



Senate Community Affairs Committee  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Australia

Dear Senators

### **Inclusion of non-registered professionals in the Health identifier Scheme**

As social work is not among nationally registered professions, the AASW would like to be clear about how, in relation to the assignment of health care identifiers,

- Sole trader social workers; and
- Social workers not working for a health care provider

will be informed and provided with a healthcare identifier and any subsequent training, equipment, software or allowances that will enable them to correctly comply with the system. I raised these questions at an e-health national forum late last year but the documents provided since have not answered the questions. I will expand on these questions below.

Over 1000 social workers are in private practice. Most work as sole traders, receiving referrals from GPs and providing mental health therapeutic services. Others are contracted by a range of Federal, State and Territory agencies such as DVA, Workcover authorities and Family Court. Their patients often receive treatment from other health care provider organisations, such as public hospitals, GPs, psychologists, public mental health settings and / or community health organisations. In order for the scheme to operate effectively, these social workers will need to be issued with a provider identifier, both as a health care provider and as an individual practitioner. Will these social workers receive information from Medicare, or elsewhere, on how to apply for a health care provider identifier? If not, how will they be made aware of the scheme so they can participate?

A great number of social workers work outside of healthcare provider organisations. Examples include those social workers in Centrelink, working for the Family Court or those in not-for-profit welfare organisations. Over the course of their career they may well find work as healthcare providers at a future date. Is it the intention of the Ministerial Council to provide these social workers with a provider identifier? If not, will their future employers have the responsibility to apply for an identifier at a future date?

The AASW is the only professional body for social workers in Australia and is able to assist with the provision of identifiers to social workers, if requested.

Yours sincerely

Kandie Allen-Kelly

Chief Executive

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