

12 July 2009

Committee Secretary

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

PO Box 6100

Parliament House

CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to you today after speaking with Dr Richard Grant regarding the Senate Community Affairs Committee Hearings into the Health Insurance (Extended Medicare Safety Net) Amendment Bill 2009. I would appreciate the opportunity to personally address the Committee to put forward my views as I believe such an issue is lost in the written form.

My husband (Brian) and I have grave concerns with the changes proposed in this bill with regards to the out of pocket expenses to couples undergoing Fertility Treatment in the future. Considering that one in six Australian couples have infertility problems and we are one of them there will be many people detrimentally affected by these changes.

If someone had told me when Brian and I first decided to try for a family that the only way we would achieve this goal was through IVF I would have said no way. How can this happen to us?

Without the Medicare Safety Net we would not have been able to have our beautiful miracle Emily. And without the continuation of this funding we will not be able to consider a brother or sister for her. Please don't take away the only possibility of this for us and many others in the same situation. Taking away this access will make IVF only available to the wealthy and the rest of us will have to wonder what it may be like to have a larger family, or for some a family at all.

We haven't chosen to undergo this treatment lightly, as it is not something you would do if there was any other option. IVF is a stressful procedure that affects you emotionally, physically and financially and the changes that are proposed will be detrimental to many. It is hard enough when you are undergoing treatment to find the current out of pocket amount of approximately \$1000 let alone trying to find more when you are paying a mortgage and in our case childcare, trying to find \$3000 or more each cycle would be impossible.

To consider capping the Medicare Safety Net would make IVF unaffordable for Australian families like ours. Please also consider the fact that IVF treatment is not available in the Public Hospital system in many states.

Please consider us and the rest of the people in our situation who just want a family of our own, before taking away our only chance of extending our family.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my views and please contact me if I can offer any further assistance in helping you to help Australians like us to continue to have a fair go with regards to these medical procedures.

Kind regards

Peta Clacherty