

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

**Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016, 21 October 2015**

**Ref No:** SQ15-000821

**OUTCOME:** 1 - Population Health

**Topic:** Bowel Cancer Screening

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Senator:** McLucas, Jan

**Question:**

What consideration has been given to including information sent to people participating in the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program concerning false negatives?

**Answer:**

Program information and materials are regularly reviewed to ensure the information is comprehensive, accurate and up-to-date. Currently, the Program Information Booklet that is sent with the invitation letter and test kit, the negative result letter and the Program's website all provide information about what a negative test result means for a participant, including the possibility of a false negative result. If a participant has questions about their test result they can also call the Program Information Line.

A study by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)<sup>1</sup> found that, of people who participated in the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program from 2006 to 2008, less than 0.1 per cent of those with a negative screen were diagnosed with bowel cancer within two years. This indicates the test has a high level of accuracy in detecting bowel cancer.

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<sup>1</sup> AIHW. 2014. Analysis of bowel cancer outcomes for the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program. Cat no. CAN 87. Canberra: AIHW.