CRAIG LAUNDY MP

Federal Member for Reid

MEDIA RELEASE

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AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES CHANGES TO GP CO-PAYMENT

The Australian Government has announced that a new, optional GP co-payment will be introduced for GP services with additional protections for patients.

Federal Member for Reid Craig Laundy said the Government has listened to community concern and would make changes to the proposed Medicare co-payment.

The changes will mean the Medicare rebate for common consultations will be reduced by $5 only for non-concessional patients over the age of 16.

The Government will not impose a co-payment on GP services provided to pensioners, Commonwealth concession card holders, all children under 16, veterans funded through the Department of Veterans' Affairs, attendances at residential aged care facilities and pathology and diagnostic imaging services.

Incentives paid to doctors to encourage them to bulk bill concession card holders and children under the age of 16 will also remain.

Some doctors may continue to bulk-bill their non-concessional patients; others may seek to recoup some or all of the $5 rebate reduction.

Doctors will be under no obligation to charge the co-payment and this decision will be entirely at their discretion.

Other changes to the Medicare rebate schedule would encourage doctors to spend more time with patients.

"Addressing the issue of 'six minute medicine' by encouraging doctors to spend more time with patients will mean better health outcomes for patients," Mr Laundy said.

Craig Laundy said the new package ensured the Government could make Medicare sustainable and ensure Australians continued to have access to affordable world class healthcare.

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Media Contact: Marc Snape – 0402319351