

Press Release

GP CO-PAYMENTS WILL HURT THE MOST DISADVANTAGE

**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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VICTORIAN MEDICARE ACTION GROUP (VMAG)

The Victorian Medicare Action Group categorically states that Mr Dutton's proposal for co-payments of up to \$6 to visit the doctor will hurt those who can least afford to access the medical system.

Rod Wilson, Convener of VMAG said today

"Australians already make a contribution to Medicare via the tax system. It is not a free system. Clearly this may be just the start of changes including an increased privatisation and fee for service focus. These changes are likely to further disadvantage those who already have the poorest health outcomes and least access to primary healthcare services" states Rod Wilson, Convener of the Victorian Medicare Action Group (VMAG).

"VMAG agrees with the Australian Medical Association that the introduction of co-payments could see people defer seeking healthcare, and that might be more expensive later."

"VMAG are gravely concerned that this move is the beginning of the creation of a two tier medical system similar to that which exists in the US where those with the means can get access to treatment and those without miss out."

"VMAG believes the co-payment would deter people from seeing their GP. It is a fact that people from a lower socio-economic demographic have poorer health – do we really want to exacerbate this by making access to the local GP unaffordable?"

VMAG is an informal alliance of interested people and organisations. VMAG has a large membership including health practitioners, health organisations, community organisations, policy advocates, religious organisations, unions and consumers.

VMAG is holding a meeting of alliance members and other interested people on Friday 7th March 2014 to discuss potential action to advocate ensuring Medicare is in the first instance protected; and in the second instance expanded to cover other critical primary healthcare services.

The meeting will be held from 10am – 12pm at Banyule Community Health, 21 Alamein Road, West Heidelberg and is open to interested parties.

For more information or media enquiries contact:

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ENDS