

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 19 October 2011

Question: E11-338

OUTCOME 2: Access to Pharmaceutical Services

Topic: PBS DEFERRALS

Written Question on Notice

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

The Prime Minister and Health Minister announced on 30 September that the government will not defer new medicines costing under \$10 million a year for the next twelve months.

- a) What is the rationale for allowing new medicine listings to proceed for only twelve months? What happens after that?
- b) Does this twelve month time limit mean the government doesn't have confidence that the budget will return to surplus?
- c) Will the government defer medicines costing over \$10 million a year?
- d) What does the government say to patients who may be waiting for access to medicines costing more than \$10 million a year?
- e) Do you guarantee the government will maintain its commitment in the Memorandum of Understanding that Cabinet will consider all medicines within 6 months?
- f) What processes or criteria will Cabinet be applying to medicines over \$10 million a year?

Answer:

- a) The 12 month timeframe allows an appropriate period for stakeholders and Government to work together to develop options on how deferrals will be managed into the future.
- b) No.
- c) The Cabinet considers each submission to list a medicine on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) costing more than \$10 million a year on its merits.

d) and e)

The Government is committed to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Medicines

Australia, as evidenced by the PBS listings, in 2011, of the high cost drugs romiplostim (Nplate®, for the treatment of rare blood disorders), levodopa with carbidopa (Duodopa®, for the treatment of advanced Parkinson disease), fingolimod (Gilenya®, for the treatment of multiple sclerosis) and rituximab (Mabthera®, for the treatment of chronic leukaemia).

- f) The Minister for Health and Ageing's Submissions to the Cabinet about the listing of medicines are Cabinet-in-Confidence.