

To whom it may concern,

I would like to encourage the Federal Government to continue with the current number of yearly appointments (18) with a psychologist under the Better Access to Mental Health scheme. I would like to encourage the Federal Government to increase this from 18 to at least 26 (giving one appt per fortnight) as many mental health issues do not resolve in 18 sessions.

I would suggest that those people who access the scheme are probably those who cannot afford to pay for private therapy in its entirety and that it is likely these same group of people may also be suffering from chronic rather than acute problems, only accessing the scheme when attendance to therapy has become unavoidable.

I work for Child and Youth Mental Health, part of the QHealth Mental Health service. We often recommend, for those clients who do not meet our eligibility criteria, attending their GP to be referred to a psychologist through this scheme. We see clients with severe and complex mental health presentations. However, those people who may not meet our eligibility criteria (needed to ensure we can meet demand) often require ongoing intervention; 10 sessions would certainly only be a beginning for many of these people.

Cheers