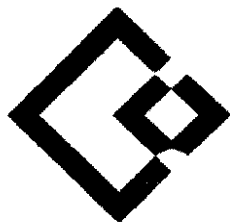
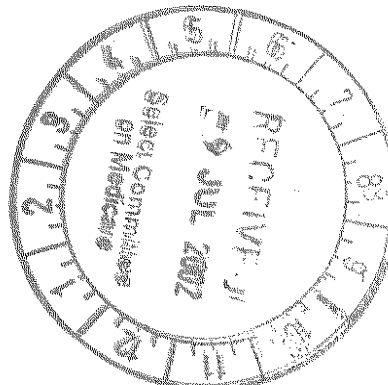


8 July, 2003

**A•S•U****Australian Services Union**

Victorian Authorities and Services Branch

The Secretary
 Select Committee on Medicare
 Suite S1 30
 Parliament House
 CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: SUBMISSION TO SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON MEDICARE

The ASU Victorian Authorities & Services Branch has 21,800 members employed in the following industries:

- Local Government;
- State Authorities;
- Water and Sewerage Authorities;
- Social and Community Services;
- Energy;
- Information Technology;
- Transport;
- Shipping; and
- Travel.

The greater majority of our members are not high salary earners but have combined incomes in excess of \$35,000 per annum. This will impose additional costs on them due to the proposed changes to Medicare.

This change means that our members are being forced to pay three times for the health services under the Governments proposal. Firstly, our members contribute to the health system by paying PAYE tax, secondly they contribute through their taxes to a Medicare levy and now they are being asked to pay an upfront payment when visiting their general practitioner.

This will lead to many of our members who have families having to compromise on other things to ensure their family's health is protected. Our Prime Minister clearly indicated at the last election that there would be no changes to Medicare, yet this has occurred.

The upfront fee will be difficult for some families to meet as previously mentioned, past history has shown that once these types of payments are introduced they continue to be increased over time. We are equally concerned that general practitioners will still have the ability to set their own charges

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Branch Secretary
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without any apparent control. This is likely to lead to some families having to travel further to receive affordable health care, and is likely to impact further on public hospitals.

Many of our members are employed in the Social and Community Services field including Community Health Centres. They often see the plight of lower income families on current "user pay systems" and are concerned that this change will only add to the plight of the many families that come through their doors seeking assistance.

For all of the above reasons, we urge the Senate Select Committee to recommend a review of this decision with a view of removing this imposition of our members and their families.

Yours truly,



Darrell Cochrane
Branch Secretary