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Medibank time travels to find data to suit their cause

Medibank is in a time warp, using data from 2013 and ignoring the most recent figures, to make claims about Australia's health care system in an effort to push a case for transparency they are not open to themselves, a new article in The Australian has shown.

In today's Australian Medibank's Andrew Wilson claims Australia "is not competitive compared to many countries" citing a 2013 report produced by the International Federation of Health Plans (IFHP).

However, the current report from 2015 available on the IFHP website does not support this contention, says Australian Private Hospitals Association CEO Mr Michael Roff.

"Medibank obviously chose the out of date report because in 2013, the Australian dollar was extremely strong against the United States dollar, which distorted the international comparisons.

"The 2015 report, which Medibank chose to ignore, shows Australia is indeed competitive based on the IFHP analysis and is not the most expensive country on any measure," Mr Roff said.

In addition, Mr Wilson wrote, "the average invoice cost for cataract surgery in Australia in 2013 was greater than other comparable healthcare systems, including the US and New Zealand."

This fails to mention that in 2015, the average cost for cataract surgery on Australia was 16% lower than the United States and also lower than the United Kingdom.

Mr Roff said the Australian public should be sceptical of data used by the large private health insurer.

"Medibank have been caught out presenting meaningless and out of date data and misrepresenting the true picture in order to further their own cause.

"Australians should certainly be asking questions about health care costs, not least of all why large insurers make such significant profits and continue to cry poor.

"If Medibank was serious about giving consumers information to help them avoid unnecessary costs, they should be more transparent about the "junk" policies they sell that don't cover their members for services they are likely to need, by excluding these services from cover.

"APHA research shows that 40% of people don't know if their health insurance policy has any exclusions. These people are likely to face either large out of pocket costs in the private system or be forced to wait for care in the public system," Mr Roff said.

The 2015 IFHP report can be found here:

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/518a3cfee4b0a77d03a62c98/t/578d34649de4bb15e7a9f2e2/1468871781348/2015+Comparative+Price+Report_Final+071516.pdf

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