

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016, 23 October 2015

Ref No: SQ15-000730

OUTCOME: 5 - Primary Health Care

Topic: Mental Health

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Lambie, Jacqui

Question:

Despite having greater need, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience lower access to mental health services than the rest of the population. This is in part because services and programmes designed for the general population are not culturally appropriate within a broader context of social and emotional wellbeing as understood by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Furthermore, such services do not ensure a connected transition through the mental health system for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

2. What specific measurable strategies has the Department of Health outlined that focus on improved Mental Health support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?
 - i) What will be the resource allocation targeting Mental Health by each administered program this financial year and each year in the forward estimates?
 - (ii) What resource allocation methodology will be applied to the targeting of expanded resources aimed at addressing the recommendations of the national review of Mental Health?
 - (iii) Who has been appointed to the Expert Reference Group (ERG) announced by Minister for Health, Hon Sussan Ley MP who represents the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Sector
 - i. How will this new ERG interact with existing specialist committee's and working groups on Aboriginal Mental Health including ATSIMHSPAG and NATSILMH
 - ii. Given the focus within the review that focusses on expanding the successful social and emotional wellbeing teams within Community Controlled Health organisations how is the national affiliate body representing these organisations actively engaged in these ongoing advice mechanisms?

Answer:

As part of the response to the Review of Mental Health Programmes and Services, the Government announced an additional \$85 million over three years (starting in 2016-17) to be provided to Primary Health Networks (PHNs) for the specific provision of culturally sensitive primary mental health care services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

PHNs in each region will be required to prepare a mental health service plan and lead the reform work, including commissioning and implementing new services. They will work closely with relevant local Indigenous and mainstream primary health care organisations, including Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services and peak bodies.

Information was exchanged between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Advisory Group (ATSIMHSPAG) and the Expert Reference Group throughout their deliberations.