

Community Affairs, Community (SEN)

A Response to the suggested budget cuts to Medicare Mental Services

I am a registered psychologist and Mental Health Social Worker. I currently Bulk Bill about 85% percent of the people I provide counselling to under the Medicare Better Access Initiative programme. For many people with moderate mental health concerns who are experiencing financial hardship they have been able to access psychological services because of the Better Access Initiative. They are not able to financially afford to engage the services of a Clinical Psychologist, Registered Psychologist or Mental Health Social Worker, when they reach the session limit of Medicare.

I currently receive referral from Queensland Health Community Mental Health Services. 18 sessions is often inadequate for people that are experiencing chronic long term mental illness. The cut back to 10 sessions will further marginalise this group that is already not receiving adequate services. The people referred by Queensland Health have very complex and long term mental health concerns. It appears that after about six weeks of contact with this group of people Queensland Health is looking for programmes in the community to provide services & support because they are not resourced to provide long term care.

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