

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2010-11, 23 February 2011

Question: E11-156

OUTCOME 5: Primary Care

Topic: MEDICARE LOCALS

Written Question on Notice

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

In relation to the proposed Medicare Locals, can DoHA provide assurances that under Medicare Locals and the GP Super Clinic program, rural and regional patients will not lose a single face-to-face after hours GP service? (Whereas Medicare Locals will facilitate after hours telephony and online GP advice and referral?)

Answer:

The Government will be providing significantly increased funding for after hours services, including face-to-face after hours services.

After hours services are currently funded in response to applications and/or on an entitlement basis, not as a result of analysis of local need as will be the case with Medicare Locals. Medicare Locals will decide at a local level which after hours services they will support and fund based on how well they meet the needs of the local community.

The GP Super Clinics program provides capital infrastructure funding to help build a stronger primary health care system. They provide additional services to meet local community needs and priorities. These may include additional GP, nursing and/or allied health services. Better integration and use of nursing and allied health services can free up GPs to offer additional appointments. The Australian Government does not own or operate GP Super Clinics. GP Super Clinics are required to operate with viable and sustainable business models so the services provided are determined by the GP Super Clinic operators.