

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2010-11, 23 February 2011

Question: E11-158

OUTCOME 5: Primary Care

Topic: MEDICARE LOCALS

Written Question on Notice

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

- a) Further to the previous estimates hearing, can DoHA provide any further update about stakeholder engagement for the after-hours phone triage system in rural, regional remote areas?
- b) Will this system be incorporated into the Medicare Local program as the primary model for the provision of after hours GP care?

Answer:

- a) The After Hours Primary Care Technical Working Group (TWG), which consists of representatives from key stakeholder organisations, held its second meeting on 17 February 2011 via teleconference. At this meeting TWG members were provided with a progress report by the Department about the after hours GP telephone advice service.

The TWG includes representatives from the: Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine; Rural Doctors' Association of Australia; Australian Medical Association; Australian General Practice Network; Royal Australian College of General Practitioners; National Association for Medical Deputising; and Consumers' Health Forum of Australia.

- b) While the after hours GP telephone advice service will provide additional support to health professionals and their patients, it will not replace face-to-face care for those who need it. However, Medicare Locals will be required to ensure that local services which they support are integrated with the after hours GP telephone advice service where possible.