

27 July 2011

Re: Senate Inquiry into Mental Health Services

Dear Sir or Madam

I am writing to you to voice my grave concerns regarding your inquiry into funding of mental health services in Australia.

I am particularly opposed to your "rationalisation" of mental health services. Can you please explain to the Australian people why you believe that cutting psychology treatment sessions from 12 (+6) to 10 per year (maximum) under the Better Access program, will result in significant reduction in psychological distress and improve functioning? There is no evidence that Cognitive Behavioural Therapy is effective in less than 10 sessions, particularly for people with chronic and severe mental illness, whom we see in our outpatient clinics, who do not qualify for treatment in the public mental health systems.

Getting GPs to undertake more mental health assessments, for which they have or have not undertaken professional training to do, may mean that GPs may abandon providing assistance and referrals for mental health problems altogether. Why change a system that was working well?

Yours truly,

(name supplied)