

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 29 May 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000553

OUTCOME: 4 - Individual Health Benefits

Topic: GP bulk-billing incentives

Type of Question: Hansard Page 68, 29 May 2017

Senator: Watt, Murray

Question:

Senator WATT: That is in an overall sense. What I am asking is: in dollar terms, for a consultation with a GP, what does that mean? I am not talking about an aggregated figure.

Mr Bowles: I have not worked it out on an item number, so I will take that on notice. The issue is, there is \$9.5 million in that first year, in relation to bulk-billing services. So it is not insignificant. But I would add that in the second year it is \$146 million, when you start to bring in the other services. Then it is \$403.4 million in 2019-20 when you bring in the next lot, and in 2020-21 it is \$443.4 million, for a total of \$1,002.3 million, roughly \$1 billion.

Senator WATT: Are they aggregated figures? All of the indexation, across every procedure, across every year.

Mr Bowles: Everything that is indexed; yes.

Senator WATT: What I am trying to get to is what this means for an individual consultation with an individual GP. But you do not know that, is that correct?

Mr Bowles: No, not specifically to each individual item. You are asking for one item; what one bulk-billing incentive—

Senator WATT: Well, the one that is starting this year.

Mr Bowles: We are going to re-index—at whatever the rate of indexation is—for either the \$6 or the \$9 and a bit rates for bulk-billing incentives. So it is small, in that context, but we actually deliver 365 million services a year.

Senator WATT: I am trying to get to this: what is the benefit to an individual patient and an individual GP?

Mr Bowles: I will take it on notice. I have already said that.

Answer:

Three GP bulk-billing incentive items will be indexed from 1 July 2017. The new fees and rebates are:

- Item 10990 - Fee \$7.30 (from \$7.20) Rebate \$6.25 (from \$6.15)
- Item 10991 - Fee \$11.00 (\$10.85) Rebate \$9.35 (\$9.25)
- Item 10992 - Fee \$11.00 (\$10.85) Rebate \$9.35 (\$9.25)

This is the amount per service. The total increase a GP would receive in the 2017-18 financial year would depend on the number of eligible bulk-billed services provided.