

Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Department of Human Services

Additional Estimates 2007-08 – February 2008



Question: HS112a-c

Outcome 1, Output 1.1

Topic: Medicare Australia – Medicare and PBS eligibility

Hansard Page/Written Question on Notice: Written

SENATOR COONAN asked on 22/02/2008:

- HS112a: What mechanisms does Medicare Australia have in place to authenticate identity to assess eligibility to receive Medicare and Pharmaceutical benefits where a customer does not have their card with them?
- HS112b: What mechanisms does Medicare Australia have in place to authenticate identity to assess eligibility to receive Medicare and Pharmaceutical benefits where a customer has lost their card or had it stolen?
- HS112c: What mechanisms does Medicare Australia have in place to authenticate identity to assess eligibility to receive Medicare and Pharmaceutical benefits where a customer provides reliable authentication by telephone?

Answer:

HS112a: When a claimant presents at a Medicare office wishing to make a claim without their Medicare card the Service Officer will undertake a security check to verify their identity. The check compares the claimant's responses with personal information held in the Medicare enrolment database.

Where the security check fails, identification documents must be provided, for example, a driver's licence or a passport.

When filling a prescription for a PBS listed medicine at a Pharmacy, a person needs to provide their Medicare card or Medicare card details, along with any concession card to obtain the prescription at the subsidised price.

If a customer is unable to provide their Medicare card or number upon request at the pharmacy, they may have to pay full price for their medicines. However, if the person has had a prescription filled at the pharmacy before, they may have their Medicare card number stored on the pharmacy software and the pharmacy can use this. The pharmacist can also call 132290 to obtain the Medicare number for the person as written on the prescription.

Where a customer has paid full price for their medicines, they may seek a refund from Medicare Australia of the difference between the cost of the prescription and the co-payment (less any pharmacy charges).

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- HS112b: Once a person reports their card lost or stolen, further claiming against that card number is not allowed. The person is issued with a new card to allow further Medicare claiming. As part of the process to report the card lost or stolen and be issued with a new card, the person will either have to meet the requirements of a security check or provide identification documents to ensure Medicare Australia is dealing with the correct person.
- HS112c: The same security check is used when a member of the public contacts Medicare Australia by telephone in respect to claiming Medicare and PBS benefits. The claimant must confirm personal details, such as date of birth and postal address, held on their Medicare enrolment file. If the caller does not pass the security check, and their identity is not confirmed, they are advised to lodge their claim via another channel, such as visiting a Medicare office.