

## PRESS RELEASE

# Medicare: Never spoil a good story with a few facts

## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

25 February 2014

**“The Victorian Medicare Action Group suggests Abbott and Dutton check their facts before they dismantle Medicare” Rod Wilson, Convener of VMAG said today.**

## VICTORIAN MEDICARE ACTION GROUP (VMAG)

### Fact 1

Total health spending in Australia is \$140.2 billion (\$59.5 bill from Commonwealth govt \$38.3 from Stat govts) 9% of GDP.

### Fact 2

Spending on GPs is \$7.4 billion. GPs are the cheapest end of the health system. Not much to be gained in this area relative to the big ticket items in health expenditure.

### Fact 3

Spending on GPs increased from \$301.60 per person in 2006 to \$304.40 in 2012 (productivity commission figures). Not exactly unsustainable growth.

### Fact 4

All developed countries recognise that spending on prevention ie GPs and related services is the best way to address hospital overcrowding.

### Fact 5

We spend less per head than comparable developed countries but have better life expectancy.

### Fact 6

Australians go to hospital at a higher rate than almost any other developed country. Ie system too hospital centric.

### Fact 7

Raising the Medicare levy by 1% would raise an additional \$7 billion.

### Fact 8

Numerous reports and surveys have shown Australians would be prepared to pay higher taxes in order to ensure access to health services.

**Fact 9**

Patient out of pocket expenses are increasing rapidly already represent 22% of health spending.

**Fact 10**

The effect of the proposed \$6 co payment would be to shift patients to extremely crowded hospital emergency depts.

**Fact 11**

Modelling by SA govt has indicated total cost to the system of \$6 co-payment would be \$2 billion.

**Fact 12**

The AMA; GPs and consumers agree that they do not want prices and services controlled by a US style private health insurance model.

**What is the point of being a wealthy country if you can't spend money on staying well and treating illness?**

**VMAG are gravely concerned that the Abbott Government is moving to create a US style health care system controlled and operated by private health insurance where those with the means can get access to treatment and those without miss out.**

**About the Victorian Medicare Action Group (VMAG)**

*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 AND MEDIA ENQUIRIES CONTACT:**

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**ENDS**