

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

5/7/11

To whom it may concern,

**Re: Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee inquiry into
Commonwealth Funding and Administration of Mental Health Services**

I would like to feedback on the cancellation of the two tiered Medicare rebate system for psychology services. I am a clinical psychologist worked in public settings for almost 10 years before setting up my private practice recently. I have worked with general psychologists, clinical psychologists, and psychologists with other specialties over the years. It strikes me how differences the work quality psychologists perform with different educational qualifications. Focus on the comparison between clinical psychologists and general psychologists, I found that clinical psychologists are better in a number of areas such as case formulation, cognitive assessment, complex case treatment, longer term psychotherapy and mental health assessment and treatment. Clinical psychologists also have better knowledge and skills across age spectrum because the post-graduate coursework as well as placement ensure students gain knowledge across life span before practising as a clinical psychologist.

To become a clinical psychologist, I have studied 2 years bachelor and honour degree in psychology with the exemption from my previous 4 year bachelor degree in related health course. I then studied 2 years Mater Degree in Clinical Psychology, and completed all coursework required in Doctorate Course in 1 year before upgrading to a PhD 3 years ago. I am still completing my PhD while keeping a full-time job and running a clinic. This year is my 12th year studying in university. In addition, I have spent much time, effort, and money to gain supervision required for the endorsement and maintenance of the clinical college membership. It is an insult and extremely unfair to disregard the differences between general psychologists and clinical psychologists. As a matter of fact, in my private practice, a lot of referrals from GP, psychiatrists and other health professionals are specifically referred to clinical psychologists instead of general psychologists because of the recognition of our better ability in doing more thorough assessment and treating more complex cases.

I sincerely wish that the two tiered Medicare system can be maintained. I could just see how we could potentially lose our clinical psychologists to overseas workforce otherwise.