

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 30/31 May 2011

Question: E11-051

OUTCOME 4: Aged Care and Population Ageing

Topic: AGED CARE NETWORKS

Written Question on Notice

Senator Adams asked:

During the former Prime Minister's announcements on the national health reforms, he referred, on a number of occasions, to the creation of aged care networks to complement the hospital, primary and Medicare Local networks yet, in more recent times the aged care network idea seems to have disappeared.

Can the Department explain how, without an aged care network, aged care services are meant to develop a strategic working relationship with the other networks or do we assume, that aged care is simply the forgotten part of the health system?

Answer:

The Australian Government's One Stop Shop 2010 Budget initiative will help older people move seamlessly through the aged care system. This network will be closely aligned with Medicare Locals and Local Hospital Networks to ensure people's health needs are detected and addressed, with services coordinated across the health and aged care systems.

On 5 April 2011, the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, the Hon Mark Butler MP, announced the first step in implementing this One Stop Shop Budget initiative. From 1 July 2011, older Australians and their carers will find it easier to access and navigate the aged care system with the introduction of a single phone number identifying a single point of entry for people seeking information and access to aged care services. This will in time replace the range of numbers currently in operation.

Further aspects of this implementation will be considered in the context of the Government's response to the Final Report of the Productivity Commission *Caring for Older Australians* Inquiry.