

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-11, 20 October 2010

Question: E10-057

OUTCOME 11: Mental Health

Topic: MENTAL HEALTH

Written Question on Notice

Senator Siewert asked:

- a) Given the late inclusion of social workers and occupational therapists in the current Better Access evaluation process, will the data be comparable with the other service provider data?
- b) Are there enough psychologists and clinical psychologists who can move into the gap left behind by the removal of SW's and OT's?

Answer:

- a) An overall summative evaluation is to be undertaken which will draw together the evidence gathered through all the Better Access evaluation components, as well as other relevant information and research. Collation of the evidence through the evaluation components means that a variety of data, collected from various sources and using a variety of methods, will be available to assess the effectiveness, appropriateness and overall impact of the Better Access initiative.

While the component evaluations for client outcomes have slightly different methodologies to account for the different sample sizes, the consultant has designed the methodology for Component A.2 (social workers and occupational therapists) to enable comparison with Component A (psychiatrists, general practitioners and psychologists).

- b) The Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon Nicola Roxon MP, and the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, the Hon Mark Butler MP, announced on 12 November 2010 that social workers and occupational therapists will continue to be able to provide Medicare-funded services under the Better Access initiative.