

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

BUDGET ESTIMATES - 2 JUNE 2011 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Professional Services Reviews

Question reference number: HSW 15

Senator: Back

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 22 July 2011

Number of pages: 1

Question:

- a) What is currently being done with these cases that have been referred since the PSR panels have been suspended?
- b) Is Medicare conducting its own investigations instead of referring them to the PSR?

Answer:

- a) Medicare Australia was advised that 39 cases, which were under review by the Professional Services Review at the time of the panel being suspended, were discontinued.

Medicare Australia established an expedited review process for checking each of these discontinued cases. If Medicare Australia identifies that concerns continue to exist, the health professionals will be referred to the Director of the Professional Services Review for consideration by the new panel once it is established.

Prior to referral to the Director of the Professional Services Review, health professionals will be given an opportunity to respond to Medicare Australia's concerns in writing, in order to address any concerns identified through the audit.

- b) No. Medicare Australia does not have the legal authority to determine whether a health professional has engaged in inappropriate practice. Only the Professional Services Review can make this determination. Medicare Australia's role is to identify potential inappropriate practice and refer any such matters for determination.

Medicare Australia has referred a further 48 cases to the Professional Services Review in the 2010-11 financial year (up to 1 May 2011).