

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 19 October 2011

Question: E11-216

OUTCOME 6: Rural Health

Topic: RURAL LOCUM SUPPORT - RURAL HEALTH OUTREACH FUND

Written Question on Notice

Senator Adams asked:

Page 6 DoHA 2010-11 Annual Report states that from 1 July 2012 the bulk of MSOAP will form part of the new Rural Health Outreach Fund. Also, says that the implementation of maternity services program has been slow.

Please provide an update on the Maternity Services Program which appears to be behind the implementation plan. What are the reasons for this? What impact has the delay had on the implementation of services?

Answer:

The implementation of the Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance Program - Maternity Services measure is reliant on other linked measures such as the registration, accreditation and provision of Medicare provider numbers for Nurse Practitioners.

Following signing of Funding Agreements in June 2011, fund holders undertook a comprehensive needs analysis and developed detailed service delivery plans in consultation with state and territory Advisory Forums. While this planning delayed the commencement of maternity services, it has ensured that services are directed to priority health areas.

Service delivery has now commenced in New South Wales, Tasmania, and Western Australia and is expected to commence in the other states by early 2012.