

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017, 19 October 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000726

OUTCOME: 2 - Health Access and Support Services

Topic: Mental Health Reform

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Polley, Helen

Question:

There is a significant amount of reform being undertaken by the Department of Human Services and the Department of Health. Apart from meetings, is there any overarching process that the Departments have implemented to consider the impacts of these reforms on mental health programs and services? If yes, can the Department provide the analysis? If not, why hasn't any work been undertaken?

Answer:

The Department of Health is not in a position to answer on behalf of the Department of Human Services.

The Australian Government's response to the National Mental Health Commission's Review of Mental Health Programmes and Services sets out a reform package for mental health in Australia designed to address the inefficiency and fragmentation identified by the Commission.

Many of these reforms are being implemented through Primary Health Networks (PHNs), recognising the individual needs and challenges that are specific to local communities. PHNs are required to provide the Department of Health with annual reporting on mental health activity that includes a needs assessment, an activity work plan, and performance reporting. This reporting will consider implementation issues and consider continual improvement of mental health services in the PHNs' regions.

Some of these reports are available on individual PHN's websites.