

MINISTERIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON OUT-OF-POCKET COSTS

COMMUNIQUE

12 February 2018

On 8th February, the first meeting was held of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Out-of-Pocket Costs, formed at the request of the Hon Greg Hunt MP, Minister for Health, to develop options to help consumers make informed decisions on the cost of their medical care.

The meeting was chaired by Australia's Chief Medical Officer, Professor Brendan Murphy and was attended by a group of expert medical specialists, a consumer representative and representatives of the private health insurance and private hospital sectors. The Committee was addressed by Minister Hunt who is placing much importance on transparency and the best quality care for consumers.

Professor Murphy told the taskforce that out-of-pocket costs for some admitted and non-admitted medical services have become an increasing concern for consumers, private hospitals and the private health industry. This is an essential part of the value proposition for consumers. Similar concerns have been expressed by some Medical Colleges and Special Societies, particularly around what is seen to be outlier charging practices.

The Committee strongly agreed that increased transparency for consumers was a priority issue to be dealt with by the Committee. Such transparency should better inform consumer choice.

It was also agreed that Consumer education should be undertaken to better understand their rights, the detailed nature of professional private billing and to correct any misapprehension that the size of medical fees are related to the quality of care provided.

The Committee will further consider principles and approaches for improved transparency at its next meeting in March and expects to report to the Minister by the end of 2018.

Media contact: Kay McNiece
T: 02 6289 7400 Mobile: 0448 207 226
news@health.gov.au