

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017, 19 October 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000732

OUTCOME: 6 - Ageing and Aged Care

Topic: Home Care Provider Approvals

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Polley, Helen

Question:

There are currently 53 mandatory criteria that must be considered in approving a provider to deliver home care services. The Increasing Choice in Home Care reform will see the process for becoming an approved provider streamlined and focussed on the ability of the organisation as a whole to deliver quality care. Can you detail how this new process will work and which of the 53 mandatory criteria will no longer need to be met? What safeguards are in place to prevent the reduction in mandatory assessment criteria leading to the approval of shonky providers? What protections do you have in place to prevent a 'race to the bottom' by providers attempting to maximise profit at the expense of care? Particularly in regional and rural communities where there may not be adequate competition, or in the provision of care for people with special needs?

Answer:

Increasing Choice in Home Care consolidates the suitability criteria for becoming an approved provider to six key areas. The standard required to be approved as an approved provider has not decreased. The changes strengthen the focus on the capacity of the applicant as a whole, including its systems and processes, to deliver quality care and services. There will be less focus on key personnel, who may change regularly.

The Australian Aged Care Quality Agency's (the Quality Agency) ability to assess approved providers' performance against the aged care standards will be strengthened. An approved provider must provide self-assessment information if requested by the Quality Agency. Following consideration of the self-assessment, the Quality Agency will determine whether further scrutiny is required. The Quality Agency will continue to assess the performance of the home care service against the Home Care Standards, at least once every three years, and assessment contacts may be made at any time.

The Department of Health continues to monitor service delivery and quality compliance for all providers, including those in rural and remote areas and/or those providing care for people with special needs. Where providers are not meeting the relevant standards, proportionate compliance action will be taken.