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Transcript: AMA President, Dr Michael Gannon, Today Show, *with Georgie Gardner*,
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Subject: The AMA Private Health Insurance Report Card, PBS expansion.

GEORGIE GARDNER: Well, further evidence that Australians are fed up with their private health providers, as a new report reveals customer complaints have increased by 30 per cent in the past year.

President of the AMA, Dr Michael Gannon, joins us now. Thank you for joining us. What are customers most unhappy about?

MICHAEL GANNON: Well, customers are sick of the carve-outs, sick of the exclusions, sick of being told when they're sick they're not covered. And, we've seen attempts by the health insurers to deflect blame to doctors. This Report Card shows that complaints about doctors and dentists are rare. It's the insurers that need to look at their own products and they're the major problem with the private hospital system.

GEORGIE GARDNER: So, give us a snapshot if you could, which fund has performed the worst?

MICHAEL GANNON: Well, in launching today's AMA Private Health Insurance Report Card, we look at the different funds and how they perform differently according to different procedures. We have the ridiculous situation where some of the major insurers have a different schedule in every different State. We have a system that is deliberately confusing for people buying health insurance, and too often it's the case that people find out that the product that they've purchased is not good enough only when they've got a hospital admission schedule.

GEORGIE GARDNER: Yeah. Its complexity makes it prohibitive doesn't it?

While we've got you Dr Gannon, some good news at least for asthmatics, and diabetics, and people suffering from arthritis this morning, with key medicines about to get a whole lot cheaper.

MICHAEL GANNON: Yes, the expansion of the PBS is always good news. It's a part of the Australian system which bears up very well to international comparison, the ability of the Government in Australia to buy medicines on behalf of 24 million people, evidence-based medicines that only get scheduled once they've been proven to work, and then become very affordable being something like \$39 a script for most Australians and as little as \$6 or \$7 for those on Health Care Cards.

GEORGIE GARDNER: Yeah. It makes a difference, doesn't it?

Dr Gannon, thank you very much.

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