

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

BUDGET ESTIMATES - 2 JUNE 2011 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Medicare Australia Fraud – Improper Billing in Public Hospitals

Question reference number: HS 21

Senator: Fierravanti-Wells

Type of question: Hansard page 86

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Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: Has there been any investigation of practitioners for improper billing located in a public hospital or outpatients' service?

Ms Golightly: Yes.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: Is that the sort of investigation you undertake?

Ms Golightly: We do get complaints from time to time on the tip-off or other lines that Mr Bridge was talking about earlier. Where we get those complaints, we do look into them.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: Do you have some statistics on the numbers of practitioners that have been investigated and how many have been directed to make a repayment, say, over recent years? I will leave that to whatever statistics you have.

Ms Golightly: Sure.

Answer:

Medicare Australia's information collection does not specifically identify whether practitioners that have been investigated for improper billing are located in public hospitals or outpatients' services.

However, this financial year (as at 30 April 2011), Medicare Australia had completed 1,357 audits and review cases in relation to incorrect billing under the Medicare program. This figure refers only to claiming against the Medicare Benefits Schedule. Of these, Medicare Australia has identified \$13,920,208 in incorrectly claimed Medicare Benefits Schedule payments made to 211 medical practitioners and medical practices.

In the 2009-10 financial year, Medicare Australia completed 2,365 audits and review cases in relation to medical practitioners. Of these, Medicare Australia identified \$7,879,181 in incorrectly claimed Medicare Benefits Schedule payments made to 477 medical practitioners.

In the 2008-09 financial year, Medicare Australia completed 2,794 audits and review cases in relation to medical practitioners. Of these, Medicare Australia identified \$4,546,599 in incorrectly claimed Medicare Benefits Schedule payments made to 719 medical practitioners.