

AMT Media Release

March 24 2015

AMT fears public safety implications if the private health insurance rebate for massage therapy is removed

The Association of Massage Therapists (AMT) is warning that a move from the Federal Health Minister to axe the private health insurance rebate for massage therapy could have implications for public health and safety.

AMT Secretary Rebecca Barnett said that the private health insurance rebate on massage therapy currently affords the public some protection from rogue practitioners and practices.

“Under private health insurance legislation, Massage Therapists wishing to operate as health insurance providers must hold membership with a professional body that has entry-to-practice requirements. They must also comply with a number of requirements in relation to clinical practice standards and ongoing professional development. Compliance monitoring is actually more stringent in these areas than it is for health practitioners registered under AHPRA.

“Without that market mechanism in place, the public will be more vulnerable to massage therapists who may have no training or formal qualifications,” Ms Barnett said.

There is currently no uniform, national regulatory framework in place for Massage Therapists. The Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council has undertaken a broad consultation on the terms for a National Code of Conduct for Healthcare Workers. The proposed Code would capture Massage Therapists under its umbrella but AMT believes it is likely to be too broad to offer adequate protections to the public in respect of the practise of massage therapy.

“AMT would like to see the current self-regulatory environment strengthened in the interests of public health and safety. We released a rigorous and comprehensive Massage Therapy Code of Practice in 2012. We believe that having this Code of Practice recognised in statute would be a big leap forward in terms of enhancing protections to the public”.

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