

# Peter & Lydia Spitz

Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs,  
P.O. Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra, ACT, 2600

Cc Senator Chris Back  
Dr Richard Waluk



10th August 2011

Dear Sir/Madam,

We understand that you are responsible for coordinating an inquiry into the Professional Services Review (PSR) Scheme, provided for under the Health Insurance Act 1973, by the Community Affairs References Committee.

An inquiry into the PSR is welcome news. As citizens of a democratic Australia, we are most disturbed that our GP can be forced to forward our private and confidential medical files, without our knowledge, consent or authorization, to the PSR to facilitate their investigations. We understand that the recent Amendment to the Medicare (Compliance) Act of 9 April 2011, equips Medicare officers with similar powers.

When we visit our GP, we trust that the personal information we give him/her will remain absolutely confidential. Such powers provided to government agencies diminish our confidence in being able to be open with our GP. In turn, we believe that this will have serious negative repercussions in the treatment and management of our health issues. It will weaken the ability of our GP to practice good medicine and reduce the quality of our medical treatment.

Please do not misunderstand us. Misappropriation of public money or resources by any individual is criminal, scandalous and entirely undemocratic. We whole-heartedly support the weeding out of doctors who 'rort' the system. Never the less, there must be a way to achieve this objective without infringing on patients rights to privacy. Surely, obtaining patients involvement, consent and cooperation would reap the best results.

I (Peter) have had personal experience of oppressive methods used by dictatorships abroad, and both our extended families have suffered as a result of totalitarianism. We value our privacy, liberty and freedom of expression. We value being Australian and trust that you share the same values.

Sincerely,

Peter H. Spitz

Lydia M Spitz