

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

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

**Ref No:** SQ16-000405

**OUTCOME:** 4 - Individual Health Benefits

**Topic:** MBS Rebates

**Type of Question:** Hansard Page 41, 19 October 2016

**Senator:** Reynolds, Linda

**Question:**

Senator REYNOLDS: Just to be clear, what I am looking for is the figures in 2013 when this policy was introduced. The minister at the time made the assertion that GPs could afford this measure because the average doctor gets \$350,000 a year in Medicare billings. I am just wondering if you have figures for that year, perhaps before and afterwards, just to give us an idea of—

Mr Stuart: I think, unfortunately, although we are looking for data, we would have to take that one on notice. We have information that is a little bit broader than just doctors with us today, but we can probably come back to you later in the day on that for that specific time.

Senator REYNOLDS: Again, not to go through and recrunch some numbers, but do you have some figures that would contextualise this in terms of not only the minister's statement at the time, but also what the average doctor now is getting back from Medicare? If that is what they were getting from Medicare at the time, and it was probably 75 per cent bulk-billing rates, then you would think that the average salaries for GPs would be somewhere around the \$400,000 plus mark. If you could come back later in the day, it just might put some context around the numbers.

Mr Stuart: The minister of the day said doctors, so I assume that that probably includes specialists as well as GPs. We first of all have to establish that we are looking at the data on a constant basis and then update it. We will see what we can do before the end of the day.

**Answer:**

In order to gain a consistent picture over time, the GP workforce has been divided based on the total number of days worked each year. An individual who worked full time five days a week for 48 weeks each year would work on average 240 days. In reality individual work patterns are much more varied and include both full-day and part-day combinations of work. The group “211 to 280 day” is the nearest equivalent to full-time and has two subcategories – 211 to 240 days and 241 to 280 days.

### Full-time GP Average MBS Billing, 2011-12 to 2015-16

Financial Year	Full time		Full time 211 to 280 days
	211 to 240 days	241 to 280 days	
2011-12	\$272,929	\$349,462	\$312,000
2012-13	\$283,322	\$364,862	\$323,450
2013-14	\$292,372	\$369,903	\$329,621
2014-15	\$294,292	\$376,229	\$333,544
2015-16	\$298,814	\$381,036	\$338,524

Note: income is based on Medicare benefits only