

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017, 1 March 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000207

OUTCOME: 2 - Health Access and Support Services

Topic: After Hours Primary Health Care System

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Griff, Stirling

Question:

Professor Claire Jackson's 2014 review of the after hours primary health care system recommended that the Commonwealth work with stakeholders to examine the drivers behind the rapid escalation of these services and seek to improve the system (recommendation 4).

- a) Has this happened?
- b) If not, why not? Is any such consultation/review planned?
- c) If so, what have been the findings so far?

Answer:

- a) In 2014, Professor Claire Jackson was engaged by the Department to conduct an independent review of after hours primary health care. A number of recommendations resulted from the review. The initial recommendations implemented included a new model of after hours service provision commencing on 1 July 2015.

The new model of after hours service provision consists of:

- The Practice Incentive Program (PIP) After Hours Incentive which supports general practice to provide their patients with appropriate access to after hours care.
- Funding to all 31 PHNs to develop locally tailored innovative after hours solutions to meet the needs of local communities and improve service integration.
- An after hours GP advice and support line to support those who do not have access to face to face GP services in the after hours period. MBS Review Taskforce has yet to make recommendations to Government on urgent after-hours services.

The remaining recommendations progressed through existing policy reform mechanisms which include the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) Review Taskforce. The provision of urgent after-hours MBS services is currently being examined by the MBS Review Taskforce, in the context of its overall review of the MBS to align its services with contemporary, evidence-based best practice. Stakeholder consultation is an important part of this process.

- b) and c)
Please see response to part a).