



Dear valued patients

January 2023

Happy New Year from the staff at Talunga Clinic. We hope that the holidays have been restful and enjoyable.

You may be aware of the challenges that GP practices have been facing over the past few years. Cost pressures have forced many clinics to abandon bulk billing and many have adopted private billings for all patients.

We have resisted increasing fees where possible but it has come to the point where we have to find a sustainable path forward as government contributions to your healthcare have not kept pace with the cost of running a sustainable practice. After many months of debate and consideration, we have decided that we cannot continue to bulk bill.

From Monday 6th February, patients receiving a Commonwealth Government Pension (including aged pension, single parent pension and carers pension), will be asked to pay a private gap for one visit per quarter. The first visit for each quarter will be charged privately, and pensioners will be asked to pay a gap of \$40.00. Once this private fee is paid, the remaining consultations for that quarter will be bulk billed. This represents a total cost of \$160, (4 X \$40 payments) spread over the year. Veterans or Disability Support Pensioners will be exempt from this charge, and will continue to be bulk billed. We will also continue to bulk bill children under the age of 16 years. The billing for private patients and those holding a current Health Care Card will remain unchanged.

While the additional costs may be a source of anxiety for some, we have kept the gap payment as low as possible and have capped the number of gap payments you pay each calendar year at 4, which we hope will go some way towards addressing your concerns. Please also speak to our staff to identify any potential ways in which we can utilise GP management plans or reviews (which continue to be bulk billed services) to minimise your out of pocket costs.

In cases of extreme hardship please also feel free to speak to our practice managers to see how we can help as we do not want anyone to delay their healthcare due to payment concerns.

We will continue to review our billing policy, and welcome any constructive feedback and suggestions on how we can balance fee increases with the need to remain viable and continue to provide the high level of care you deserve.

If you feel that healthcare needs to be more affordable, we encourage you to speak to your local MP or the health minister about this as we certainly hold the same belief that healthcare needs to be accessible and affordable to all. We have listed some details overleaf, which may be useful in terms of seeking avenues to raise your concerns.

Kind Regards

Dr Bryan Goh

CONTACT DETAILS TO RAISE YOUR CONCERNS ABOUT THE RISING COST OF HEALTHCARE

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