

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the recent proposed changes to the Medicare system for Psychologists. I work in private practice in Ipswich and Brisbane, mainly operating under a bulk billing system due to many of the people in the areas I work not being able to afford a gap of any kind and at times are even limited by how frequently they can attend due to the cost of fuel to travel to me, which has resulted in me traveling to meet them at their homes or an area closer to where they live. I find that for the majority of the clients I work with they require 12-18 sessions due to the severity of their mental health issues. I fear that a system which reduces the number of sessions to below this will mean we are putting numerous people at higher risk by building their rapport and gaining their trust to be point where they open up their deepest wounds and then not being able to help them process through these and develop new skills and insights as we will run out of sessions that we are able to offer them. In many instances, if we are not able to see someone through to the end of their journey then we are better to never expose their wounds, as walking around with open wounds and no support to heal these tends to put people at higher risk of depression, self harm and suicidal ideation. I fear that this will then put a higher demand on psychiatrist who are already showing long waiting times that are inappropriate for people at high risk.

Regards,

Danielle Goodridge  
Psychologist