

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

**Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017, 1 March 2017**

**Ref No:** SQ17-000209

**OUTCOME:** 2 - Health Access and Support Services

**Topic:** After Hours Services

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Senator:** Griff, Stirling

**Question:**

What audit and evaluation processes of after hours services does the department have in place?

**Answer:**

Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) Items

The Department routinely monitors the use of MBS items, including after hours items. This includes examining the patterns of growth and utilisation of services.

The MBS Review Taskforce is undertaking a review of all MBS items.

The Department's provider compliance area has been monitoring, providing education and investigating specific cases of suspected non-complaint claiming behaviour within the after hours services. Where incorrectly claimed benefits are identified, the Department seeks to recover funds.

Practice Incentives Program (PIP) – After Hours

The Department conducts audits of a selection of Practice Incentives Program (PIP) practices each year to ensure practices are meeting the requirements outlined in the guidelines. This may include a review of practice documentation. If requested, practices must provide evidence to support their eligibility and claims for payments.

Primary Health Network (PHN) After Hours Activities

A review of Primary Health Network (PHN) after hours activities was conducted in 2016 as part of the broader evaluation of the PHN program undertaken by Ernst and Young.

After Hours GP advice and support line

From 1 July 2015, Healthdirect Australia transitioned to a new more costed effective, better targeted after hours GP advice and support line to service patients who do not have access to local face to face GP service in the after hours period following a review conducted by Professor Claire Jackson in late 2014.