

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

**Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017, 19 October 2016**

**Ref No:** SQ16-000393

**OUTCOME:** 4 - Individual Health Benefits

**Topic:** Bulk-Billing Rates

**Type of Question:** Hansard Page 028, 19 October 2016

**Senator:** Polley, Helen

**Question:**

Senator POLLEY: Well, from your point of view it might be services, but from a patient's point of view, if you are looking at Tasmania or WA and the ACT, it is the community who have issues about not having access to bulk-billing. If you are saying that the college of GPs is wrong, then, quite clearly, you must be able to give us the figures that you say they are not including.

Mr Bowles: We said we would take that on notice. But we want to be clear that the cleanest way to understand is if we were seeing a drop-off in bulk-billing rates—your example; we could probably explore that a little bit further—but we are not. We are actually still seeing an increase in bulk-billing of services in this country. Again, if I use my example, I would be ticked as a patient who has been bulk-billed, or I will be crossed off because I am not bulk-billed all the time, even though I am bulk-billed some of the time. I think that is Mr Stuart's point. We will take it on notice and will try and come up with that picture for you. But it is not as clean and it is not as true as understanding the services that are bulk-billed.

**Answer:**

See response to SQ16-000392.