

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2013-14, 5/6 & 7 June 2013

Question: E13-124

OUTCOME: 3 - Access to Medical Services

Topic: Child Dental Benefits Schedule

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Fierravanti-Wells

Question:

The Schedule provides a number of restrictions on the use of item numbers, including some that can only be used once every two years. How will dentists and patients be informed of these requirements and when will that occur? What happens if a patient attends different dentists and a restricted service is performed on multiple occasions- if the patient isn't bulk-billed, who is liable, the dentist, the patient or Medicare?

Answer:

The Dental Benefits Rules 2013 (the Rules) detail requirements of services and have been available on the Federal Registration of Legislative Instruments since 26 May 2013 when the Rules were registered. All members of the public are able to access the full schedule online. This schedule includes all covered item numbers, benefits and restrictions on services. Further communication materials concerning the schedule are being developed between the Department of Health and Ageing and the Department of Human Services and will be available prior to the commencement of the Schedule.

As long as a patient has sufficient funding available in their \$1,000 entitlement, a benefit will be paid for the restricted service if relevant limitations have not been exceeded and all other requirements of the program are met. Providers will be able to check the availability of benefits for restricted services by telephoning the Department of Human Services or by accessing the Health Professionals Online Services portal. However, this information will only be able to account for claims that have been processed at the time of the query, and will not reflect any outstanding claims that may exist.

Treatments and charges beyond the scope of the program are a matter for the dentist and patient to discuss.