

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

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

Question: E13-243

OUTCOME: 12 - Health Workforce Capacity

Topic: Workforce Capacity

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Di Natale

Question:

Has the Department evaluated the costs, benefits and viability of introducing physician assistants in Australia (a reform option canvassed favourably in a Health Workforce Australia Report)?

Answer:

On 29 October 2010, the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council requested that Health Workforce Australia (HWA) provide advice on the potential role of Physician Assistants (PAs) within the Australian healthcare system.

In preparing advice HWA undertook a review of the literature and considered trials conducted by individual states and territories. The resulting report titled *The Potential role of Physician Assistants in the Australian context* was released on the HWA website on 24 August 2012.

The Department of Health and Ageing has not done further work on the introduction of PAs, but it is open to employers of health practitioners to look at employing PAs as an option.