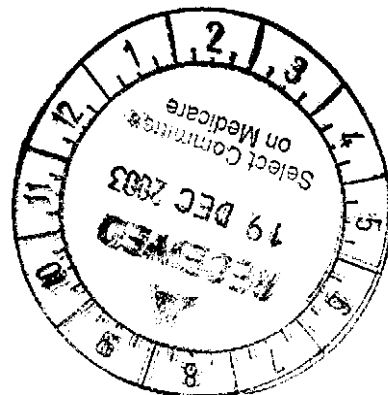


DIVISION of GENERAL PRACTICE

Contact: Sue Moir
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File No: ORG010

17 December 2003

Secretary: Jonathan Curtis
Senate Select Committee on Medicare
The Senate
S1.30.1
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600



Dear Mr Curtis,

RE: SUBMISSION BY THE SOUTHERN TASMANIAN DIVISION OF GENERAL PRACTICE.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to the Committee regarding the proposed Medicare Plus package.

The Southern Tasmanian Division of General Practice is an independent, incorporated body, governed by an elected Board of Directors, which seeks to improve health outcomes through general practice.

The Division has canvassed the views of its 289 GP constituents on this matter and the following statements reflect the consensus of views received:

ISSUE NUMBER ONE: THE INTRODUCTION OF A \$5 PAYMENT

This was not supported by general practitioners. GPs see this payment as inadequate to persuade them to bulk bill patients, and an indication that the government will not fund quality general practice. Whilst one GP indicated that they may be willing trial the payment, they expressed severe reservations that it would be sustainable.

ISSUE NUMBER TWO: THE INTRODUCTION OF A CONCESSIONAL SAFETY NET

Whilst some GPs see this a fair and reasonable move, concerns were raised about the implications of administering this at a practice level for individual patients. There is a belief that this proposal clouds the main issue of adequately funding for quality medicine.

ISSUE NUMBER 3: "SAFETY NET TO COVER OUT-OF POCKET COSTS"

The majority of GP responses were supportive of this proposal..

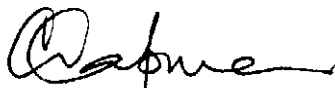
ISSUE NUMBER 4: "DOCTORS RECEIVE THE MEDICARE REBATE DIRECTLY"

Whilst this was supported by GPs in principle, the logistics of its administration are problematic. Some GPs are concerned that their practices will become quasi Medicare offices.

In responding to the Medicare Plus proposal GPs have raised the core issue of workforce. The implications of new roles or expectations for overseas training doctors or practice nurses, needs a careful risk analysis.

We look forward to the opportunity of expanding on these comments when the Committee conducts its hearing.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Chapman', written in a cursive style.

Dr Geoff Chapman
Medical Director