

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

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

Question: E11-362

OUTCOME 3: Access to Medical Services

Topic: JOINT INJECTIONS

Written Question on Notice

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

In February 2010, the Committee was advised that rheumatologist provided a submission for new item numbers and advice would be provided to Government "within three to four months.

- a) What has happened to the proposal for new item numbers?
- b) Is a new listing still likely and if so when?

Answer:

- a) The Australian Rheumatology Association's (ARA) application, assessment protocol and assessment report were considered by the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC) at its meeting in April 2011. MSAC concluded that joint injections were safe and effective but raised a number of concerns around the lack of evidence to support the applicant's claims that consultant physicians deliver a different type of outcome in a different type of patient group compared with other practitioners who provide the same service. MSAC deferred its decision on the ARA's application until further evidence was provided. The ARA provided further evidence to support their application in June 2011.
- b) MSAC will consider the ARA's new evidence at its meeting on 29-30 November 2011. MSAC's advice will then be provided to the Minister of Health and Ageing. Upon Government approval for listing, the administrative listing process can take up to six months or longer if the item is considered as part of a budget.