

Press Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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\$15 GP CO-PAYMENTS – UNACCEPTABLE, UNFAIR AND UNJUSTIFIED

VICTORIAN MEDICARE ACTION GROUP (VMAG)

The Victorian Medicare Action Group condemns the Commission of Audits proposal for a \$15 co-payment and reiterates that the payment will hurt those who can least afford to access the medical system.

Meredith Carter, VMAG spokesperson said today

“Australians already make a contribution to Medicare via the tax system. It is not a free system. These changes are likely to further disadvantage those who already have the poorest health outcomes and least access to primary healthcare services - people who already have a very difficult time making ends meet and covering costs associated with their health” states Meredith Carter, Victorian Medicare Action Group (VMAG) spokesperson.

“The introduction of co-payments, especially at the \$15 rate now being proposed, will likely see people defer seeking healthcare, resulting in more expensive treatments being needed later or further overcrowding of emergency departments.”

“We all suffer if that happens. All developed countries recognise that spending on prevention ie GPs and related services is the best way to address hospital overcrowding and promotes greater efficiency as well as better health for everyone.”

“ VMAG firmly believes the co-payment would be counterproductive. It would deter people from seeing their GP. The lower your socio-economic status the poorer your health is already likely to be – do we really want to exacerbate this by making access to the local GP unaffordable?”

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 apolitical and open for all consumers and organisations to join. The group has previously run successful save Medicare campaigns.

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