

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017, 1 March 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000465

OUTCOME: 2 - Health Access and Support Services

Topic: PHNs

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: O'Neill, Deborah

Question:

Is there anyone or a group within the Department responsible for coordinating the activities of the PHNs? Can the Department explain how State and Territory Governments currently engage with the PHNs?

Answer:

The Primary Health Networks (PHN) Branch in the Department of Health carries out a range of national support activities for PHNs. This includes:

- providing program leadership and guidance;
- setting national policy direction;
- developing and implementing the PHN Performance Framework and measures to encourage innovation and incentivise performance;
- making available national datasets and resources; and
- facilitating collaboration and knowledge sharing across PHNs.

PHNs are expected to develop collaborative working relationships at the local level with Local Hospital Networks (or their equivalent). There is also engagement at the state or territory level, where state and territory governments are engaging with PHNs directly, collectively or representatively, depending on the number of PHNs in a state or territory.

Bilateral agreements on coordinated care are also currently being negotiated between the Commonwealth and state and territory governments. These agreements are being negotiated in the context of Schedule 2 to the COAG Heads of Agreement between the Commonwealth and the states and territories on Public Hospital Funding. As PHNs will have involvement in implementing coordinated care activities that are being proposed in the bilateral agreements, the Department and state and territory government bodies are consulting with PHNs about how the bilateral agreement activities can link with PHNs' role and activities. Consideration of activity on coordinated commissioning between state and territory government bodies and PHNs is also occurring through the bilateral agreement discussions.