

Union of Australian Women
(South Australian Branch)

188

B. Miller
1/36 Wear Avenue
MARDEN SA 5070

Senate Select Committee on Medicare

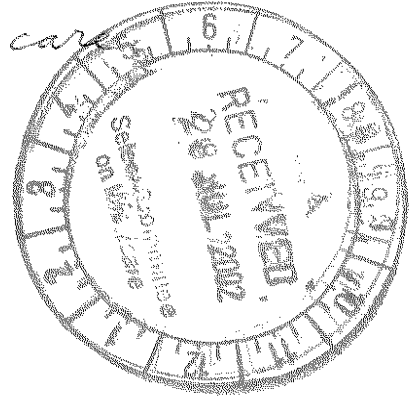
Elton Humphrey

Secretary

Senate

Parliament House

Canberra Ct 69. 2600



Dear Mr Humphrey,

Enclosed please find a late submission on the Medicare issue from the Union of Australian Women, SA Branch.

We understand that the Adelaide Senate Enquiry will be held at the Adelaide Town Hall, Princes Room, Wednesday, 30th July from 9.30 to 4.30 pm.

Yours sincerely

Beryl Miller (Mrs)
Secretary
UAW SA Branch

SUBMISSION TO SENATE HEARING ON MEDICARE HELD IN ADELAIDE, 30TH JULY, 2003

The Union of Australian Women, SA Branch, makes the following submission on the need to maintain and extend the Medicare system in Australia.

Our Federal Government sees fit to spend \$43.3 million a day on the arms race in a bid to become the policeman of the South East Asian Region yet money for our public hospitals is unavailable and our taxpayers are paying \$3.6 billion each year to support the Private Health Insurance sector in an attempt to undermine the universal Medicare system which was set up in 1984.

Not only is the government protecting and financially supporting the private health insurance industry but at the same time bulk-billing by GP's has become an uneconomic proposition for the doctors. We reject the proposal that bulk-billing only be available for those on pensions and very low incomes. Bulk-billing must be made available to all citizens.

We reject the moves already made by the Government together with additional plans they have in the pipeline, to make Medicare a two-tier system. Those with the money will be able to afford the best medical attention available while those in the lower income group will be forced to take what is available in the public health sphere. Figures show quite clearly that the US, with its two-tier health system spends more of its GDP than Australia for total health – US 13% Aus. 8.3%. The US system is more expensive than Australia, spending \$4631 in the US and \$2211 in Australia per person. While Medicare is a universal system the US has over 40 million people without any form of health insurance.

We call for the withdrawal of the \$3.6 billion of taxpayers money to the PHI and demand that this money be invested in the following areas:-

\$280 million to be allocated to increase the rebate fee to doctors with an additional \$180 million to be made available to doctors to pay for nurses in general practice.

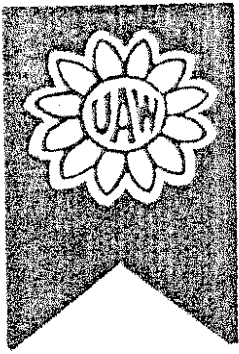
Increase public hospital spending by \$710 million with an additional \$750 million for a proper National Dental Scheme.

Spend \$150 million to fund independent drug detailers to advise GP's on appropriate use of medications to help combat the drug companies propaganda.

Spend \$120 million on Aboriginal health (a 10% increase) and \$300 million on aged care (a 10% increase).

This adds up to \$2.6 billion – thus we have \$1 billion of the \$3.6 billion PHI rebate left over. This program shows quite clearly that our country can afford the universality of Medicare as well as the Pharmaceutical Benefits System (PBS).

The Union of Australian Women rejects the two-tier health system being promoted by the Howard Government. Medicare must remain universal.



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MEDICARE resolution 23/7/03

This gathering of women, organised by the Union of Australian Women expresses its deep concern with the Federal Government's plans to undermine Medicare.

We call for the maintenance of Medicare as a universal system.

We demand that the \$3.6 billion of taxpayer's money to finance the Private Health Insurance (PHI) sector be withdrawn.

This money to be allocated to increase the rebate fee to doctors (\$280 million with additional funds (\$180 million) made available to doctors to pay for nurses in general practice.

Increase public hospital spending by \$710 million with an additional \$750 million for a proper National Dental Scheme.

Spend \$150 million to fund independent drug detailers to advise GP's on appropriate use of medications and to combat the drug companies propaganda.

Spend \$120 million to Aboriginal health would give a 10% increase and \$300 million on aged care which would also give a 10% increase.

This all adds up to around \$2.6 billion - thus we have \$1 billion of the \$3.6 billion PHI rebate left over. So obviously we can afford Medicare and we can afford the PBS.

We reject the two tier health system currently being promoted by the Howard Government. Medicare must remain universal. We seek your support for these proposals.