

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

**Additional Estimates 2014 - 2015, 25 February 2015**

**Ref No:** SQ15-000274

**OUTCOME:** 3 - Access to Medical and Dental Services

**Topic:** Medicare Co-pay

**Type of Question:** Hansard Page 63, 25 February 2015

**Senator:** Di Natale, Richard

**Question:**

Senator Di Natale: All I am getting at is, if seven per cent of services for someone with a concession card are not bulk-billed, and you introduce these differential rebates so there is a five dollar reduction in the co-pay for a non-concessional patient, it will mean a higher out-of-pocket cost for that patient. Given that some concession card holders are subject to that at the moment, under this new policy those patients, those concession card holders, will not get the benefit of the five dollar reduction.

Mr Bowles: I think there are a couple of issues at play here. The policy is pretty clear that concession card holders are exempt. The seven per cent is in a completely different space. We would need to think about what the make-up of that is, because there are some services that are provided - like vaccination or something like that - that are not necessarily covered. It could be part of that. I do not know. I am just trying to work out the seven per cent issue. we can take on notice the seven per cent, but I do not think you can extrapolate from one to the other, because the policy is pretty clear that concession card holders are exempt from the five dollars.

**Answer:**

On 3 March 2015, the Minister for Health, the Hon Sussan Ley MP, announced that the \$5 rebate reduction and optional co-payment for GP consultations, scheduled to commence on 1 July 2015, would no longer proceed.