

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

**Budget Estimates 2014 – 2015, 2/3 June 2014**

**Ref No:** SQ14-000619

**OUTCOME:** 3 – Access to Medical and Dental Services

**Topic:** Medicare Benefits Schedule Indexation

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Senator:** McLucas, Jan

**Question:**

In relation to the MBS indexation freeze, has the department done any research on:

- a) The impact to patient behaviour on follow up appointment attendance and referred consultations?
- b) How this will affect fee levels?
- c) The impact on specialists costs and fees?

**Answer:**

The measure announced in the 2014-15 Budget to freeze the indexation of some Medicare Benefit Schedule (MBS) items for two years was a continuation of a measure announced by the former Government in the 2013-14 Budget.

- a) The Department has not undertaken any research on this issue as it is not standard practice to estimate second round effects.

b) and c)

It is up to decisions of individual providers if, when, and by how much they change their fees.