

Medicare needs to remain a Public Health Service. Private health providers must be an option but they cannot be relied in for universal coverage. Already patients struggle due to unaffordable procedural specialists and a dearth of public clinics. Already GPs carry the burden of increasingly complex care as patients find medical specialists unaffordable. As a GP with 15 years' experience in Aboriginal Health, I can categorically confirm that my patients cannot afford private healthcare. In most cases, the broad-ranging, national support and flexibility provided through Medicare enables adequate care. They have timely detection and treatment of health conditions, preventing costly deteriorations. Medicare keeps patients in the community and out of hospital, for the most part. We know that people with chronic, complex health conditions are frequently also people with significant socio-economic disadvantage, known as the social determinants of health. These people need ready access to care and multifaceted, targeted prevention strategies. Their human needs are not an attractive business proposition for company shareholders, but rather, their needs must be considered for the benefit of our civil society.

Megan Elliott-Rudder