

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 21 October 2011

Question: E11-232

OUTCOME 8: Indigenous Health

Topic: CLINICAL GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMONWEALTH
FUNDED ABORIGINAL AND COMMUNITY CONTROLLED HEALTH
SERVICES

Written Question on Notice

Senator Adams asked:

Governance arrangements for Commonwealth funded Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS):

What are the arrangements for clinical governance?

What safety and quality standards must be met by ACCHSs?

Are they required to report adverse events or medical errors (e.g., such as dispensing medication incorrectly)?

Answer:

The Government supports ACCHS to develop effective clinical governance practices through the promotion of clinical accreditation under the Establishing Quality Health Standards (EQHS) Budget measure.

The EQHS measure provides funding and related support systems to ACCHS to become accredited against the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Standards for General Practice. Participation in the EQHS measure by ACCHS is on a voluntary basis but is encouraged by the Government as an important means of improving ACCHS' clinical practices.

The RACGP framework incorporates standards relating to the quality of GP practice services; the rights and needs of patients; safety, quality improvement and education; practice management; and physical facilities and support processes.

There is no formal requirement under the RACGP standards for practices to report adverse events or medical errors. However, organisations seeking RACGP accreditation are required to demonstrate that they have appropriate mechanisms in place for ensuring the safe and quality use of medicines, for responding to patient feedback and managing patient complaints as well as other general clinical risk management strategies.

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care recently released a consultation paper on the development of "Practice-level Indicators of Safety and Quality for Primary Health Care". While including indicators around safety (adverse drug reactions and patient safety investigations), these proposed indicators will be voluntary only.

There are currently no mandatory reporting requirements for Primary Health Care (including GP) services.