

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

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

**Ref No: SQ14-00791**

**OUTCOME:** 5 - Primary Health Care

**Topic:** Rural Health Services - GP Tax

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

**Senator:** McLucas, Jan

**Question:**

With regard to the GP Tax ("Co-payment") What will happen with respect to the fact that people living in the country, who have poorer health outcomes? What special provisions have been made to ensure access to regional GPs for regional patients?

**Answer:**

The Government will be providing a higher 'low gap incentive' for services provided in regional, rural and remote areas.

The low gap incentive is payable to GPs who provide attendance services and charge only the \$7 patient contribution to concessional patients and children under 16 years of age for their first 10 services in a calendar year. After 10 services, the low gap incentive will be paid to GPs who charge the patient no out-of-pocket cost.

The table below provides a comparison for concessional patients in metropolitan and regional areas based on the standard GP consultation (Medicare Benefits Schedule item 23).

	<b>Metropolitan</b>	<b>Regional</b>
Low gap incentive	\$6.15	\$9.25 *

\*subject to indexation