

Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs

PO Box 6100

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

Australia

3/8/11

**Re: Commonwealth Funding and Administration of Mental Health Services**

I am an endorsed Counselling Psychologist and wish to raise my concerns as to the clear discrimination between clinical psychologists and counselling psychologists under the Medicare system. I have a Masters in Counselling, have had the required 2 years of supervised practice, had extensive training in assessment, diagnosis, psychotherapy and psychopharmacology and have over 14 years of experience providing psychological therapy services for a broad range of patients. I would also like to point out that when I attended Macquarie University common subjects were taken with the clinical students. Furthermore, many of the workshops/seminars conducted for ongoing professional development attract specialist points in order to maintain membership of the APS Colleges and are attended, in common, by clinical and counselling psychologists.

As an endorsed Counselling Psychologist why is it that I do not receive recognition of my specialist's qualifications, under Medicare, yet I am treating the same highly prevalent disorders such as anxiety and depression as a clinical psychologist. Why is that clients /patients who wish to consult with me have to incur a greater out of pocket expense or why is it that I have to receive approximately \$40.00 less as a rebate if a bulk bill consult is to take place? I do not believe that the current

rebate for endorsed Counselling Psychologists is consistent with their qualifications, training and competencies, and request that this discriminatory policy be removed.

Yours sincerely,

*V. Herrera*

**Vinicio Herrera**

**Counselling Psychologist**

**Member College of Counselling Psychologists**