



The Royal Australasian  
College of Physicians

**Paediatrics & Child Health Division**

30 September 2008

The Secretary  
Senate Finance and Public Administration Standing Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Inquiry into Item 16525 in Part 3 of Schedule 1 to the Health Insurance (General Medical Services Table) Regulations 2007**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in relation to this Inquiry. I am writing this submission on behalf of the Paediatrics & Child Health Division of The Royal Australasian College of Physicians.

***The number of services receiving payments under this item and the cost of these payments***

As paediatricians, we do not have access to information to quantify the number of services receiving payments under this item and the costs of these payments, or the basis upon which payment of benefits are made under this item, except to say that presumably payment occurs to cover second trimester termination of pregnancy.

***The effects of disallowing this item***

We do note that this Medicare item ensures equitable access to all Australian women to second trimester termination of pregnancy. Disallowing this item will mean that access to this important service will be decreased for a small but significant proportion of vulnerable women. This may result in both physical and mental risk to the woman in question if she is unable to access funding for that termination. These risks include risk to the woman's life and health because of a medical complication, or to her long term mental and physical health as a result of the pregnancy complication for which she has decided to have the termination.

While in our experience second trimester termination is always a difficult decision, and never undertaken lightly, it is still a service that is essential to the range of antenatal services available to women in order to protect their safety and health.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this issue.

Yours sincerely

Dr Jenny Proimos  
**President**  
**Paediatrics & Child Health Division**

