

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2014 - 2015, 2/3 June 2014

Ref No: SQ14-000511

OUTCOME: 2 - Access to Pharmaceutical Services

Topic: Access to Medicines Working Group

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Brown, Carol

Question:

Page 64 of the Health Portfolio Budget Statement states that the Access to Medicines Working Group will be reinvigorated as a forum for discussion of PBS policies with the pharmaceuticals sectors, and further states one of the four priority areas on which initial discussions will focus is “interpretation of section 99ACB of the National Health Act 1953”. What informed the decision to include this element of PBS policy as one of the four priority areas for discussion by the access to medicines working group?

- a) What are the aims of the Forum’s discussions in regards to the “interpretation of section 99ACB of the National Health Act 1953”?
- b) Are any amendments to the current arrangements currently under consideration? If So, what are the proposed changes?
- c) What is the timeline for the Forum’s discussion or work program?

Answer:

Interpretation of S99ACB of the *National Health Act 1953* was added to the list of priorities for discussion by the Access to Medicines Working Group (AMWG) at the request of Medicines Australia (MA).

- a) AMWG will discuss the intent of S99ACB and look to determine the extent (if any) of potential unintended consequences as claimed by MA.
- b) No.
- c) The first meeting of the AMWG was held on 16 June 2014, at which a timetable of approximately six months was set for this discussion and policy work.