

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 19 October

Question: E11-246

OUTCOME 3: Access to Medical Services

Topic: IMPLANTABLE CARDIAC DEVICES

Written Question on Notice

Senator Xenophon asked:

- a) What is the department's position on rebates for doctors' fees in relation to implantable cardiac devices with the capacity to remotely provide information to doctors electronically?
- b) There are an increasing number of devices with this capability. When will the department be reassessing its policy?

Answer

- a) There are items in the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) that provide rebates to patients for the surgical placement of implantable cardiac devices including pacemakers and defibrillators. However, given the patient is not attending either in person or by videoconference with the practitioner, a rebate for remote reading of the device falls outside current Medicare policy parameters and legislation which underpins the MBS. There are attendance and telehealth items that may be applicable should the assessment of the device require consultation with a medical practitioner.
- b) It is a government decision to amend the policy and legislative parameters that govern the operation of the MBS. Applications for MBS funding of eligible medical services are assessed by Medical Services Advisory Committee, which provides advice to government about the circumstances of public funding for new and existing MBS - rebated services.