

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

BUDGET ESTIMATES - 2 JUNE 2011 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Medicare Compliance

Question reference number: HS 23

Senator: Fierravanti-Wells

Type of question: Hansard page 87

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

Number of pages: 2

Question:

- a) **Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS:** I have some questions in relation to Medicare compliance. How many medical practitioners have been audited in relation to Medicare billing in the previous 12 months?

Mr Bridge: I can give you a breakdown for the 2009-10 year. This actually provides some more detail that was raised earlier. Some 2,365 audits of health professionals, which includes allied health professionals, specialist and GPs, were conducted in the 2009-10 financial year. That would be fraud investigations, practice reviews, possible PSR audits, the whole gamut.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: Was that figure for GPs and allied health?

Mr Bridge: All health professionals.

- b) **Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS:** Could you take on notice and provide me with a breakdown of the various categories, if you do not mind?

Mr Bridge: Yes.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: How many have been found to have billed improperly or made repayments? It is basically just looking at the nature of those audits. If any of them do relate to billing issues, could you provide whether those moneys were paid? Please take that on notice.

Ms Golightly: Yes.

Answer:

- a) In the 2010-11 financial year (as at 30 April 2011), Medicare Australia has completed 1,357 audits and review cases in relation to Medicare Benefits Schedule payments made to individual health professionals.
- b) In the 2009-10 financial year, Medicare Australia completed 3,594 audits and review cases across the health programs administered by Medicare Australia. The breakdown of the 2009-10 audit and review cases is presented in the table below.

Audited group	Completed audit and review cases	Individuals/entities for the recovery of benefits incorrectly paid	Amounts identified for recovery
Medical practitioners*	2,365	477	\$7,879,181
Pharmacies / pharmacists	273	100	\$1,842,051
Patients / members of the public	468	25	\$196,811
Practice Incentive Program recipients, medical practices and other	488	17	\$374,945
Total	3,594	619	\$10,292,988

* This includes general practitioners, specialists and allied health professionals

Medicare Australia is not able to provide a breakdown of monies repaid for debts raised in a specific financial year, as repayments received may relate to cases from previous financial years.