

Senate Finance and Public Administration Standing Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 20 October 2009 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Compliance

Question reference number: HS63 (a-b)

Senator: Bernardi

Type of question: *Written*

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 4 December 2009

Number of pages: 1

Question:

- a) How do Medicare officers determine if an invoice is legitimate?
- b) Has Medicare ever considered having a barcode or marking placed on providers' invoices to limit the incidences of fraud?

Answer:

- a) All Medicare service officers who have responsibility for processing patient invoices undertake mandatory training. This training includes the essential details required to successfully process an invoice (account and/or receipt) for a Medicare benefit, as required under Section 19(6) of the *Health Insurance Act 1973*.

Fraud awareness is also a compulsory component of this training. Where service officers have concerns about any aspect of an invoice, it is procedure to contact the doctor's surgery to verify the service details as required.

Where a service officer's experience and/or knowledge of providers, provider stationery and claiming patterns leads them to suspect the validity of an invoice, it is standard procedure to alert Medicare Australia's internal fraud hotline.

- b) As medical invoices do not originate in Medicare Australia, and it is up to individual medical practitioners as to what software they use to produce the invoices, the use of barcodes or markings has not been considered.