

Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee inquiry into Commonwealth Funding and Administration of Mental Health Services (submissions close Friday Aug 5 2011)

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
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Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
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3/8/2011

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to address the following terms of reference regarding the Government's 2011-2012 changes to mental health.

- (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;

It is government policy to improve accessibility to mental health treatment. A reduction in the number of psychologists' treatment services available to individuals with moderate mental health issues appears contrary to this policy.

- (i) the two-tiered Medicare rebate system for psychologists,

I have completed post-graduate training in clinical psychology. A factor in the decision to upgrade my qualifications and maintain my continuing professional development requirements was the higher Medicare rebate for clinical psychologists. I believe that my training and continuing professional development has resulted in better quality services for my patients. Thus, the two tier system appears to be an effective incentive for psychologists' to improve their training and for patients to have access to higher quality treatment.

Regards,

Dr Mariana Macphail
D.Clin.Psych., M.Sc., B.Psych.
Clinical Psychologist

Cc: *the Minister for Mental Health, Mark Butler* ministerbutler@health.gov.au