

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016, 1 - 2 June 2015

Ref No: SQ15-000610

OUTCOME: 3 - Access to Medical and Dental Services

Topic: Medicare Benefits Schedule

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Siewert, Rachel

Question:

What is the scope/Terms of Reference for the MBS Review Taskforce and Primary Health Care Advisory Group? Will the Review consider the introduction of new MBS Items to tackle endemic population health issues such as chronic disease? Is the intent to identify savings only?

Answer:

The Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) Review Taskforce (the Taskforce) will review the more than 5,500 services listed on the MBS to better align with contemporary clinical evidence. The focus of the Taskforce will be current MBS services, rather than new MBS services. Assessment of new MBS services will continue to be the role of the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC). Where the Taskforce identifies improvements to the MBS which would require new MBS items, discussions will be held with MSAC about the best approach to consider these recommendations. The Taskforce and MSAC will regularly engage about the MBS and health technology assessment issues.

The Primary Health Care Advisory Group (PHCAG) will investigate options to provide better care of people with complex and chronic conditions. The PHCAG will be looking for opportunities to reform primary healthcare to support better management of patients, particularly in the chronic and complex space. The PHCAG and Taskforce will discuss and examine MBS services relevant to primary care and the management of patients with chronic conditions. The Chair of PHCAG is also a member of the Taskforce (and vice versa).

There are no savings targets attached to the MBS review or the PHCAG process.

More information, including the membership and terms of reference, is available at: www.health.gov.au/healthiermedicare