

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017, 19 October 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000522

OUTCOME: 2 - Health Access and Support Services

Topic: Mental Health Services

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Siewert, Rachel

Question:

Has the Government considered slowing down the timeframes for the PHNs to implement the programs transitioning into the flexible pool, so they can be implemented properly?

a) If not, why haven't they?

Answer:

No.

The timeframe for the implementation of the mental health flexible funding pool, including the transition of a range of programs to Primary Health Networks (PHNs) from 1 July 2016, included an opportunity for all PHNs to undertake planning and capacity building in 2015-16. All PHNs were provided with additional one-off operational funding in 2015-16 to enable them to undertake increased administration activities to 30 June 2016, in preparation for their expanded role in mental health and suicide prevention, and drug and alcohol treatment from July 2016.

The 2016-17 year is considered to be a transition year for PHNs, and continuity of services for individuals remains a key priority.

The Department of Health continues to work closely with all PHNs and other stakeholders in the implementation of the Australian Government's mental health reforms.