

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017, 6 May 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000360

OUTCOME: 4 - Individual Health Benefits

Topic: Pathology and Diagnostic Imaging - MYEFO

Type of Question: Hansard Page 30, 6 May 2016

Senator: Gallagher, Katy

Question:

Senator GALLAGHER: From the responses today, and from the letter to the Senate, we can assume that the cuts to pathology and diagnostic imaging will come in on 1 July this year.

Mr Stuart: That is a matter for government.

Senator GALLAGHER: That is fine. Thank you. Just to confirm, from your point of view, senator representing the minister, as it stands today these cuts will come in on 1 July 2016.

Senator Nash: That is my understanding, as I indicated before, but I want to take that on notice to Minister Ley. Senator GALLAGHER: But the scrutiny process will occur after that.

Senator Nash: It might actually be best to refer to—there is a paragraph in that letter that might assist. It says: 'The timing of when a legislative instrument should be made by the Governor-General on the advice of the Federal Executive Council is a decision for government. The Senate will have the opportunity to scrutinise the legislative instrument, which has the effect of implementing the MYEFO bulk-billing incentive measure once it has been tabled.' As you would be well aware, there is that opportunity to do that.

Senator GALLAGHER: So we can disallow retrospectively, once the change has been—

Senator Nash: That is the normal process of disallowance, but, as I said—

Senator GALLAGHER: But the normal process of disallowance is that it would sit for the period of time before the date it comes into effect. What we have here is that it is going to come into effect, and then post the election we can look to disallow.

Senator Nash: As I have indicated, I will take it on notice and provide any further information that I can for you.

Answer:

The Health Insurance (Diagnostic Imaging Services Table) Regulation 2016 and the Health Insurance (Pathology Services Table) Regulation 2016 were made on 17 August 2016, and were tabled in both the House of Representatives and the Senate on 30 August 2016.

The 2015-16 MYEFO measure to change the bulk billing arrangements for diagnostic imaging and pathology was not included in these instruments. This MYEFO measure was superseded by the 'Coalition's plan for access to affordable pathology for all Australians' and the 'Coalition's plan for access to affordable diagnostic imaging for all Australians'.