

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

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

Question: E12-210

OUTCOME 1: Population Health

Topic: COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINES

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Number of pages: 2

Senator: Senator Di Natale

Question:

- a) How many audits of complementary medicines have been undertaken by TGA officials in the last financial year, and what results were found regarding quality, labelling and content?
- b) Based on these results, is the regime regulating complementary medicine in Australia sufficient to protect consumers?
- c) How many new applications for listing of complementary medicines were received in the last financial year, and how many were accepted or rejected for listing?
- d) Does the TGA monitor, respond and address complaints regarding the efficacy of complementary medicines, and if so, can you please advise how many complaints have been received, what products or families of products were involved, as well as the action the TGA undertook during the last financial year?

Answer:

- a) In the 2011-12 financial year the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) completed 414 post listing compliance audits on complementary medicines. Of these, 221 medicines had regulatory issues which were raised with the sponsor. Data is only available for the last half of the financial year where approximately 60-70 per cent of the medicines with regulatory issues (113) were associated with labelling, efficacy or advertising issues, the remainder had manufacturing and/or quality issues.
- b) The TGA adopts a risk-based approach to regulation.
- c) The TGA received 1733 submissions for listing of new complementary medicines in the 2011-12 financial years all of which were included on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods.

d) Approximately 180 complaints about complementary medicines were received by the TGA in the financial year 2011-12. The products included a broad spectrum of medicines/families of medicines including fish oils, probiotics and multivitamins, and those for joint health, sleep assistance, weight loss and liver health.

All complaints are triaged upon receipt and actions undertaken were either further investigation or desk-based audit or regulatory action.