

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

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

Question: E12-237

OUTCOME 1: Population Health

Topic: SELECTING STAFF

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

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Senator: Senator Di Natale

Question:

In Budget Estimates Hearing Wednesday, 30 May 2012 in response to a question from Senator Fierravanti-Wells on the criteria used in selecting staff for training, Ms. Flynn replied that "the staff that I am talking about are intensivists, intensive care nurses and emergency department clinicians, so they come with these skills, of course."

- a) Why was recruitment restricted to intensivists?
- b) As the key objective of intensivists is to save lives, does the Authority agree that Aupatients families may perceive a conflict of interest between this function and seeking organ transplant donations? Did the Authority consider this perception when deciding on recruitment criteria?
- c) If the Authority did consider this perception and chose to ignore it, what were the Authority's reasons?
- d) As the key determinant for organ donation is brain death, was the recruitment of neurosurgeons considered?

Answer:

- a) As Ms Flynn's statement indicates, recruitment was not restricted to intensivists but was open to critical care doctors and nurses including emergency clinicians. As the national reform agenda was based on the Spanish model, similar types of staff were recruited as those employed in Spain. One of the main elements of the Spanish Model of Organ Donation and Transplantation is 'medical doctors, mainly critical care physicians, supported by nurses' (Source: Transplant International 24 (2011), Spanish experience as a leading country: what kind of measures are taken?, Matesanz et al). In addition, similar types of staff have been employed in other high performing countries.

b) Refer to a).

As the use of critical care specialists has been identified as a key component of many international organ donation models, and as there are high donation outcomes in these countries, it appears this perceived conflict of interest is not an impediment to successful donation outcomes.

c) Refer to b).

d) The Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Society Statement on Death and Organ Donation (Edition 3.1 2010) advises that the statement ‘is intended to provide a relevant and accessible resource for intensive care specialists (intensivists) and other health care workers involved in the determination of death.’. As brain death can be determined by health care workers other than intensivists, neurosurgeons were eligible to apply for donation specialist positions.