association of massage therapists

AMT Client Communique

Potential changes to your ability to claim a health rebate on your massage therapy treatment

For more than a decade now, the Australian Government has been encouraging us to purchase private health insurance so we can take responsibility for our health and have more choice in our healthcare experience. But those choices may be dwindling.

You may have read recent articles in *The Australian* newspaper regarding a leaked draft of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) review of natural therapies. The reports suggest that the Australian Federal Health Department intends to remove the government rebate for natural therapies – including massage therapy – from private health insurance.

The Association of Massage Therapists (AMT) – a professional body that represents massage therapists - maintains its position that there is a solid foundation in evidence underpinning the efficacy of massage therapy in the treatment of a range of conditions and as a wellness/preventive health intervention.

Furthermore, AMT asserts that the methodology employed by the NHMRC meant that only a limited range and type of evidence spanning a five-year period was included in its review.

Massage therapy plays an important role in the broader healthcare system. Massage therapy offers highly individualised, patient-centred care, and massage therapists connect with clients in a way that busy medical practitioners often struggle to in an overburdened primary care system.

The Health Department is yet to confirm how it will act on the NHRMC findings - now is the time to have your voice heard.

What can you do?

If you are concerned that the Australian Government may remove massage therapy from your ancillary health cover, AMT urges you to:

1) **Go online** and sign our petition at: http://bit.ly/amtpetition

2) **Write** to your local member and ask them to advocate on your behalf to ensure that your access to massage therapy is not unduly restricted in the future. Let them know how massage fits into your healthcare and what conditions you use massage to treat.

3) **Write directly to the new health minister**, the Hon. Sussan Ley MP, at sussan.ley.mp@aph.gov.au

4) **Contact your health insurer** to discuss any concerns about your ongoing ability to claim a rebate on your massage therapy treatments.

AMT is closely monitoring developments and will keep your massage therapist up-to-date with any new information it receives.

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