

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 19 October 2011

Question: E11-352

OUTCOME 2: Access to Pharmaceutical Services

Topic: PHARMACEUTICALS AND PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES

Written Question on Notice

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

- a) How many medicines have been considered for funding by federal cabinet in the last five years?
- b) Have any medicines been rejected for funding by the government? If so, please name them.

Can you please advise/update on the current length of time from PBAC recommendation to medicines being listed on the PBS?

Answer:

- a) Since January 2007, 99 medicines and seven vaccines with a financial impact, including 31 high cost medicines costing more than \$10 million in each year of its listing, have been considered for funding on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), the National Immunisation Program and the Life Saving Drugs Program by the Cabinet.
- b) No.

Under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Australian Government and Medicines Australia, clause 29 states that “for those submissions required to be approved by Cabinet, the Commonwealth (Australian Government) will use its best endeavours to implement a maximum time frame of six months for consideration and decision by Cabinet. The six months will commence from the date of notification by the Department of Health and Ageing to the sponsor that pricing is agreed”. It applies for high cost medicines recommended from the July 2010 Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee meeting onwards.

Since the MoU came into effect the average time taken for Cabinet to consider high cost drugs following pricing agreement is 4.3 months, with two drugs being considered within one month.

In 2011, the average length of time from the PBAC recommendation to PBS listing of high cost medicines was 11.7 months.