

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017, 19 October 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000476

OUTCOME: 4 - Individual Health Benefits

Topic: Excessive Surgeons' Fees - Out-of-Pocket

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Griff, Stirling

Question:

Noting that, generally, a patient is referred to a surgeon and has little, if any understanding in relation to charging practices, has the Department considered requiring disclosure such that patients are better informed of their choices and of surgeons' and medical proceduralists' charging practices? Would this approach result in a more even playing field in terms of price negotiations between surgeons and medical proceduralists and patients?

Answer:

Doctors are obliged to fully explain their fees and any applicable Medicare Benefits Schedule and private health insurance rebates to their patients. This is known as 'informed financial consent' and is set out in the Medical Board of Australia's (MBA) code of conduct for doctors.