

Ministerial Advisory Committee on Out-of-Pocket Costs: Membership

Prof Brendan Murphy (Chair)	Department of Health
Mr John Batten	Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
Dr Andrew Miller	Australian Medical Association
Prof Steve Robson	Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
Prof David Scott	Australasian College of Anaesthetists
Assoc Prof Mark Daniell	Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists
Dr Lawrie Malisano	Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
Prof Mark Frydenberg	Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
Prof Christian Gericke	Royal Australasian College of Physicians
Ms Cathy Ryan	Catholic Health Australia (St John of God Health Care)
Ms Jo Root	Consumers Health Forum
Mr Andrew Sando	Australian Health Service Alliance
Mr Rhod McKensy	NIB
Dr Michael Coglein	Australia Private Hospitals Association
Dr Mark Sinclair	Australian Society of Anaesthetists

Ministerial Advisory Committee on Out-of-Pocket Costs Terms of Reference

Purpose

The government recognises that there is increasing community concern about out-of-pocket fees charged by a relatively small proportion of medical practitioners and the transparency of medical costs in advance of referral. In some instances these fees result in considerable patient out-of-pocket costs and financial hardship, and the fees charged do not have a clear relationship to the quality or nature of the medical services provided. These concerns are shared by many medical professional associations, the private health insurance industry and consumer groups. The government is keen to work with the medical profession to identify the drivers for these fees and costs and to explore strategies that may improve the provision of information for consumer choice, and the fee charging practices.

The Ministerial Advisory Committee on Out-of-Pocket Costs (the Committee) brings together key individuals with expertise in clinical practice, private health insurance, and consumer issues to work in partnership on the development of best practice models to make information on out-of-pocket costs charged by doctors more transparent and to help consumers with private health insurance better understand out-of-pocket costs.

On 13 October 2017, the Minister for Health, the Hon Greg Hunt MP announced a wide-ranging package of reforms including the establishment of an expert committee to consider options to improve the transparency of medical out-of-pocket costs.

Functions

The role of the Committee is to provide advice to the Minister on possible reforms covering:

- best practice models for the transparency of in-hospital medical out-of-pocket costs, and associated medical services in the community;
- legislation and regulatory barriers to consumer transparency of out-of-pocket medical costs;
- the implementation of best practice models; and
- other related issues as directed by the Minister.

It is expected that Committee members will draw on professional and other networks in considering options presented to the Committee.

To support these functions, members of the Committee will:

- act in a collegiate and collaborative manner when debating and resolving issues; and
- respect the confidentiality of Committee procedures.

External Support

The Committee may be supported through the commissioning of external advice (through the Department of Health), if required.

Membership

The Committee is chaired by Professor Brendan Murphy. Members are appointed for their knowledge, expertise and experience in clinical practice, private health insurance, and consumer issues. With the Chair's prior approval, individuals and organisations who are not members may be invited to participate in the Committee discussions where they have particular knowledge, expertise, or experience. A quorum for a meeting is the Chair and half the Committee membership plus one. A quorum of members must be present before a meeting can proceed. A member who is unable to attend a meeting should advise the Chair and the Secretariat as soon as possible.

Confidentiality

Members are required to sign confidentiality agreements, and to declare any real or potential conflicts of interests at the commencement of each meeting. All Committee members have an obligation to maintain confidentiality regarding all matters arising within the Committee, and to maintain this confidence even after their membership of the Committee has expired. Committee members are specifically obliged to refrain from making any comment or statement concerning any Committee matter to any member of the media. The Chair of the Committee or the Secretariat will coordinate all media contact.

Timing

The Committee will meet in person, or via teleconference. The Committee is expected to meet four times in 2017-18, and twice in 2018-19. The Committee can meet more or less frequently if required, and will provide advice to the Minister for Health.

Decisions and consideration of issues can be made out-of-session by the Committee, including by teleconference, or videoconference.

Secretariat

The Department of Health will provide secretariat support for the Chair and the Committee. Papers will be distributed to Committee members at least five working days before a Committee meeting, except with the Chair's agreement. The agenda for meetings will be agreed between the Chair of the Committee and the Secretariat.