

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2012-2013, 17 & 19 October 2012

Question: E12-002

OUTCOME 4: Aged Care and Population Ageing

Topic: EACH PACKAGE

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Number of pages: 2

Senator: Senator Williams

Question:

A person reassessed by ACAT is now eligible for an EACH D package which is \$8.90 a day (17 hours care per week). However, the service provider now claims travel from this package and the visits have been cut to one day a week, where previously on the short term care package they were receiving two services daily plus housekeeping.

- a) Can the Department clarify why a person in this situation is now worse off?
- b) Why are travel expenses taken from a package that is designed to help the client?

Answer:

- a) Extended Aged Care at Home Dementia (EACHD) packages provide individually planned and coordinated packages to assist elderly Australians to remain living at home for as long as possible.

A range of home care services can be provided under an EACHD package, such as assistance with personal care, care planning and case management, clinical care, meal preparation, support services, and strategies that specifically target the behaviours of concern and psychological symptoms associated with dementia. When a person first receives an EACHD package, the approved provider and the consumer will negotiate a Care Recipient Agreement outlining the services to be provided under the package.

There is not a standard number of hours of care under an EACHD package. The amount of care available to an individual will depend on the assessed care needs of the person, within the limit of the funding available. For EACHD packages, the Australian Government provides a subsidy amount of \$137.58 per day. The consumer may also be asked to pay a client contribution of up to \$8.90 per day (for people on the basic rate of pension).

The Care Recipient Agreement may be re-evaluated over time, particularly as a person's care needs change. Changes affecting existing care arrangements must be discussed between the approved provider and the consumer within the context of the total funding available for the package

- b) Approved providers are able to charge administrative fees to cover a range of overhead or operational costs, such as insurance, workers compensation, care co-ordination and travel costs, but these should be kept to a reasonable minimum.

If a consumer believes that the administrative costs being charged are excessive, as a first step, the consumer should discuss the matter with the approved provider.

A consumer can also seek assistance from an advocacy service funded under the Government's National Aged Care Advocacy Program. Advocacy services provide information to consumers about their rights and responsibilities when in receipt of Home Care Packages, including EACHD packages. Advocacy services are free, confidential and independent.

If a person is unable to resolve the issues or concerns with the approved provider, they may wish to contact the Aged Care Complaints Scheme. The Complaints Scheme is available to anyone who has a complaint or concern about an Australian Government-subsidised aged care service. Complaints can be made openly, anonymously or the person's name can be kept confidential.