

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2014 - 2015, 2/3 June 2014

Ref No: SQ14-000439

OUTCOME: 2 - Access to Pharmaceutical Services

Topic: PBS Co-payments - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Type of Question: Hansard Page 49, 2 June 2014

Senator: Siewert, Rachel

Question:

Minister, have you given any thought to the impact that even the increase in the concessional rate will have on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?

Answer:

Under the Closing the Gap (CTG) PBS Co-payment Measure, eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers who would otherwise pay the general co-payment for medicines have their co-payment reduced to the concessional rate, and concessional patients receive their PBS scripts for free.

The 1 January 2015 changes to the PBS co-payment and safety net arrangements will only affect those general patients that are paying the concessional rate under the CTG as the concessional co-payment will increase by 80 cents and the safety net threshold will increase by two scripts per year to 62 in 2015, 64 in 2016, 66 in 2017, and 68 in 2018 onwards.

Eighty eight per cent of 'Closing the Gap' prescriptions are for concessional patients so they are currently, and will continue to be free under this arrangement.