

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: HS116

Outcome 1 Output 1.1

Topic: Medicare Australia – Access Card

Hansard Page/Written Question on Notice: Written

SENATOR COONAN on 22/2/2008:

What are the current risks of persons being able to obtain Medicare and PBS benefits to which they are not entitled, that the Access Card was designed to reduce?

Answer:

Given the universality of the Medicare and PBS programs, the potential for fraud is low. Prior to the implementation of PBS Online, there was a risk that persons may seek to claim concessional entitlement to PBS medicines when their eligibility had expired. This risk has been eliminated as pharmacies have access to real-time concessional entitlement information through PBS online claiming. There is a residual risk that fraudulent access to Medicare and PBS could occur where a temporary visitor to Australia, who is not eligible, steals or borrows a Medicare card and presents as the person on the card.

There is also the potential for a person to establish a false identity and false claims to fraudulently obtain benefits. The number of such incidents is low.