



Illawarra Medical Services

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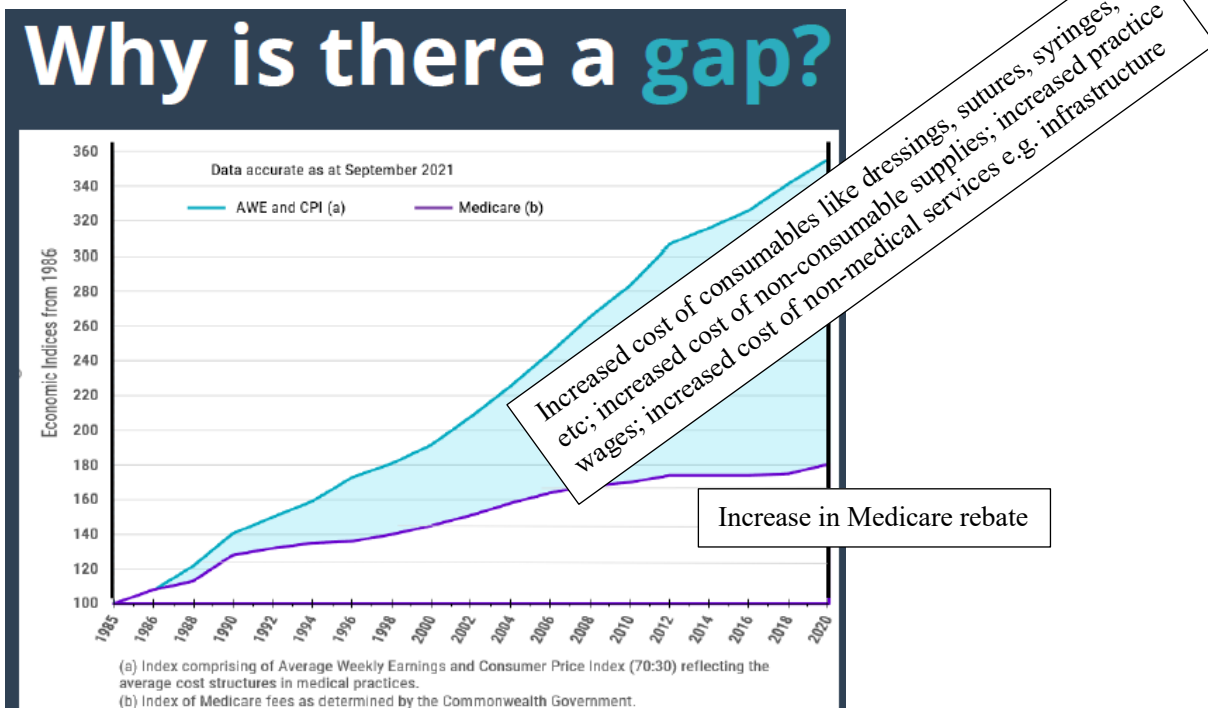
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Notice: We are now a mixed billing practice

To our valued patients

Unfortunately, we have had to make the difficult decision to introduce mixed billing into IMS, effective 31 October 2022. **Why?**

The simple explanation. After 80 years of maintaining a bulk billing practice in the heart of Berkeley, government health spending for primary care services is simply not keeping up with the rising healthcare costs. While the costs of supplies and staff are increasing, the government rebate has increased only marginally (for example, \$0.65 for a standard consultation over many years), which makes relying solely on Medicare rebates unsustainable. Therefore, GP practices have been subsidising the governments shortfall in the cost of healthcare for far too long now.



The elaborate explanation. “Government’s indexation of Medicare rebates has never kept pace with the rising cost of medical practice. On average AWE and CPI increased by 2.4% and 1.4%, respectively, per year. Practice costs rise by a similar amount. Medicare rebates only increased between 1.2% to 2.5% from 1995 to 2012 – noting that all pathology and most diagnostic imaging services received no indexation during this period. From 2012-2017 all MBS rebates were frozen with no indexation. Indexation only recommenced in 2017, when GP bulk-billing incentives were indexed at 1.4% and then in 2018 with GP and specialist consultations indexed at 1.5%. In 2019, specialist and allied health consultations, including therapeutic and procedural items resumed indexation at 1.6%. In 2020, indexation of 1.5% was applied to most of the general medical services items ... This is why your Medicare rebate is worth less every year. Concerned? Talk to your local Federal MP.” (Source: Australian Medical Association.)

The fees set are actually less than the fees recommended by the Australian Medical Association, which recommends \$86.00 for a standard consultation. We do wish our consultations to continue to be accessible for patients, but in a way that is sustainable for the Practice and particularly, our doctors.

What can you do? We encourage you to write to your local Federal Member of Parliament and the Minister of Health. You are also entitled to lodge a complaint with the Health Care Complaints Commission.