



Media release

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ANMF (SA Branch) rejects co-payment compromise

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (SA Branch) has renewed its call for the scrapping of the GP co-payment, despite the scheduled public release of the Australian Medical Association's (AMA) compromised plan later today.

ANMF (SA Branch) CEO/Secretary Adj Assoc Professor Elizabeth Dabars AM said the AMA's reported plan, while a compromise to the Federal Government's initial proposal, will still see vulnerable Australians failing to access care at times of critical need.

"We already know that cost prevents people from all walks of life from seeking much needed medical treatment in the early stages," Ms Dabars said.

"Any measure that inhibits access to our health care system is something we will continue to reject and serves only as a building block to further dismantle our Medicare system."

"We cannot achieve a sustainable funding model for the health system as a whole by stripping the preventative components from the system."

Ms Dabars added that while the AMA's reported proposal would reduce the number of Australians required to pay a GP co-payment, the ANMF (SA Branch) was concerned by the lack of publicly-available analysis on how it would affect other parts of the health care system.

"Failure to thoroughly analyse how a co-payment will affect other areas – and open that analysis up for public scrutiny – is both short-sighted and senseless," Ms Dabars said.

"Our health care system is rife with interdependencies. Any changes to the delivery or to the cost of delivery of primary medical services that impact accessibility have the potential to impact the entire system."

Ms Dabars visited Canberra in June in her capacity as Convenor of the SA Health Alliance, and met with South Australian Greens and Labor Senators, as well as Nick Xenophon, who committed vote against co-payments and support universal health care.

"Should the Federal Government adopt a water-down co-payment plan, these MPs must still remember the pledge they made to their constituency to support a universal health care system and vote against the introduction of co-payments," Ms Dabars said.

Ms Dabars called on these MPs to reaffirm their commitments to voting against co-payments in any form in light of the AMA's proposal and will formally write to them later today.