

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016, 21 October 2015

Ref No: SQ15-000873

OUTCOME: 11 – Ageing and Aged Care

Topic: Regional Assessment Services

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Polley, Helen

- a) As of 1 July 2015, the Regional Assessment Services have been introduced. Is this just for referrals to access to the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)?
- b) Please outline the breakdown as to how many are face-to-face and how many are by phone only. How does this compare to the criteria for providing these services? That is, how many referrals are expected to be face-to-face?
- c) How much detail is meant to be provided in a referral?
- d) If a referral is inadequate, is the provider of the service reimbursed for the time taken to undertake an adequate assessment?
- e) Can the Department measure how many consumers are receiving either inadequate services or who miss out due to inadequacy of the assessment and referral services?

Answer:

- a) Yes. The Regional Assessment Service is responsible for conducting face-to-face assessments of older people seeking entry-level support at home, provided under the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP).
- b) All Regional Assessment Service assessments should be conducted face-to-face unless geographical isolation makes this impractical. In exceptional cases, alternative methods such as broadband internet or telephone services may be used to facilitate assessment.
- c) Referrals included sufficient information for an assessor or provider to understand the client's circumstances and reason for seeking support. The information is generally collected by the contact centre through screening questions.

Client Solution Specialists record responses to a broad and shallow set of questions during screening to facilitate the appropriate client pathway. The level of detail able to be provided by a client or their representative may limit the amount of information which can be collected at this stage. This information is displayed to assessors so that clients do not have to repeat their story.

This screening information is added to by the assessor undertaking a more detailed face to face assessment.

- d) Since 1 July 2015, the Regional Assessment Services assess a client's eligibility and need for services delivered under the CHSP except in Western Australia and Victoria. Referrals for service may then be made, in consultation with the client, to appropriate service providers. The service provider should reasonably respond to and monitor the needs of clients in their care.

Eligibility for care under the *Aged Care Act (1997)* remains unchanged with the expansion of My Aged Care services from July 2015.

If a provider has questions about the referral, they can discuss with the assessor, or contact centre, who made the referral.

- e) Over time, My Aged Care will become a rich source of information to inform future policy and service provision.

My Aged Care is an access pathway for aged care information, assessment and unbiased referral to service.

After conducting an assessment, assessors will develop a support plan with a client, considering client needs holistically, and recommending service(s). This may include Commonwealth-funded services or non-Commonwealth funded services.

The Commonwealth manages assessor and service performance through formal contracts and/or funding agreement arrangements. These are specific to the relevant programmes and outcomes.