

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

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

Question: E12-287

OUTCOME 11: Mental Health

Topic: BETTER ACCESS

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Number of pages: 1

Senator: Senator Wright

Question:

I am also interested in the projected total cost for the Better Access program for this year from January to December. So it is not a financial year; it is a calendar year, but it accords with the period of time for which the change was in effect where there are 10 sessions and then six in exceptional circumstances. Presumably some projections were made about what the cost of that would be for the calendar year?

Answer:

As per response to Question on Notice E12-368, Additional Estimates 2011-2012, 15 February 2012 Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) related services for the Better Access program are paid for through 'Special appropriations - *Health Insurance Act 1973* - medical benefits'. The Better Access initiative is part of the Medicare Benefits Schedule which is a demand driven program provided for under this special appropriation. As a demand driven program, all eligible services that are clinically required will continue to be subsidised in line with the program's parameters.

The Department of Health and Ageing only publishes forward estimates for total MBS expenditure. The Department does not publish forward estimates for a subgroup of items or for specific programs such as Better Access.