

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-11, 20 October 2010

Question: E10-315

OUTCOME 5: Primary Care

Topic: GP SUPER CLINICS

Written Question on Notice

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

- a) One of the first clinics to open was at Strathpine - What response does the department have to the complaints of Dr Morris Williams of the Strathpine Seven-Day Medical Centre - which is near the new super clinic – that it does not provide services that were not already provided?
- b) What response does the department have to Dr Williams' claim that his patient numbers have halved since the super clinic arrived?
- c) What response does the department have to Dr William Rath of the Brendale Medical Centre, also near the new super clinic, whose assessment is the super clinic received "special dispensation" to employ Overseas Trained Doctors and says - and I quote - "It's just not fair. They are giving them \$2.5 million to do exactly what we are doing and it is an unfair advantage. I have been here for 22 years and it is not fair when you have to buy everything."
- d) How does the stated aims of the super clinic program to complement and enhance existing services equate to the Health Minister's response to these doctor's criticisms that they "should become more competitive"?

Answer:

- a) It has always been the expectation of the Australian Government that GP Super Clinics would provide a range of services that build on existing primary health care services and enhance these services to meet local community need.
- b) The Department is unable to corroborate this assertion.
- c) No special dispensation was given to the Strathpine GP Super Clinic. The Preliminary Assessment of District of Workforce Shortage (PADWS) application process can be used by all medical practices that are not located in districts of workforce shortage to set out special circumstances that support the employment of an overseas trained doctor who is subject to the provider number restrictions under section 19AB of the *Health Insurance Act 1973*.
- d) The intent of the GP Super Clinic program is to complement and improve local primary care services. There is high demand for quality primary care services in many communities across Australia, including Strathpine, and local providers could be expected to benefit from this demand.