

Committee Secretary
Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee
Department of the Senate
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To the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee,

I, as the National Women's Officer for the National Union of Students, write on behalf of the NUS Women's Department in regards to the proposed changes to the inquiry into item 16525 in Part 3 of Schedule 1 to the Health Insurance (General Medical Services Table) Regulations 2007. This relates to the funding of Medicare of second trimester and third trimester abortions.

It is the NUS Women's Department belief that this inquiry is being carried out for political and moral reasons of a particular group and is not based on a need for financial reform or for the wellbeing of women. In fact if this motion were to pass, women, particularly women from low socio-economic backgrounds, would be at a disadvantage, and we would see an erosion of public health care for women.

Restricting funding of second and third trimester abortions will not necessarily result in less abortions being performed. What it will result in is women having less access to safe abortions, and will hurt most those from low economic backgrounds and those in rural areas where access is already at a minimum. Some of the women also affected would be those with sick or dying foetuses that are forced to terminate a wanted pregnancy.

I am also concerned that the removal of this item from the Health Insurance Regulations could potentially open the door to moralising other medical procedures. Medicare should act independently from political agendas and personal beliefs, as it has done so in the past. There is no moral judgement on the merits of the procedure itself so to remove Medicare funding for such a procedure would be detrimental for women.

I urge you to consider the consequences of removing this item from the Health Insurance Regulations, consequences which will affect a group that is already disadvantaged in other areas of our society. Please remember that this is an issue of safe, reliable and accessible health care.

Thank you for your consideration,

Claire Tatyzo