

PRESS RELEASE

GP Co-Payment

All Governments has always maintained that GPs are the linchpin of Primary Healthcare, but with the “on again off again” policy of GP copayments, that pin holding together the overall health of the community is now being pulled out.

The Nepean Division of General Practice (NDGP) representing over 100 local GPs continues to be opposed to any form of GP Co-Payment. The recent announcement to modify this measure is but tinkering around the edges.

“The NDGP Board will have no option, but to support doctors who charge patients for the \$5 copayment” says the Chairman, Dr Hany Gayed, “I’m sure the community and the government feel most bulk billing doctors will absorb this income loss. This has significant implications for the financial viability of every general practice. ”

“ I have been bulk billing since its inception,” he continues “ but this measure will seriously impact on my ability to provide a quality service to my patients. GP Members I have spoken to, feel to same way.”

The role of the GP in modern practice is many faceted. It includes acute care, preventative care, chronic disease management and post discharge from Hospital management. There is more and more responsibility placed upon General Practice, in managing the health of the community. Any additional financial burden on patients will stop them from seeing their GP. It is fraught with danger with potential admissions to an already over stretched hospital system. This will certainly involve greater expense to the public purse and puts the patient at risk.

Whilst the current proposal is intended to apply to non concessional health card holders, a high percentage of Patients outside these groups in the Penrith LGA are bulk billed.

“Let’s be clear”, says NDGP Company Secretary, Michael Edwards “ The Medicare rebate is a re-imbusement to the patient, not to the Doctor. This measure is in reality freezing the Medicare Rebate for the next 3 years (2018). Let it go, don’t destroy Medicare through the back door”! “Anyway you look at it, it will be the patients that will suffer and the patients that will ultimately pay for the copayment. It is not a GP copayment it is another slug on the consumer” he said.

END

Authorised for release

Dr Hany Gayed

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