

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

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

Question: E12-182

OUTCOME 2: Access to Pharmaceutical Services

Topic: CHEMOTHERAPY DRUGS

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Number of pages: 1

Senator: Senator Boyce

Question:

Are you aware that unlike other medicines, patients have to travel significant distances for chemotherapy treatment. What guarantees does the Government give that those patents in regional and remote areas can have timely and affordable access to these drugs post December 01?

Answer:

In the 2009-10 Budget, \$560 million was allocated to establish a network of best practice regional cancer centres and associated accommodation facilities, to help improve access and support for cancer patients in rural, regional and remote Australia, and to help close the gap in cancer outcomes between the city and the country.

In total, there are 24 regional cancer centre projects. These projects enable people with cancer to access the right care at the right time, as close as possible to home and family, irrespective of where they live or their social circumstances.

For cancer drugs patients pay no more than one PBS co-payment for the first prescription dispensed, with no additional co-payment for repeat prescriptions. That is, in 2013 a concession patient will pay \$5.90 and a general patient \$36.10 for the first injection/infusion of the drug, but not for the repeats. The Australian Government pays the full cost of cancer drugs supplied under the PBS. Pharmacists and hospitals cannot charge patients extra for PBS medicines.