

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2010-11, 23 February 2011

Question: E11-228

OUTCOME 4: Aged Care and Population Ageing

Topic: CONTINENCE AIDS PAYMENT SCHEME

Written Question on Notice

Senator Fifield asked:

- a) When did the Department become aware of the anomaly re DVA card holders not being eligible for continence aids?
- b) How many people were affected by this issue?
- c) How many DVA Blue Card holders are currently in the continence scheme?

Answer:

- a) The Continence Aids Payment Scheme (CAPS) was implemented on 1 July 2010. Since that time, the Department has been closely monitoring the implementation process and has been discussing a range of issues with Medicare Australia. In October 2010, the Department first began to investigate a potential anomaly in the CAPS Legislation regarding Department of Veterans' Affairs Pensioner Concession Card (DVA PCC) holders who were new applicants for the CAPS.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs contacted the Department in December 2010, after receiving a number of calls from DVA PCC holders who were concerned about their eligibility for the CAPS.

The first time a DVA PCC holder contacted either the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing or the Department to seek clarification about their eligibility for the CAPS was in January 2011.

- b) The eligibility anomaly only related to those DVA PCC holders who applied for the CAPS after 1 July 2010. Those DVA PCC holders who had previously received services under the CAAS were not affected.

In January 2011, Medicare Australia reported that 255 DVA PCC holders were registered as ineligible for the CAPS and were notified by letter about their ineligibility. Since the amendment to the Legislation, these applications have been processed and finalised; and the CAPS payment backdated to the date the application was received by Medicare Australia, to ensure that clients were not disadvantaged.

- c) It is not possible to determine how many DVA PCC holders were grandparented from the previous Continence Aids Assistance Scheme (CAAS) to the CAPS, as this data was not collected. However, Medicare Australia advises that as at the end of February 2011, there were 330 DVA PCC holders who have applied for the CAPS since July 2010.