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Ms Christine McDonald  
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Dear Ms McDonald

**Inquiry into Health Insurance Amendment (Medicare Funding for Certain Types of Abortion) Bill 2013**

The AMA does not support the passage of the *Health Insurance Amendment (Medicare Funding for Certain Types of Abortion) Bill 2013* (the Bill).

The Medicare benefits arrangements should not be used to address social issues.

If the Australian Parliament is inclined to prevent gender-biased sex selection as per the interagency statement by the OHCHR, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women and WHO referred to in the explanatory memorandum for the Bill, it should do so in a more direct and specific way.

The interagency statement states at page 7:

It is clear that, while intending to effect a common good, restrictive laws and policies implemented in isolation from efforts to change social norms and structures can have unintended harsh consequences, and may violate the human rights of women.

and

“...the causes of biased sex selection lie in gender-based discrimination, and that combating such discrimination requires changing social norms and empowering girls and women.”

The interagency statement provides a suite of recommendations about the many levels on which this social issue should be addressed. It does not recommend denying financial assistance for legal medical procedures.

Yours sincerely

Dr Steve Hambleton  
President

18 April 2013