

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

**Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016, 1 – 2 June 2015**

**Ref No:** SQ15-000581

**OUTCOME:** 5 - Primary Health Care

**Topic:** Primary Health Networks

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

**Senator:** Siewert, Rachel

**Question:**

How does the Department intend to guarantee service delivery continuity in the roll out period? Will this change the strategic intent of the formation of Primary Health Networks? If so, will the Government consider alternate service delivery avenues?

**Answer:**

Service continuity is a priority in the establishment of Primary Health Networks (PHNs). For the first year of PHN operations, where appropriate, existing Medicare Local frontline services will be transferred to the PHN purchasing environment. It is expected that Medicare Locals and PHNs will work cooperatively during the transition period to identify such services in order to minimise the impact on patients and health professionals.

This will not change the strategic intent of the formation of PHNs. The objectives of PHNs are to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services for patients, particularly those at risk of poor health outcomes, and to improve coordination of care to ensure patients receive the right care in the right place at the right time.

PHNs will have greater flexibility to stimulate innovative public and private health care solutions by purchasing or commissioning health and medical/clinical services for local groups most in need and will better integrate health service sectors. PHNs will be supported to move to commissioning models as far as possible commencing in the second year of operation (2016 - 17).