

Dear Senate Inquiry,

I would like to address the following terms of reference for the senate inquiry on the Commonwealth Funding and Administration of Mental Health Services

Term of Reference (b iv): The impact of changes to the number of allied mental health treatment services for patients with mild or moderate mental illness under the Medicare Benefits Schedule. As the mother of a son whose overwhelming emotional issues were causing such stress in his school life and family life, not to mention the ripple effect on the rest of the family; that on two occasions he made attempts to hang himself. If he had not been able to see his clinical psychologist every few weeks as well as phone contact and referrals, I hate to think what may have happened. I certainly believe he would have ended up in a self destructive pattern and potentially an acute psychiatric admission. I believe it is short-sighted to reduce the number of available sessions to 10, this would not have seen us through this crisis and the cost of care for hospital admission is much more expensive for the government. Thankfully we have been able to avoid that and as a result of the care and expertise of the clinical psychologist, my son is on a healthier and safer emotional path. He back at school and showing signs of making good decisions in his life.

Term of Reference (e i): The two-tiered Medicare rebate system for psychologists. My son needed to see a clinical psychologist with educational expertise in mental health. He required informed risk assessment and treatment that would not have been available from the educational level of a psychologist.

Kind Regards