

During today's Committee hearing relating to the National Health Amendment (Pharmaceutical and Other Benefits - Cost Recovery) Bill 2008, the Committee Chair requested that the Guild provide further information relating to some statistics that were referred to while giving evidence.

The Guild receives data, on a monthly basis, from the Department of Health & Ageing (DoHA) which shows the total number of prescriptions that have been claimed for under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (RPBS) in the previous month, for each drug listed.

During evidence, the Guild stated that 63% of the molecules listed on the PBS and/or RPBS were dispensed less than once per month per pharmacy, on average. This estimate was arrived at using the DoHA data, aggregated across the 12 months to June 2008. Of the 770 unique drug names (molecules) in the data, 483 (63%) recorded less than 60,000 prescriptions dispensed over this period. There are approximately 5,000 community pharmacies in Australia, so 60,000 prescriptions represents approximately one per month per pharmacy.

These 483 low volume drugs accounted for, in total, approximately 5.7 million prescriptions in the 12 months to June 2008, out of a total volume of 185.6 million for all drugs. 5.7 million prescriptions represents 3.1% of the total. As stated in evidence, 63% of molecules account for just 3% of prescription volume, with the other 37% of molecules accounting for 97% of the volume.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Regards,

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