

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2010-11, 23 February 2011

Question: E11-075

OUTCOME 10: Health System Capacity and Quality

Topic: HEALTHCARE IDENTIFIERS SERVICE

Written Question on Notice

Senator Boyce asked:

When is it certain that the public will see demonstrable improvements in the quality and safety of their health care as a result of the introduction of the Health Identifier Service and what will be the quantum of those improvements?

Answer:

Healthcare identifiers will be adopted progressively by the health sector.

'Early adopter' projects are underway in several public health jurisdictions. Their purpose is to demonstrate how the identifiers should be adopted in order to support patient safety and privacy. The lessons learned from these projects will assist other healthcare organisations in their adoption of identifiers, including Wave 1 and 2 lead implementation sites for the personally controlled eHealth record (PCEHR).

Overseas eHealth implementations have informed estimations of the benefits that the use of healthcare identifiers will provide, among other benefits, up to:

- a 10% reduction of total time spent on messaging for healthcare providers; and
- a 15% reduction in unnecessary or duplicated tests.

Healthcare Identifiers are also a building block for the personally controlled eHealth record system which will place the individual at the centre of their own healthcare by enabling access to important pieces of health information when and where it is needed by individuals and their healthcare providers.

Individuals will be able to choose whether or not to have a PCEHR, and if they choose to participate, they will be able to set their own access controls. Using the PCEHR System, individuals will be able to access their own healthcare information and allow their healthcare providers to access and use this information to provide more coordinated and effective care for the individual.