

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017, 1 March 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000204

OUTCOME: 2 - Health Access and Support Services

Topic: After Hours Medical Deputising Services

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Griff, Stirling

Question:

According to the SMH article and other news reports, after hours medical deputising services often rely on less experienced, or overseas trained doctors. Have there been any complaints to the department about this, and/ or any concerns raised by/to the department over the standard of care these doctors are providing?

Answer:

Around 70 per cent of urgent after-hours services are provided by ‘other medical practitioners’ – that is, providers other than vocationally registered (fellowed) general practitioners (GPs). The peak GP professional organisations are represented on the MBS Review Taskforce’s After-Hours Working Group: the Australian Medical Association (AMA), Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), Rural Doctors Association of Australia and Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine. These organisations have raised concerns about the ability of these practitioners to provide ‘urgent’ care unsupervised outside of a health facility and the impact of this situation on the quality of service. In addition the RACGP has reiterated these concerns in a position statement on *after-hours home visiting services in primary healthcare*.