



THE SENATE

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

1 February 2019

Dr Michael Schaper, Secretary General
Australian Medical Association
via email:
cc:

Dear Dr Schaper

The Education and Employment References Committee is undertaking an inquiry into the appropriateness and effectiveness of the objectives, design, implementation and evaluation of jobactive. Details about the inquiry are available from the committee's website.

At a public hearing in Perth on 29 January 2019, the committee received evidence that jobactive providers are contacting doctors to seek changes to patient diagnoses. The committee also heard that Centrelink was in some cases rejecting valid medical certificates.

Attached is a copy of the transcript from the hearing (see evidence given by the Western Australian Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies, Mr Alan Bateson and Mr Milan Pospisil) and tabled medical certificates from Mr Bateson and Mr Pospisil.

The committee would appreciate a public comment from the Australian Medical Association on these issues. As the committee is due to report to the Senate on 13 February 2019, the committee would appreciate a response by 8 February if possible. The committee has written to the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners on the same matter.

Should you have any further queries regarding this correspondence please contact the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 3521, or by emailing eec.sen@aph.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Senator Gavin Marshall
Chair
References Committee

19/89

Senator Gavin Marshall
Chair, References Committee
The Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Email: eec.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Marshall

Jobactive Program

I refer to your correspondence dated 1 February 2019 concerning the above and can advise that the AMA has not been contacted by any members complaining about pressure from Jobactive Providers to modify medical certificates.

From time to time, concerns have been raised with the AMA about medical certificates being rejected by applicants for the Disability Support Pension (DSP), or Newstart participants seeking a medical exemption. In this regard, the AMA has been approached by both GPs and the applicants themselves.

In response to these concerns the AMA has met with the Department of Human Services on several occasions and been briefed on the relevant eligibility requirements. The system is complex and, in this respect, DHS has sought to provide more information for practitioners in relation to DSP eligibility requirements and the relevant medical evidence required. Material published by DHS at the end of 2018 is available at the following link: [checklist for treating health professionals](#).

I trust this information is of assistance to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Warwick Hough
Acting Secretary General
7 February 2019



AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL
ASSOCIATION
ABN 37 008 426 793

T |
F |
E |
W |

42 Macquarie St Barton ACT 2600
PO Box 6090 Kingston ACT 2604