

19 June 2023

 Hon Matt Keogh MP
 Minister for Veterans' Affairs
 Minister for Defence Personnel

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Subject: Concerns re low DVA rates for medical services

Dear Minister

Several medical practitioners have contacted AMA Queensland concerned about the Department of Veterans' Affairs Fee Schedules for Medical Services ('DVA rates'). Specifically, these doctors report that DVA rates have failed to keep pace with the cost of medical services such that practitioners are declining to treat our returned service personnel under the scheme.

In response to these concerns, AMA Queensland has reviewed some key MBS items for the main specialists that treat our veterans, including general practitioners, orthopaedic surgeons and psychiatrists. This review shows DVA rates have fallen dramatically behind those for WorkCover and the AMA Fees List and are, on average, just 32% higher than MBS (patient) rebates as set out in the below tables.

General Practice			
MBS Item	% of MBS Rate	% of WorkCover Rate	% of AMA Fees List Rate
23	115%	51%	51%
36	115%	55%	53%
44	115%	52%	51%
2700	115%	36%	35%
2713	115%	43%	42%
2715	115%	60%	44%
11707	140%	45%	44%
30071	134%	36%	35%
30192	134%	54%	53%
30196	134%	54%	53%
Average	123%	49%	46%
Range	115%-140%	36%-60%	35%-53%

Orthopaedics			
MBS Item	% of MBS Rate	% of WorkCover Rate	% of AMA Fees List Rate
49570	140%	45%	44%
49318	167%	53%	52%
49518	168%	54%	30%
Average	158%	51%	42%
Range	140%-168%	45%-54%	30%-52%

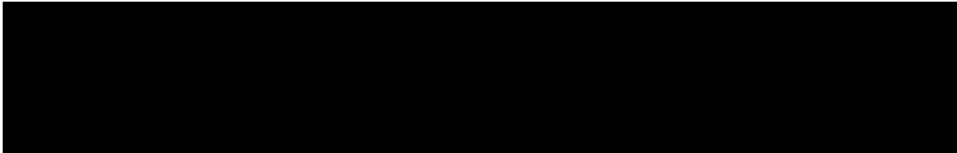
Psychiatry			
MBS Item	% of MBS Rate	% of WorkCover Rate	% of AMA Fees List rate
291	145%	84%	82%
293	145%	79%	77%
300	145%	66%	65%
Average	145%	76%	75%
Range	145%	79%-84%	65%-82%

AMA Queensland recognises the invaluable service our defence personnel provide the community and that this can expose them to increased incidence of illness and injury. They deserve a medical scheme that reflects this service and, at a minimum, aligns with WorkCover and AMA Fees List rates.

We know that the loss of clinician support to the DVA program will further exacerbate the prolonged waiting time for veterans to access appropriate care and is likely to lead to the deterioration of the presenting cause and affect the mental health of an already vulnerable patient.

As such, we would welcome an opportunity to discuss this with you further with the aim of developing a sensible resolution of these concerns.

Yours sincerely



Dr Maria Boulton
 President
 AMA Queensland

Dr Brett Dale
 Chief Executive Officer
 AMA Queensland