



28 February 2010

Private Health Insurance Legislation – update

On 24 February the legislation by which the Federal Government proposed to increase the Medicare Levy Surcharge was defeated in the Senate. However, the Bill to means-test the 30 per cent PHI rebate is still before the Parliament. Debate is expected to continue on this in the week of 8 March. The Coalition parties, Family First and Independent Senator Nick Xenophon oppose means testing of PHI.

Private Health Insurance Premiums Increased

This week the Minister for Health and Ageing, Nicola Roxon announced that private health insurance premiums would increase by an average of 5.78% from 1 April 2010. This year's increase is lower than last year (6.02 per cent). The Government is also publishing the individual average premium increases to give consumers further choice and information. This means that people are able to check and compare the average price rise for their fund, and to compare the relative costs and benefits of their cover. This is available at www.health.gov.au

APHA Welcomes New Major Sponsor - Forbo Flooring Systems

Forbo Flooring Systems are part of the Forbo Group, a global leader in flooring, bonding and movement systems. The company employs some 6,000 people and has an international network of 44 sites with production and distribution as well as 51 pure sales organizations in a total of 35 countries worldwide. Forbo is headquartered in Baar, Switzerland. Forbo deliver high quality design orientated solutions that offer low lifecycle costs, durability and world leading environmental performance. Forbo have the experience and range to offer tailored solutions for every area, from wards, operating theatres, treatment rooms, CSSD, kitchens and wet areas through to waiting rooms and offices. Please visit the new Forbo page on the APHA website <http://www.apha.org.au/sponsors/forbo/>. APHA looks forward to working with Forbo this year.

New Reports from Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

The AIHW released two new reports this week, on ovarian cancer and drug treatment for arthritis and osteoporosis. The Report, *Ovarian cancer in Australia an overview, 2010*, shows that ovarian cancer was the most common cause of gynaecological cancer death and the sixth most common cause of cancer-related death among women in 2006. Although the prognosis for women diagnosed with ovarian cancer was relatively poor compared with a number of other cancers, the prognosis has improved over time. These and other data in this report provide a comprehensive picture of ovarian cancer in Australia including how ovarian cancer rates differ by age, Indigenous status, country of birth, socioeconomic status and geographical area.

In its Report *Medication use for arthritis and osteoporosis*, the AIHW provides information on what medicines Australians are using to manage their musculoskeletal problems, how much these medicines cost, and trends in the prescription of new medicines. 'Medicines are central to managing arthritis and osteoporosis to improve mobility and reduce pain and inflammation...[and]

in the last decade, the variety of medicines available for managing arthritis and osteoporosis has expanded considerably, especially with the arrival of several new medicines that can reduce disease severity, slow its progression, and in some cases prevent complications.'

Both publications can be downloaded at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/>

ACSQHC – Medication Safety Update

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare has released their latest Medication Safety Update. The update is available on the Commission's website at [http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/internet/safety/publishing.nsf/Content/com-pubs_MedSafety-MSA-con/\\$File/32464.pdf](http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/internet/safety/publishing.nsf/Content/com-pubs_MedSafety-MSA-con/$File/32464.pdf)

APHA, PO Box 7426, Canberra BC, ACT 2610