

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-11, 20 October 2010

Question: E10-026

OUTCOME 1: Population Health

Topic: THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Written Question on Notice

Senator Siewert asked:

Why doesn't the TGA play a greater role in promoting its activities in the media and the public along the lines of similar organisations in other countries, such as the FDA?

Answer:

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) promotes its activities through the TGA public information website, and manages this website as the central portal for information on TGA activities. Information on the TGA website is picked up by the media and the interested public and promoted via these agencies to the wider community. The TGA also promotes its activities through conferences and speaking engagements, letters, booklets and brochures.

The FDA also utilise their public information website as the central portal for promoting their activities in the media, along with conferences and workshops, various print publications which can be ordered online and alert letters sent to health professionals. FDA activities are promoted on the FDA website through quick links to 'What's new', 'Spotlight on' and 'Recalls and alerts'; email alert and RSS feed subscriptions; access to press announcements; and interactive media such as Twitter/Facebook, YouTube and FDA safety news video broadcasts/podcasts.

The communication channels used by the TGA to promote its activities are similar to those used by the FDA, with the exception of the use of interactive media. However, the TGA public information website is currently undergoing extensive redevelopment. As part of this redevelopment, an emphasis has been placed on further developing channels used to communicate and promote the TGA's activities. For example, the new website will include a 'Spotlight on ...' section with quick link to hot topics – this is one of the ways the FDA promotes its key activities.

Furthermore, the Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Ageing, the Hon Catherine King MP has announced a review of the transparency of the TGA's regulatory processes to be conducted by an independent panel. The objective of this review is to improve public understanding and knowledge of regulatory decision making through suggesting ways of promoting the TGA'S regulatory activities to the wider community, enhancing public transparency and consumer confidence.