Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 19 October 2011

Question: E11-462

OUTCOME 2: Access to Pharmaceutical Services

Topic: PBS LISTING OF PRADAXA

Written Question on Notice

Senator Ferravanti-Wells asked:

Given the Government is also claiming uncertainty about global clinical trials to justify its delaying of PBS listing of Pradaxa, what will the government be doing to support additional clinical trial activity in Australia?

Answer:

The Australian Government via the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), funds investigator initiated clinical trial research conducted by researchers in universities, hospitals and medical research institutes. These 'Centres of Research Excellence' provide support for teams of researchers to pursue collaborative research and develop capacity in clinical, population health and health services research.

In addition, the Clinical Trials Action Group (CTAG) is a joint Government and industry group that was established to explore the best ways to improve the international competitiveness of the Australian clinical trials environment. The CTAG report, Clinically Competitive: Boosting the Business of Clinical Trials in Australia, was accepted by Senator the Hon Kim Carr and the Hon Nicola Roxon and released on 3 March 2011. The report made 11 recommendations aimed at improving the clinical trials environment in Australia.

Responsibility for implementing the CTAG recommendations lies primarily with three government agencies: the Department of Innovation, Industry (with the lead role), Science and Research, the NHMRC and the Department of Health and Ageing.

There is much activity occurring in the clinical trials environment and many components of the CTAG recommendations have been progressed, including the completion of the promotion of clinical trials through the development and distribution of a clinical trials factsheet and greater identification of clinical trial networks.

The benefits of implementing these recommendations include addressing the timeliness of approvals through increased efficiency, gaining the benefits of e-health for clinical trials, improving patient recruitment, support for clinical trials networks and improve clinical trial data access in rural and remote regions.

Additionally, at its 29 September 2011 meeting, the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Committee considered the recommendations contained in the CTAG Final Report and endorsed them for implementation across jurisdictions, as broader reforms to the health system are developed.