

Community Affairs, Committee (SEN)
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY REBATES UNDER MEDICARE

Dear Senator,

I would like to add my support for the ongoing Medicare rebates offered for psychology and clinical psychology clients.

I am a psychologist in private practice who completed my training in 1992 with the 4 plus 2 pathway. However, I am also in the process of completing the final stage of my doctorate in psychology (with the final marking of my thesis due soon).

Over the years I have offered supervision to conditionally registered psychologists who have been completing both pathways of study (i.e., 4 plus 2; or Masters or higher degree). It should be noted that in all of my work settings (Mental Health and Schools) there has been no real difference in the ability of these conditionally registered psychologists, although those completing a 4 plus 2 have often had more practical experience. In fact, within community settings professionals often do not distinguish between the various pathways of qualification (e.g., GP's) as this would be akin to comparing the results of students from different university courses or subjects.

Hence, I support a two tier approach to psychology services, recognising that psychology and clinical psychology services are able to offer evidence based assessment and therapy individually designed to meet the therapy needs of people with mental health problems. Whilst specialised training at a post graduate level enables clinical psychologists to competently manage severe mental health problems, these specialised services are not always available to the community for various reasons.

Subsequently there is a significant need within the community for psychology services as well as clinical psychology services to cater for the moderate to severe mental health problems encountered. In fact, the majority of clients seen in my private practice experience moderate to severe mental health problems, rather than mild issues of concern. In regional and rural areas, this need is more obvious.

Hence, I would urge you to maintain Medicare rebates for psychology and clinical psychology services.

Thank you for your consideration.

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Psychologist - Guidance Counsellor