

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-2011, 20 October 2010

Question: E10-112

OUTCOME 3: Access to Medical Services

Topic: HYPERBARIC OXYGEN THERAPY

Written Question on Notice

Senator Siewert asked:

I understand that interim funding for item 13015 is due to cease on October 31. The most recent figures for the total cost of benefits paid on this item were \$6.8million.

- a) Could you let me know what the reasons are for no longer funding this item?
- b) Can you clarify the funding situation with regards to item 13020, which I believe may also cease to receive interim funding in October?

Answer:

a and b)

In May 2003, the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC) advised the Minister for Health and Ageing that *“the clinical evidence was inadequate to substantiate claims that hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) was cost-effective in the treatment of refractory soft tissue radiation injuries or nondiabetic refractory wounds. However, MSAC recommended that, as there are no effective alternative therapies and in view of the progress of local data collections and an international trial, funding for HBOT continue for MBS listed indications at currently eligible sites, for a further three years”*.

The Minister noted this advice in August 2004. As interim funding of these items was due to expire on 31 October 2010 it was appropriate for MSAC to commence a review. Pending the finalisation of this review, MBS funding for this item has been extended.