

**SUBMISSION**

Date: August 4, 2011  
From: Assoc Professor Robyn Young

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I have tried to log into the web to make a submission but have been unable. I suspect the cite may be overwhelmed by people as outraged as I am regarding the proposed changes to Medicare. Alternatively it is an example of the inadequate attention given to yet another aspect of mental health. I am amazed by the proposed reduction to accessing allied health. I engage in private practice one afternoon a week. On those afternoons I often see victims of crime and trauma, or young adolescents on the brink. Two of my clients lost their year old grandson years ago. They can't afford to pay a fee and twice now I have received calls from the grandfather on the brink of suicide. I have been there for the family since their grandson was murdered. I see them every 2-3 weeks. They have had their allocated visits for this year and I now see them at no charge. I cannot tell them or any other clients that I can't see them as they have had their visits for the year and I will see them when the next MHCP can be completed. Would you say to a person who has asthma, you've had your allocated visits for the year, come back in 6 months so we can activate a new plan? It is clear that mental health is not seen as a real health issue. Further, despite a minimum of 6 years of study, or 9 in my case, plus laborious professional development requirements, our profession depends on GPs with limited mental health experience, to tell us if a client needs to be consulted. The system is appalling. Given suicide is one of the leading causes of death among young adolescent males, when is the government going to realise that appropriate mental health care can actually save the community as a whole not to mention, the individuals who seek our help. Incidentally, the young man who murdered my client's grandson had called ACIS the night of the murder saying he was delusional and was told to go and rest. He then called an ambulance and was told they couldn't come as he had an outstanding bill. As a result a year old is dead and I am trying to pick up the pieces but without the support of Medicare.

Sincerely,

Robyn Young