

Brief submission

Letting private providers into Medicare could see for-profit companies making critical decisions about who gets treated and how. This would lead to a two-tiered system where those with the financial means receive preferential treatment, and those who will wait for timely quality care. This directly contradicts the notion of universal access to quality healthcare which underpins Australia's world-class health system. Allowing private providers into health opens the door to community inequity. Markets in small regional towns and remote areas, and areas with high levels of poverty, aren't profitable for health insurance companies. So, it may exacerbate the split of general practice between those who cherry-pick the quick and straightforward (and therefore more profitable) patients and those who are left to deal with more complex patients, usually small business GPs and the Aboriginal Health sector. Profit-driven healthcare threatens the very foundation of our universal Medicare system, restricting access and quality of care, especially in areas where insurers don't stand to make money. We need investment in our public health system, rather than cost-cutting and outsourcing. A wealth of historical and international evidence tells us that increasing the presence of private providers in our public healthcare system will undermine the quality and accessibility of care. It's the two-tiered system that's crippled American healthcare, driving up costs and leading to less care for fewer people.

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