

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES - 20 OCTOBER 2011 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Staffing in Medicare offices

Question reference number: HSW 2

Senator: Williams

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 9 December 2011

Number of pages: 1

Question:

- a) Is it the case that the Medicare network is under-funded and under-staffed, or is it the case that the existing resources are not effectively utilised in order to ensure adequate service delivery in front line areas?
- b) During times of staff leave, many positions are unable to be backfilled within the Medicare Network to provide adequate service delivery to the Australian public. There appears to be no relief staff available within the network, particularly for country and regional areas in these circumstances. This situation is also prevalent where staff seek out career opportunities both in training and relieving capabilities but are unable to take up the opportunities due to the networks inability to back fill their absence. Is this an accurate representation of the current situation within the Medicare side of the Department of Human Services Network? If so, what are you doing to alleviate the problem?
- c) What are the funding or other impediments to providing backfilling to those locations where this situation occurs?
- d) Are you adequately funded to provide this resource, or do you require additional funding?
- e) Are you best utilising the existing funding to provide adequate service coverage in these circumstances, and that includes providing adequate training and career opportunities for staff, particularly in country and regional areas?

Answer:

- a) No.
- b) No.
- c) None.
- d) The Department of Human Services is adequately funded to provide this resource.
- e) Yes.