

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-11, 20 October 2010

Question: E10-397

OUTCOME 11: Mental Health

Topic: SOCIAL WORKERS AND OT'S

Hansard Page: CA 73

Senator Siewert asked:

Survey of social workers and OT clients currently underway.

- a) What process was used to select those clients and the clients from some of the other services?
- b) Can you confirm the process?

Answer:

a and b)

Social workers and occupational therapists have been included in each of the component parts of the Better Access initiative evaluation. In order to provide a complete and comprehensive picture of the outcomes for consumers under the initiative, a study is being undertaken on consumer outcomes focussing specifically on social workers and occupational therapists and their clients under the Better Access initiative.

While the component evaluations for client outcomes have slightly different methodologies to account for the different sample sizes for Component A (psychiatrists, psychologists and general practitioners) and Component A.2 (social workers and occupational therapists), the consultant who is undertaking both of these components has designed the methodology for Component A.2 to enable comparison with Component A. This will mean that findings from Component A.2 will be comparable with the findings from Component A.

All social workers and occupational therapists who had provided services under the Better Access initiative over the 12 month period from 1 June 2009 to 31 May 2010 were invited to participate in the study and to recruit clients to participate in the study.

The methodology of having providers recruit consumers to the study was employed in both Component A and A.2 of the evaluation. This is a common way of recruiting consumers noting that patient data is not held by Medicare Australia.

As part of the study design for Component A, participating providers agreed to approach their first 20 consecutive new consumers when they first presented for services that were funded through the MBS item numbers for Better Access.

As part of the study design for Component A.2, participating social workers and occupational therapists agreed to recruit two to five consumers who had recently completed treatment under Better Access.