

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017, 28 October 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000416

OUTCOME: 4 - Individual Health Benefits

Topic: PHI

Type of Question: Hansard Page 54, 19 October 2016

Senator: Polley, Helen

Question:

Senator POLLEY: They say that they used your department's data to determine the figure of 65,000 policyholders who would be affected, whereas the minister claimed a million would be disadvantaged. Would you take that on notice and see if there is anything more you can add?

Mr Bowles: I am happy to take it on notice. I might add that if 50 per cent of the insurable population is insured—I do not know but let's say that is probably about 12 million; it is probably actually higher than that—not everyone has hospital-only care, so thousands versus millions sounds more right to me. But let me take it on notice.

Answer:

As at the year ending 30 June 2016, over 13 million Australians had a private health insurance policy which provided cover for general treatment services and over 11 million Australians had a private health insurance policy which provided cover for hospital services.

As at the year ending 30 June 2016, there were around 68,000 policy holders covered for public hospital services only, noting that there could be multiple people covered under each policy.

On 8 September 2016 the Private Health Ministerial Advisory Committee was established to examine all aspects of private health insurance and provide government with advice on reforms including:

- developing easy-to-understand categories of health insurance;
- developing standard definitions for medical procedures across all insurers for greater transparency and simplified billing; and
- ensuring private health insurance meets the specific needs of Australians living in rural and remote Australia.