

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO**

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

**Question: E12-359**

**OUTCOME 10: Health System Capacity and Quality**

**Topic: EHEALTH**

**Type of Question: Written Question on Notice**

**Number of pages: 2**

**Senator: Senator Boyce**

**Question:**

In the Department of Health and Ageing's Annual Report 2011-2012 under section 10.2 they said this about their National E-Health Leadership;

"During the year, the Department (in conjunction with state and territory governments) continued to support the National E-Health Transition Authority (NEHTA) to develop and maintain the specifications, infrastructure, software and systems required to support electronic health systems nationally. NEHTA's responsibilities encompass the delivery of key E-Health components, including;

- a) The Healthcare Identifiers (HI) service,
- b) The National Authentication Service for Health (NASH). [NOT COMPLETED-see earlier questions]
- c) Standard clinical terminologies and secure messaging to support the safe and secure electronic exchange of patient information.
- d) The Department participated in stakeholder discussions, led by NEHTA and Standards Australia, to inform the development of these national E-Health standards and focused on the promotion and use of E-Health standards, particularly the foundation standards for clinical terminology and secure messaging, to ensure efficient, effective and consistent implementation of E-Health nationally.

KPI: E- Health components implemented by the National E-Health Transition Authority (NEHTA) in accordance with funding agreement.

(2011-12 Reference Point: Funding agreement with NEHTA sets out deliverables linked to the 2011-12 NEHTA work program, agreed to by the Australian Government and states and territories and approved by the NEHTA Board.)

Result: Met.

However this is what COAG says about the 'KPI's /Indicators /Outcomes /Accountability of NEHTA in Chapter 10 of a recent report by the COAG Reform Council under the heading "Reporting on National Partnerships"

"National Partnerships must focus on accountability for outcomes and outputs, measured through clearly specified performance indicators (Commonwealth Treasury 2010b). The

National Partnership Agreement on E-Health does not articulate performance indicators or milestones that enable comparative reporting. The council encourages signatories to the National Partnership Agreement to follow IGA directives in developing comparable performance indicators and milestones that can be reported upon in future years." (National Healthcare Agreement: Performance report for 2009-10 P 141)

In the case of E-Health and the reporting systems of NEHTA and DOHA they had this to say;

- o "We cannot clearly link some activities to the outcomes and objectives of the National Healthcare Agreement."

- o "We cannot clearly mark progress on some commitments or analyse some information comparatively."

- o "The E-Health National Partnership do not have indicator specifications and/or the data is not available. "

- o [There are] "No common indicators or benchmarks" The COAG reform Council Chairman, Paul McClintock, also said earlier this year that inquiries by the Parliamentary Public Accounts and Audit Committee

had; "Raised questions about the appropriateness of accountability arrangements for the new funding agreements"

Given all of the above on what basis are you claiming your targets have been met when there is no way to test the performance of NEHTA or DOHA with regard to the progress of national E-Health implementation, there is no way to measure outcomes, and there are no KPI's?

**Answer:**

The Funding Agreement between the Commonwealth and the National E-Health Transition Authority (NEHTA) provides the principle tool of ensuring that the work completed by NEHTA meets the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) approved work program. NEHTA reports on the work completed to its Board on a quarterly basis. NEHTA released an annual report publicly on Monday 5 November 2012. This report provides details on the targets and work completed by NEHTA during 2011-12 financial year.

The scope of the National Partnership Agreement on eHealth (NPA) dealt largely with the implementation of the Healthcare Identifiers (HI) Service. The NPA included specific reporting requirements for the HI Service, including reports on HI Service operations and privacy compliance and enforcement.

In addition, in accordance with the requirements set out in the NPA, Elton Consulting Pty Ltd was selected to undertake an interim review of the NPA's effectiveness, efficiency and ongoing appropriateness toward achieving its objectives, outcomes and outputs. The review determined that the NPA has proved effective and appropriate in achieving the intentions of all jurisdictions in providing funding for the NEHTA and successfully establishing the HI Service.

Performance measurement for NEHTA and the Department of Health and Ageing were not addressed through the NPA, because it is a COAG document, which set out roles and responsibilities of all jurisdictions. The funding agreement in place between NEHTA and the Department specifies the roles and obligations of each agency. The Department's performance is identified in the 2011-12 Department of Health and Ageing Annual Report, which is measured against the information presented in the 2011-12 Health and Ageing Portfolio Budget Statements and the 2011-12 Health and Ageing Additional Estimates Statements.