



Ref: S08-09

22 April 2009

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Committee Secretary

Inquiry into Compliance Audits on Medicare Benefits

The Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) has consulted widely on the proposal to implement the Government's announced 2008-09 Budget measure to increase compliance audits on Medicare benefits by increasing the audit powers to Medicare Australia to access the patient records supporting Medicare billing and to apply sanctions on providers.

The protection of health consumer privacy is essential. Administrative arrangements already exist to ensure health consumer privacy protection. CHF understands that privacy will not be compromised under the proposal to extend the current arrangements to require health professionals to provide documentation to verify compliance with the Medicare billing processes.

Consumers are fully aware of the need to ensure a sustainable health system that has checks and balances in place. It is entirely in the public interest for the new MBS compliance procedures to be implemented. CHF supports the measures.

Yours sincerely

Carol Bennett
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR