

# Senate Finance and Public Administration Standing Committee

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

### Human Services Portfolio

**Topic:** Medicare Easyclaim

**Question reference number:** HS71 (a-f)

**Senator:** Scullion

**Type of question:** *Written*

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

**Number of pages:** 2

**Question:**

- a) What is the break down of Medicare claims by method? (ie Easy Claim, Medicare office, telephone, mail.)
- b) What is the total expense to date of for the Medicare Easy Claim – Increasing Take up program?
- c) What was the cost of the promotion campaign for Medicare Easy claim where every Medicare card holder was sent information?
- d) What other expenses such as print and electronic advertising and promotional material have been incurred on promoting Medicare Easy Claim?
- e) What has been the increase in Medicare Easy Claim over the past 12 months?
- f) What is the increase or decrease in the number of Medicare claims processed through Medicare offices?

**Answer:**

- a) Approximately 74 per cent of Medicare services are bulk billed. Providers claim the vast majority of these services electronically utilising the Medicare Online (87 per cent) and Medicare Easyclaim (three per cent) channels. The remaining claims are posted or forwarded to Medicare Australia where they are scanned and processed by Medicare Service Officers.

Practices using a Medicare Easyclaim solution that is integrated with their practice management software are now transmitting almost 70 per cent of their patient claims electronically.

Services claimed by patients represent approximately 26 per cent of total services. The main channels for lodgement of patient claims are:

- electronically, using the Medicare Online (18.1 per cent) and Medicare Easyclaim (5.6 per cent) channels;
  - face to face in a Medicare Office (52.1 per cent); and
  - paper/phone claims (24.2 per cent).
- b) The budget measure Medicare Easyclaim - increasing take-up for 2008–09 was \$7.99 million. The total spending was \$6.52 million.
- c) The direct mail to 7.2 million Medicare cardholders was part of a broader communications campaign during May and June 2009 to promote Medicare electronic claiming (including Medicare Online, Medicare Easyclaim and ECLIPSE) which cost \$7.9 million. The direct mail to these cardholders cost \$4.1 million.
- d) Other expenses included in the \$7.9 million are:
- media advertising in both press and on radio (approximately \$2 million); and
  - consultants (creative and market research), public relations, champion events, and other costs associated with development and production printed materials (approximately \$1.8 million).
- e) Bulk bill services and patient claim services lodged via the Medicare Easyclaim channel have increased by 3.4 percentage points (1.7 per cent to 5.1 per cent) and 3.8 percentage points (1.8 per cent to 5.6 per cent) respectively from October 2008 to October 2009. Over the same period, bulk bill services and patient claim services lodged via the Medicare Online channel have increased by 1.8 percentage points (82.8 per cent to 84.6 per cent) and 5.4 percentage points (12.7 per cent to 18.1 per cent) respectively from October 2008 to October 2009.
- f) The number of Medicare patient claimed services processed during October 2008 was 5 145 241 of which 3 535 585 (68.7 per cent) were paid at the counter in Medicare offices. For the month of October 2009, 5 220 259 patient claim services were processed of which 2 721 631 (52.1 per cent) were paid at the counter in Medicare offices.