

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 30 May 2017

Ref No: SQ17-001062

OUTCOME: 4 - Individual Health Benefits

Topic: Better Access

Type of Question: Hansard Page 130, 30 May 2017

Senator: O'Neill, Deborah

Question:

Mr Bowles: Well, everything was under a freeze until they have been lifted progressively. I have said I literally cannot recall everything that is in these things, but if you go to our website it will have what happens from 1 July 2017, what happens from 1 July 2018—and I think it actually lists the numbers beside them, from memory. Regarding Better Access, I just do not know all the numbers. I do not have the relevant people here and I have not had a chance to get away from the table for a little while.

Senator O'NEILL: I thought your staff might provide that for you, Mr Bowles.

Mr Bowles: We are getting it, but—

Answer:

As provided in the response to Question on Notice SQ17-000613:

- Mental health service items on the Medicare Benefits Schedule will be indexed from:
 - 1 July 2018 for mental health services as part of a standard GP consultation;
 - 1 July 2018 for a mental health service from a consultant psychiatrist;
 - 1 July 2019 for a mental health service from an allied health professional, such as a psychologist, occupational therapist or social worker; and
 - 1 July 2020 for a GP service to establish or review a mental health treatment plan or a GP mental health consultation.
- Mental health patients will also benefit from the increased GP bulk-billing incentive from 1 July 2017, which encourages GPs to bulk-bill non-referred attendances.