

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 21 October 2011

Question: E11-087

OUTCOME 2: Access to Pharmaceutical Services

Topic: CLOSING THE GAP PHARMACEUTICAL BENEFITS SCHEME (PBS)
CO-PAYMENT MEASURE

Written Question on Notice

Senator Rachel Siewert asked:

The COAG ICDP evaluation framework sets out the evaluation plan for this B1 measure. In it there is the intention to determine the volume of Closing the Gap prescriptions produced by service type. The potential data sources however are not quantitative- but qualitative (i.e. from consultation with Indigenous health services and general practices) and this is to be determined after four years. Why is this 'soft' measure of the volume of scripts generated from private general practices being by the Department?

Answer:

The Indigenous Chronic Disease Package (ICDP) Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (the Framework) identifies expected outcomes of ICDP and its component measures with a range of associated evaluation questions and indicators. The evaluation questions and indicators explore various aspects of the identified outcomes at different stages of implementation (Year 1, Year 2, Year 4). Potential data sources are also identified as appropriate to the nature of the indicators and evaluation questions.

The relevant outcome associated with the indicator cited in the question above is, “The financial barrier to using PBS medicines is reduced or removed for eligible Indigenous Australians with or at risk of chronic disease who participate in the program”. There are a total of 11 indicators identified in the Framework for various evaluation questions associated with this particular outcome of the PBS Co-Payment Measure. These include several quantitative indicators to be assessed annually with data sourced from PBS and Practice Incentive Payments Indigenous Health Incentive administrative databases.

The particular indicator, “Approximate volume of Closing the Gap prescriptions produced by service type”, is associated with a qualitative question: “Do Indigenous health services and general practices prescribe under the new arrangements?” The appropriate data source identified is consultations with both service types. This is because the prescription data do not include information on whether the prescriber works in an Indigenous Health Service or in a private general practice.