

Dear Senate Members,

I write to you regarding the recent Senate Community Affairs committee decision on taking away the two-tiered Medicare rebate system. As you are aware, registered psychologists who meet the requirements are eligible for the higher rebate compared with non-eligible psychologists. The training requirements include a Masters Degree in Clinical Psychology and/or its equivalent. Psychologists who have not completed a Masters Program in Clinical Psychology, usually have completed 4 years at university and then 2 years supervised practice. The difference between a Masters Program and the latter is that a University Degree focuses solely on evidence based treatments for mental health disorders. I am in no way saying that Clinical Psychologists are superior to non-clinical psychologists. And I believe that some four year trained psychologists, should be entitled to receive the higher rebate. This personally, is the problem, not having a two tiered system, but because it has been so difficult for non clinical psychologist to receive eligibility. The rules around eligibility to clinical equivalence has been the problem. The Australian Psychological Society has been given the authority to oversee this, and has made the rules so difficult for non-clinical psychologists to receive endorsement.

My recommendation is therefore to not abolish the two tiered rebate system, but to review the process for obtaining endorsement.

Kind Regards,

Mary Ticinovic

Clinical Psychologist
Canterbury Community Mental Health Service
Rehabilitation Team