

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 19-21 October 2011

Question: E11-252

OUTCOME 3: Access to Medical Services

Topic: MSAC PROCESSES

Written Question on Notice

Senator Xenophon asked:

- a) The HTA review made several recommendations in relation to streamlining MSAC procedures and processes. Which of these points has MSAC decided to implement?
- b) What is the implementation process?
- c) How long until this is complete?

Answer:

- a) The Government accepted the December 2009 report of the *Review of Health Technology Assessment in Australia* (HTA Review) on 27 February 2010 and directed the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) to commence immediate implementation of thirteen of the sixteen recommendations. While recommendation 9 specifically relates to streamlining procedures and processes for the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC), a number of other recommendations also have applicability for MSAC, for example:
 - i. recommendations 2 and 3 provide a broad strategic policy framework for Australian Government health technology assessment (HTA) processes;
 - ii. recommendation 5 provides for improved procedural fairness and consistency of HTA processes; and
 - iii. recommendation 6 provides for the establishment of a single entry point for applications for co-dependent technologies which need to be assessed by two or more expert committees. This will usually include consideration by MSAC.

The three recommendations not accepted by Government relate to post market surveillance.

- b) The Department developed a comprehensive project management strategy to implement the recommendations approved by the Government and established a steering committee chaired by a Deputy Secretary to oversee implementation.

For recommendation 9, during 2010, the Department worked in conjunction with MSAC and several working groups (with MSAC members) to develop and refine the new streamlined processes, including for the assessment of co-dependent technologies, using current applications to MSAC.

The Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon Nicola Roxon MP, approved revised MSAC terms of reference and the streamlined processes and procedures to commence from 1 January 2011.

The Department sought stakeholder comment through the public release of discussion papers outlining particular aspects of the new arrangements to assist with ongoing refinement, including:

- *Draft Information Requests for Assessing a Pair of Co-Dependent Technologies* (September 2010); and
- *Proposal for changes to the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC) processes for applications for public funding* (December 2010).

- c) All HTA Review deliverables scheduled for 2010 were achieved on time. Substantial progress has been made towards ensuring that recommendations due for implementation in 2011 will meet forecast timeframes.