

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

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

Question: E13-216

OUTCOME: 12 - Health Workforce Capacity

Topic: District Workforce Shortage (Townsville GP Super Clinic)

Type of Question: Hansard Page 38, 5 June 2013

Senator: Fierravanti-Wells

Question:

In relation to the Townsville GP Super Clinic:

- a) Can you inform the committee of the outcome of the hearing in the Townsville Federal Magistrates Court on 20 May and 22 May regarding the use of overseas trained doctors in the Townsville GP Super Clinic?
- b) What was the basis for the hearing?
- c) What changes occurred in September 2012 regarding the use of overseas trained doctors, and did these changes affect the Townsville GP Super Clinic?

Answer:

a). and b)

This matter is still before the Federal Magistrates Court.

- c) On 3 September 2012, the Department of Health and Ageing introduced revised Guidelines for section 19AB of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* (the Act), which clarify each of the considerations for the Department when determining the eligibility of overseas trained doctors (OTDs) and foreign graduates of an accredited medical school (FGAMS) to obtain a Medicare provider number.

The provisions of the revised Section 19AB Guidelines apply to all OTDs and FGAMS, and continue to support the workforce distribution aims of section 19AB of the Act. The primary consideration when an OTD or FGAMS applies for an exemption under Section 19AB continues to be whether they would practise within a District of Workforce Shortage.

The Department discontinued the separate and cumbersome preliminary assessment of district of workforce shortage application process to coincide with the release of the revised Section 19AB Guidelines. Employers are no longer required to complete two application processes when employing an OTD or FGAMS.