

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 17 & 19 October 2012

Question: E12-201

OUTCOME 2: Access to Pharmaceutical Services

Topic: Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Number of pages: 3

Senator: Senator Di Natale

Question:

- a) Please provide a progress on the evaluation of the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement.
- b) When will the outcomes of evaluations undertaken under the Evaluation Framework be made publicly available?
- c) What stakeholders have been included in evaluations of Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement programs?
- d) What mechanisms are in place to audit Pharmacy Agreement expenditure to ensure funds are being used to deliver outcomes?

Answer:

- a) The Department of Health and Ageing in consultation with the Pharmacy Guild of Australia (the Guild) and the Fifth Agreement Programs Reference Group (the PRG) has developed an evaluation plan that sets out priorities and timeframes for evaluations. The evaluation plan is a working document that was last considered by the Agreement Consultative Committee (the ACC) on 18 July 2012 and the PRG on 10 August 2012. It is available on the Department's website.

The evaluation plan notes the following priorities and timelines for evaluations in 2011 and 2012:

- An Evaluation of the MedsCheck and Diabetes MedsCheck pilot was finalised on July 2012;
- The Benchmarking for the Medication Charts and Continued Dispensing initiatives commenced July 2012, and concluded in December 2012;
- Combined review of Fifth Agreement medication management programs scheduled to commence January 2013 and conclude July 2015 with preliminary outcomes reported by July 2014.
- Scoping documents for thematic reviews for 'Access' and 'Quality use of Medicines' are to be reconsidered on 20 November 2012 by the PRG. It is expected these reviews will commence early 2013 and conclude July 2015.
- PRG advised on 10 August 2012 that the 'Consumer Experience' thematic review would duplicate the 'Consumer Needs' Research and Development project.

- b) The PRG's role in relation to Fifth Agreement evaluations includes the provision of advice on interim and final evaluation findings. A summary of PRG meeting outcomes is made publicly available on the Department's website following on from PRG meetings and can be accessed through the following link:
<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/meeting-summary-6-10-aug-2012>

In addition, evaluation reports are provided to the PRG, and consistent with previous agreements, when completed are also made available on the Department's website. Some reviews including the Combined Medication Management Review and the thematic reviews for 'Access' and 'Quality Use of Medicines' are not due to conclude until the end of the Fifth Agreement in 2015, and it is not expected their final reports will be released publicly prior to this time. However, consideration will be given during the review period to the release of interim reports where feasible.

The Department receives and welcomes submissions from all stakeholders on the Fifth Agreement Evaluation Framework (the Framework) at any time. In November 2012, a combined unsolicited submission from stakeholders resulted in a constructive meeting between the Department and the Consumers Health Forum, Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers Australia, the Alcohol and Other Drugs Council of Australia, and the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia.

Feedback received from this meeting is currently being consolidated with other stakeholder feedback received through the Department's website for consideration in the first annual review of the Framework. It is expected an updated Framework will be publicly available on the Department's website by mid-2013. The updated Framework will also include broad timeframes for evaluations where known.

- c) The Framework identifies various stakeholders for each individual evaluation. The PRG has specified additional stakeholders to be consulted. The full list of stakeholders is provided below, but may be subject to further additions if appropriate:

Commonwealth Agencies (e.g. Department of Human Services, Department of Veterans' Affairs);	State and Territory governments in relation to Commonwealth funded Fifth Agreement programs, services and initiatives delivered through Community Pharmacy;
Pharmacy Guild of Australia;	Consumers;
Consumers Health Forum of Australia;	Pharmacy owners;
Community pharmacists;	Accredited pharmacists and relevant hospital practitioners;
Pharmaceutical Society of Australia;	Australian Association of Consultant Pharmacists;
Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia;	Council on the Ageing;
Carers Australia;	Mental Health Council of Australia;
National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation;	Australian Medical Association;
Australian Medicare Locals Alliance;	Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers Australia;
Fifth Agreement Programs Reference Group.	S94 private hospitals;
Australian Private Hospitals Association;	Prescribers;
National Prescribing Service;	National Rural Health Alliance;
National Aged Care Health Alliance;	Australian Council of Social Service;
Medicines Australia;	Diabetes Australia;
Chronic Illness Alliance; and	Cancer Voices Australia.

- d) With the exception of the Rural Pharmacy and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce programs, payments for Fifth Agreement programs are administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS). DHS has compliance frameworks in place to review and undertake audits to ensure services are delivered in accordance with approved program rules and guidelines. The workforce programs are funded through funding agreements and contracts between the Department and third parties. Therefore audit mechanisms include contractual obligations and deliverables being monitored by the Department and where necessary cost recovery being undertaken.

In addition, with regard to the Pharmacy Practice Incentives Program the Quality Care Pharmacy Program undertakes a regular two year re-accreditation cycle to ensure pharmacies continue to meet accreditation standards that are nationally recognised.