

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017, 19 October 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000488

OUTCOME: 4 - Individual Health Benefits

Topic: Podiatric surgery

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Griff, Stirling

Question:

Can the Department explain why the patients of podiatric surgeons, who have accredited training, are recognised under Australian law as specialist surgeons and registered by AHPRA, cannot access MBS rebates for the services provided by those surgeons?

Answer:

Medicare benefits for surgical services, including foot and ankle surgery, are currently restricted to medical practitioners who are registered by the Medical Board of Australia (MBA). The MBA is the national body responsible for registering medical practitioners and approving accreditation standards for their training. Podiatric surgeons are not medical practitioners but podiatrists with additional training and are not registered by the MBA but the Podiatry Board of Australia.

Services provided by, podiatric surgeons have not been recommended by the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC), the internationally regarded independent panel of experts responsible for advising Government about the merits of services proposed for Medicare, based on assessment of the comparative evidence for safety, clinical effectiveness and cost effectiveness.

MSAC has twice considered the Australasian College of Podiatric Surgeons' submission to have podiatric surgeons allowed access to a limited range MBS items, used currently by orthopaedic surgeons and related to the surgical treatment of feet and ankles. MSAC did not support the submission.

MSAC's decision is set out in the public summary document, which is available at <http://www.msac.gov.au/internet/msac/publishing.nsf/Content/1344.1-public>