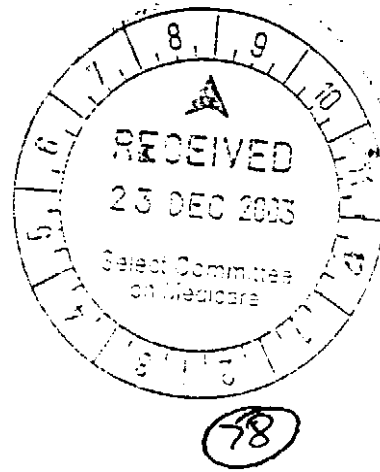


Thursday 18 December, 2003

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



Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Submission to the Senate Select Committee on Medicare

I would like the Senate Select Committee on Medicare to consider the following matters:

I request that the Senate Select Committee uphold and extend the universality of Medicare in the sense that any doctor can bulk bill any patient at any time.

The Minister for Health Mr. Abbott has stated on the Sunday Sunrise program that bulk billing was a matter between patients and doctors. It is not my understanding that this arrangement is negotiated between patient and doctor.

The Government has placed too much pressure on people to buy private health insurance for GP visits or ask doctors for charity. The 'safety net' system is not fair as it expects people who need health care to beg for help. Some people may have been covered such as pensioners however, people who do not receive a pension, who have chronic illnesses fall through the holes in the so-called safety net.

The Government has a right and a responsibility to exercise some control over fees. The increase of the schedule fee to an adequately level would help to boost Medicare. Otherwise patients face the rising costs of doctors' fees and increasing private health insurance for GP visits. It seems the Government does not care, even if pensioners will not be protected under the decline of bulk billing.

I would appreciate your reply to these concerns.

Yours sincerely,

  
Loretta Vieceli