

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016, 1 – 2 June 2015

Ref No: SQ15-000361

OUTCOME: 2 - Access to Pharmaceutical Services

Topic: cohealth

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Di Natale, Richard

Question:

Didn't the recent Mental Health Review recommend that pharmacists be better linked with GPs, so why isn't the decision to cease cohealth's alternative arrangement counter to efforts to streamline health care costs?

Answer:

The National Review of Mental Health Programmes and Services is a report to Government, not of Government, and while many of the Review recommendations offer positive ideas, they may require further investigation.

The Government decided to cease the cohealth's alternative arrangements because the pharmacy is not approved under section 90 of the *National Health Act 1953* to dispense medicines and receive dispensary remuneration through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) arrangements.

The Department of Health has offered to assist the pharmacy in making an application to the Australian Community Pharmacy Authority. If the application is successful, the pharmacy will be able to operate under the PBS arrangements, continue its integration with GP services and participate in the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement.