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RE: Senate Inquiry into Mental Health Funding

As a member of the Australian Psychological Society's College of Counselling Psychologists with Specialist Endorsement through the Australian Health Practitioners Agency (AHPRA), I am writing to express my concern in two areas: changes to the Medicare Benefits Schedule and the two tier rebate system.

Changes to MBS

Reducing the number of sessions available to patients from 18 (in exceptional circumstances) to a limit of 10, increases the risk of relapse, which can leave people more vulnerable and discouraged about the effectiveness of psychological treatment. Patients currently being seen under the 12 plus 6 allowance, are being treated successfully with long term gains in mind.

Two Tier System

Training in Counselling Psychology *specifically focuses upon* providing assessment, diagnosis and psychological therapy for mental health disorders. To only consider Clinical Psychologists for this work limits client access to the high quality treatment we provide in *our area of expertise*.

Additionally, the two tier system has created a divide in the way Clinical and Counselling Psychologists are viewed by General Practitioners, Psychiatrists and the public, with Clinicals deemed more specialized due to the higher rebate their clients receive.

Yours sincerely,

Christine Carter
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