

Kelly and Samantha Pilgrim-Byrne

19 August 2005

Committee Secretary
Community Affairs Committee
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee members

INQUIRY INTO THE HEALTH INSURANCE AMENDMENT (MEDICARE SAFETY-NETS) BILL 2005

Whilst the Medicare Safety-Net offers significant rebates to married and heterosexual couples, the Government continues to ignore same-sex couples for the purposes of Medicare.

We have been accessing assisted reproductive technologies for nearly 2 years, and more recently IVF. Because we are considered to be two single people, we both have to reach the specified out-of-pocket expenses before we can claim the 80% Safety-Net. We are not wealthy and every IVF bill is a struggle. This is unfair and financially draining.

We have been together for 12 years – we think it's about time the Government recognised our commitment to one another, and indeed all same-sex couples.

The Government should extend the same benefits to same-sex de facto couples under the Medicare Safety-Net program without further delay.

Same-sex families are hurting because of the Government's unwillingness to recognise their existence.

Yours sincerely

Kelly & Samantha Pilgrim-Byrne