

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 29 & 30 May 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000784

OUTCOME: 4 - Individual Health Benefits

Topic: Bulk Billing

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Watt, Murray

Question:

What is the percentage of patients who are bulk billed for item 23 GP services in Australia?
Please provide the most current data.

Answer:

The Department of Health does not compile statistics on patient bulk billing distributions for item 23. However, the Department does compile statistics on patient bulk billing distributions for GP non-referred attendances on a financial year basis at a national level. Item 23 represents 62.2% of all GP non-referred services and 59.6% of bulk billed GP non-referred services.

Table 1: National Bulk-billing patterns for patients who received at least one Non-Referred Attendance, 2015-16

Financial Year	Bulk-billing rate for NRA services	Patient count (2)	Percentage of patients for the year	Percentage of NRA services for the year	Average Bulk Billing Rate
2015-16	0 %	2,260,220	10.8%	4.3%	0.0%
	1% - 9%	33,946	0.2%	0.4%	7.2%
	10% - 19%	277,514	1.3%	1.6%	14.5%
	20% - 29%	573,715	2.7%	2.6%	24.0%
	30% - 39%	562,896	2.7%	2.3%	34.0%
	40% - 49%	314,586	1.5%	1.8%	42.6%
	50% - 59%	967,453	4.6%	3.3%	52.2%
	60% - 69%	706,909	3.4%	3.1%	64.4%
	70% - 79%	503,376	2.4%	2.8%	74.5%
	80% - 89%	759,506	3.6%	4.8%	84.6%
	90% - 99%	399,819	1.9%	4.9%	93.6%
	100 %	13,516,412	64.7%	68.2%	100.0%
Total		20,876,352	100.0%	100.0%	85.1%

Notes:

(1) NRA = Broad Types of Service - VR GP, Other and Enhanced Primary Care Non-Referred Attendances

(2) Patients have only been counted if they claimed at least one NRA service in the reference period and have a non-negative number of Bulk-billed NRA services (zero permitted).

The Department compiles bulk billing statistics for item 23 based on services. Nationally, the July to March 2016-17 year-to-date bulk billing rate for MBS Item 23 was 81.8%. This represents an increase of 0.6 percentage points when compared to the same period last year (81.2%).