

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 19 October 2011

Question: E11-347

OUTCOME 2: Access to Pharmaceutical Services

Topic: PHARMACEUTICALS AND PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES

Written Question on Notice

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

- a) Is it true that the Government is asking the Department to provide offsets for all new medicines listings?
- b) If so, what offsets have been found in the Health Department or the PBS and what new medicines have those offsets been used to fund?

Answer:

- a) Yes. This is consistent with the Australian Government's budget commitment to offset all new spending proposals.
- b) Submissions to the Government are Cabinet-In-Confidence.

In 2011 the Government listed (or extended the listing of) and approved price increases for medicines worth over \$990 million on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). These included:

- As announced by the Minister for Health and Ageing on 9 December 2010 and PBS listed on 1 February 2011: azacitidine (Vidaza®) for patients with bone marrow disorders, dutasteride (Avodart®) for men with prostate disease and nicotine transdermal patches and an extension to the listing of varenicline (Champix®) to assist smokers to quit. In addition, eculizumab (Soliris®) was added to the Life Saving Drugs Program for the treatment of paroxysmal nocturnal haemoglobinuria from 1 January 2011.
- As announced by the Minister for Health and Ageing on 25 February 2011: five new or amended PBS listings and two price increases for existing PBS medicines, including, romiplostin (Nplate®) for the treatment of a rare blood disorder, omalizumab (Xolair®) for the treatment of patients with severe asthma and levodopa with carbidopa (Duodopa®) a specialised treatment for patients with advanced Parkinson disease.
- As announced by the Minister for Health and Ageing on 21 June 2011: 11 new or amended PBS listings and three price increases for existing PBS medicines, including cetuximab (Erbix®) for patients suffering late stage bowel cancer, fingolimod (Gilenya®) for patients with relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis and tobramycin (Tobi®) for patients with cystic fibrosis.
- As announced by the Minister for Health and Ageing on 30 September 2011: 48 new or amended PBS listings and price increases for existing PBS medicines, including rituximab (Mabthera®) for a specific form of chronic lymphocytic leukaemia and capecitabine (Xeloda®) for the treatment of advanced bowel cancer.