

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017, 19 October 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000407

OUTCOME: 4 - Individual Health Benefits

Topic: Medicare Data

Type of Question: Hansard Page , 19 October 2016

Senator: Di Natale, Richard

Question:

Senator DI NATALE: We had this discussion about out-of-pocket costs, and I have the data from the Medicare statistics—table 1.5a—which has the MBS average patient contribution per service for out-of-hospital and patient billed services and then broad type of service: non-referred attendances—GP/VR GP. The information you gave me, Mr Stuart, was based on the GP services. Is that right? Mr Stuart: Yes. Senator DI NATALE: You gave me percentages over that period of time. Mr Stuart: That is correct. Senator DI NATALE: I suppose what I am looking at is the increase. If you look at, for example, the increase in out-of-pocket costs for the previous financial year, it was \$1.10, but in this financial year it has almost doubled. It is over \$2 on average. Is that correct? I just want to make sure I am reading this properly. Ms Jolly: Senator, we are going to need a copy of that table. Mr Bowles: Would you be able to table what you are looking at, and we can try to see if it actually matches anything of ours? Senator DI NATALE: Yes. I have a bit of scribble on it, but I am happy to table that. Mr Bowles: If we can have a look at that and see if we can make sense about where it has come from, we can come back to you on that. Senator DI NATALE: Yes. It is the Department of Health Medicare statistics. It is table 1.5a. Until we get that, I am quite happy to sit until we can come back to it.

Answer:

The Department of Health's Medicare statistics has multiple tables on out-of-pocket amounts by service type (known as Broad Types of Service) on worksheet 1.5a 'Patient OoP State'.

The table discussed in the question references out-of-pocket amounts for non-referred GP/VR GP attendances. This does not include Enhanced Primary Care (i.e. chronic disease management, mental health services) and other GP services. The published figures are in current dollars (not adjusted by CPI).

The Department of Health usually quotes figures that include all non-referred attendances in this context and comments on the percentage growth in the average patient contribution. Figures quoted by the Department are discussed in answer to Question on Notice SQ16-000395.