

To Whom It May Concern

My psychologist I currently see has requested I write an email regarding the proposed cut in Psychology consultations under Medicare.

I have been with my current psychologist for just over 12 months now. I have, as of last week, now used up all of my sessions I am able to receive under Medicare for this year. At present, thankfully, I am able to hold a part time job (albeit with difficulties) and I am able to afford fortnightly sessions until the end of the year- if I was not in a position to do this, my options would be to go without any further sessions until next year (something which would see my current mental state decline further, and undo any progress I have managed to make), or go back to the public mental health system, which to me, means starting all over again with someone new and having to retell my "history" again (an incredibly painful and difficult option, which I do not want to have to go through) . This is not an option to me-the psychologist I see is the 14th person (yes, fourteen, not a typo) I have been to see regarding my mental health issues (depression/anxiety/personality disorder) in the past 11 years. I have had depression since I was 16 years old. I have met an incredible number of useless people (public/private/attached to schools) who are meant to be there to help, yet made my condition worse.

Currently in my sessions with my psychologist, while I have not made a lot of progress, I now feel comfortable in discussing some of my more difficult issues, and I am able to trust him, which is the most important thing to me for me to be able to start making progress. It has taken me 12 months to be able to do this.

Reducing the number of psychological consultations available would just be hurting the people that need them most- 10 sessions does not stretch very far. If I stretch it out to 2 sessions a month, that will cover me for 5 months, but if I reach crisis point (which does happen) and need to make emergency appointments, it is reduced even further.

I would like to ask that the current number of sessions available under Medicare be kept, or better still, increased.

My mental health issues are not something I choose to live with, I have no option but to live with them and try to learn to manage them the best I can- something I cannot do without help.

Yours Faithfully