



12 July 2009

Senate Committee Inquiry into proposed changes to Private Health Insurance

On Wednesday 8 July CEO Michael Roff and Director Policy and Research Barbara Carney appeared at the Senate Committee Inquiry into the proposed changes to the Private Health Insurance rebate. In the May Budget, the Government announced that it would both means test the rebate and increase the thresholds for the Medicare Levy Surcharge. In his opening statement, Michael Roff said:

“Private hospitals are a vital partner to the public sector in the provision of a wide range of services and contribute significantly to the balance and sustainability of the Australian health system. The legislation in question constitutes a fundamental breach of promise by the Government. This entails renegeing on clear commitments that were made not just in the lead up to the last election, but commitments repeated by a range of senior Government figures, from the Prime Minister down, on numerous occasions both in public statements and private meetings since the election.

It is worrying to note that since these proposals were first leaked prior to the Budget, there has been no commitment from anyone in the Government that these represent the end game in terms of changes to policy settings related to private health insurance. There are now serious concerns within the APHA membership about what further changes may be made in subsequent Budgets, when commentators concur that substantial cuts to expenditure will be required to meet Government spending targets.

A range of service planning and infrastructure development decisions have been made by private hospital operators (in both the for-profit and not-for-profit segments of the sector) on the basis of the repeated commitments given by the Government that they would maintain the current policy settings.”

APHA representatives also drew the Committee’s attention to the fact that there are many unanswered questions about the basis of the financial modelling of the proposal, which cast serious doubt on the predictions of a drop out rate from PHI of only 25 000 people. The proposed changes would also result in 10 tiers of eligibility for the rebate, as opposed to only one at present.

The APHA reiterated its recommendation that the Senate not pass the legislation, as it seriously undermines the value of private health cover and penalises many thousands of people who choose to look after their own health care and access private hospitals.

See APHA’s full opening statement at <http://www.apha.org.au/read/2436483402.html>

Private Mental Health Alliance

APHA, AMA, AHIA, Department of Health and Ageing and beyondblue have all signed the AMA Agreement for Services 2009-2011 to support the activities of the Private Mental Health Alliance (PMHA), its Centralised Data Management Service and the Private Mental Health Consumer Carer Network (Australia) for the period 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2011. APHA is represented on the

PMHA by Carole Turnbull and Moira Munro.

Early bird Registration Open for 2009 APHA Congress

REGISTER EARLY for DISCOUNTS -- Register yourself and your colleagues before **21 July 2009** to take advantage of the **EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT** on Congress delegate registration. Register online at www.apha.consec.com.au

NHMRC/ABST Clinical Practice Guidelines on Fresh Blood Components

The Review of *The NHMRC/ASBT Clinical Practice Guidelines on Fresh Blood Components (2001)* is currently being undertaken under the auspices of the Australian & New Zealand Society of Blood Transfusion (ANZSBT) and the National Health and Medical research Council (NHMRC) with funding, project management, and secretariat services provided by the National Blood Authority (NBA) on behalf of all governments.

The review will result in the production of five comprehensive, evidence-based, patient-focused blood management guidelines, and one product focussed guideline produced in three phases. For more information about the guidelines see <http://www.nba.gov.au/guidelines/updates.html>

ACHS News

The latest issue of ACHS News is now available. You can download a copy of the newsletter from http://www.achs.org.au/pdf/ACHSNews_Issue30_Winter2009.pdf

Topics in this issue include:

- Hand hygiene program aims to halve infections
- ACHS & ACSQHC to co-host workshops
- Department of Health publishes HAIs
- PIRT Online has gone LIVE

2009 APHA/Baxter Awards for Quality and Excellence – Enter by 30 July

Time is running out to nominate your hospital for the APHA / BAXTER AWARDS 2009. Visit www.apha.org.au to access the awards brochure and for further details. APHA would like to encourage all current members to submit an entry in the following awards categories:

1. Clinical Excellence
2. Ambulatory Care
3. Community Involvement

What better way to reward your staff and promote your hospital's pursuit of excellence in the industry?

Entries close on 30th July 2009