

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

26 May 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000271

Question Subject: Post market review of National Medical stockpile

Type of Question: Spoken

Hansard Page number: 20

Senator: Murray Watt

Question:

Senator WATT: So you're confident then that all of the masks that are being used in Australian hospitals and by health workers are safe?

Ms Edwards: We're confident that the rules apply and that we will investigate any suggestion that inappropriate masks are being used for therapeutic purposes.

CHAIR: Ms Edwards, did any fail the post-market review of what you purchased for the National Medical Stockpile? Were any found to be not of sufficient quality?

Ms Edwards: Not that I'm aware of. We would not have done post-market review of everything we've acquired yet but, in terms of what's been dispatched, I'll take on notice whether there was some element of inadequate product. But I'm not aware of any.

Answer:

All masks dispatched by the National Medical Stockpile (NMS) are included on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG). The Suppliers of these masks have self-certified to the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) that their products have met the requirements of the TGA to be listed on the ARTG.

As at 18 June 2020 the Department of Health is not aware of any inadequate products that have been supplied to the NMS.

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Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

**Inquiry into the Australian Government's response to the COVID-19
Pandemic**

26 May 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000279

Question Subject: Aged care mental health service funding

Type of Question: Spoken

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Question

Mr Roddam: Senator, were you referring to where funding is up to in terms of the package announced at the end of March in relation to mental health more generally, or were you referring to aged-care mental health?

Senator SIEWERT: I was particularly interested in aged care. I do want to go to the other packages as well, but in particular aged care in terms of how that is now being made available to residents given the COVID-19 problems.

Mr Roddam: Perhaps I could start with the recent announcements that have been made as part of the mental health packages that relate to older Australians, including those in aged care. On 29 March the \$74 million package included \$10 million for the Community Visitors Scheme to ensure that people both in residential aged care and in in-home aged care were able to maintain contact through telephone or digital services during the height of the pandemic at that time. Since that time and in the package announced recently, on 15 May, there's been a reprioritisation of funding and also additional funding in relation to the program provided by mental health nurses that the primary health networks provide. Now that face-to-face servicing is becoming more appropriate again, there's some funding provided there. The initial services in aged-care facilities through the PHNs, the residential aged-care facilities program, is ongoing and has been ongoing during that time, as well as the existing mental health nurses program through the primary health networks.

Senator SIEWERT: Do you have data on the take-up of that through the COVID-19 pandemic?

Mr Roddam: I'll see what I can provide on notice; we don't have it with us.

Answer:

Funding to support the delivery of mental health services for older Australians living in residential aged care facilities is provided through In-Reach Psychological Services for Residents of Residential Aged Care Facilities program.

This program is being incrementally rolled out. Services commenced in all Primary Health Network (PHN) regions from 1 January 2019, with full implementation scheduled by mid-2021.

Number of PHN commissioned services over the six months to April 2020

Month	Services delivered*
November 2019	1,823
December 2019	1,456
January 2020	1,469
February 2020	1,521
March 2020	1,456**
April 2020	859**

*The data only contains information for clients who have given consent for their data to be provided to the Department (approximately 85% of all clients), and therefore this data is an underestimate of actual activity.

**Data for March and April 2020 should be interpreted with caution as some PHNs may have a delay in uploading data from service providers.

Service delivery data is not available for the Improving Social Connectedness of Older Australians Pilot (Mental Health Nursing support for Australians over 75 years) program.