

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

**Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017, 19 October 2016**

**Ref No:** SQ16-000546

**OUTCOME:** 6 - Ageing and Aged Care

**Topic:** Community and Home Support Packages

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Senator:** Siewert, Rachel

**Question:**

- a) What public information has been made available to consumers about the changes to community and home support packages?
- b) What investment has been made in public awareness about the changes to accessing services and where to go if finding access complex?
- c) Has this investment been tailored to CALD communities?
- d) How has this information been communicated and has any assessment been made of the effectiveness of any public awareness promotions the Department has undertaken since 2015?

**Answer:**

- a) A range of information has been made available to the public on the changes to home care packages. In November 2016, the Department of Health will be writing to those consumers who have a current approval for home care to let them know about the changes and how they might be affected by the reforms. Further information on the home care reforms is also available on the Department's website and the My Aged Care website.
- b) The Department has made significant investment in raising awareness of all key stakeholders in relation to the reforms to home care. This investment includes the direct mail out (as per part a)), a series of webinars that are broadcast to public audiences, development of a range of targeted support materials and printed materials for service providers, consumers and assessors, and the My Aged Care contact centre. These materials include a focus on explaining the new arrangements for allocation of home care packages from February 2017.

My Aged Care is designed to take into account the identification and support of vulnerable people. Significant work is underway to ensure that the business and system processes of My Aged Care will improve access and information for consumers seeking home care packages. For example, the service finder will provide a range of detailed information for consumers to compare home care providers. Processes will be put in place to support vulnerable clients to access the system, including through Aged Care

Assessment Teams (ACATs) and access to an advocate to assist the consumer accessing services.

- c) Yes, the Department is working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) stakeholders to ensure translated materials are available, including the translation of these into colloquial/culturally acceptable language. Specifically, the Department is working with Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) to ensure messaging for the new home care reforms is well targeted. The Department will be providing funding of \$25,000 (GST excl.) to FECCA to assist with this work.
- d) From 1 July 2015, as part of the changes to aged care, home care package providers have been required to deliver all packages under a consumer directed care (CDC) model of care. The Department undertook public consultation between 22 April and 8 May 2015 on these legislative changes. The Department considered feedback from all stakeholders and worked closely with the National Aged Care Alliance's Home Care Packages Advisory Group to finalise the changes.

With the introduction of CDC, a number of initiatives were also put in place to support the sector including working with peak organisations such as Council of the Ageing, Aged and Community Services Australia and Leading Age Services Australia to provide support for a range of capacity building projects that directly dealt with issues such as business realignment, change management, cultural change, reform readiness, professional development, consumer engagement and training for the workforce.

In preparation for introducing Increasing Choice on 27 February 2017, the Department has used a phased approach to engage and educate stakeholders on the new home care reforms to provide the sector with the right support at the right time.

The communication of information about the home care reforms is leveraging a range of channels (each channel is linked to the stakeholder to support the information best reaching them). Channels include: written letters delivered to individuals and organisations, webinars (webcasts), email updates, electronic newsletters, printed brochures and specific training sessions for specific stakeholders. The Department has invested in a rolling research program to ascertain awareness levels of multiple stakeholders and uses the results to inform future activity. Sector support will continue for the new home care arrangements and engagement activities will extend past 27 February 2017 (where appropriate).