



Senator the Hon Anne Ruston

**Shadow Minister for Health and Aged Care
Shadow Minister for Sport
Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate
Senator for South Australia**

28 May 2024

Mr Blair Comley PSM
Secretary
Department of Health and Aged Care

Dear Secretary Comley,

While I understand that you and your Department will attend Senate Estimates with detailed information regarding the operations of the Department of Health and Aged Care and portfolio agencies, I write to request that the Department provides the following specific information prior to your attendance before the Community Affairs Committee.

I would appreciate this information be provided by COB Monday 3rd June 2024.

Whole of Portfolio

- Summary and timelines of all current reviews commissioned by the Minister or the Department, with input being provided from relevant external individuals/agencies (independent committees, discussions papers, economic analysis etc). Please include all reviews that have been announced, commenced, or are awaiting response from the Government.

Urgent Care Clinics

- The total number of visits nationally in the first quarter of 2024 (Jan-March) compared to the first quarter of 2023. Noting that these clinics were not operating as UCCs during the first quarter of 2023, I am requesting MBS consultation data for these clinics over this period.

Bulk Billing figures

- The monthly GPR NRA Services figures (total and bulk billed) through January to April 2024 as per the table provided in response to SQ24-000195 – Question 4. Please also provide the corresponding table and figures providing a monthly breakdown for the period October 2022 to April 2023.

Workforce

- An updated forecast gap of registered nurses required in residential aged care from now until 1 October 2024, and a breakdown of the current care workforce numbers across Australia, including registered nurses, enrolled nurses, general practitioners, disability care workers and aged care workers. Please provide in the same format as response tabled 15 Feb 2024 from 2023-24 Additional Estimates.

Aged Care

- A breakdown of the \$1.4 billion allocated for ICT as allocated in the Federal Budget, outlining notional funding against systems and their stated purpose?
- Irrespective of priority level, the median and mean time number of days elapsed for the following scenarios pertaining to the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP):
 - From an initial submission of request for assessment to receipt of program outcome.
 - From an application for services to a referral for assessment (my aged care call centre).
 - From assessment referral through to the assessment being completed (RAS assessors).
 - From a completed assessment to the first service delivered.
 - From receipt of outcome to a decision on acceptance of program.
 - From a place allocation to the service commencing, for: Bathing, hygiene and grooming
 - Nursing
 - Means and food preparation
 - Podiatry, physiotherapy and other therapies
 - Help with impairments or continence
 - Home or garden maintenance
 - Changes to my home
 - Aids to stay independent
 - Transport
 - Social outings, groups and visitors.
- Irrespective of priority level, the median and mean time number of days elapsed, for the following scenarios pertaining to Home Care Packages (HCP):
 - From initial submission of request for assessment to allocation of package.
 - From allocation of first package to provider onboard meeting.
 - From assessment to allocation of the package in assessed as the recipient's level of need.
 - From the provider onboard meeting to service commencement.
- Of the CHSP regional assessment teams, the number of assessment teams that were existing on 1 January 2024 that have agreed to deliver services past 1 July 2024, broken down by state.

Please note that this list of topics is not exhaustive, and Opposition Senators will have other questions referring to expenditure across the Department of Health and Aged Care and Sport portfolios.

Please also note that at the time of writing, there are 9 overdue Questions on Notice from myself arising from the 2023-24 Additional Estimates.

Thank you in advance.

Kind Regards.

Senator Anne Rustón