

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

**Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 30 May 2017**

**Ref No:** SQ17-000642

**OUTCOME:** 6 - Ageing and Aged Care

**Topic:** Better Access

**Type of Question:** Hansard Page 97, 30 May 2017

**Senator:** Siewert, Rachel

**Question:**

Senator SIEWERT: So we are still in the position we were in previously where older people cannot access it because they are no longer classified as patients?

Dr McCarthy: It remains the case that the program is not available to people in residential care.

Senator SIEWERT: I have been reading through this. Could that be fixed by regulation?

Dr Hartland: We would have to look at the MBS legislation. I do not think either Dr McCarthy or I—

Dr McCarthy: We would need to take that on notice.

**Answer:**

Current interpretation of the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) suggests that Commonwealth funded Residential Aged Care Facility residents are not eligible for mental health services under the *Better Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and General Practitioners through the Medicare Benefits Schedule* (Better Access) initiative.

Any amendment to MBS arrangements, would need to be considered in a Budget context.