

Submission  
No 486

**INQUIRY INTO HEALTH OUTCOMES AND ACCESS TO  
HEALTH AND HOSPITAL SERVICES IN RURAL,  
REGIONAL AND REMOTE NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Name:** Name suppressed  
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Partially  
Confidential

It is vitally important for all rural patients to have more, ready access to good, experienced bulk-billing GP services.

This is fairly limited even in Wagga Wagga, especially in the outer suburbs such as Koorringal & Lake Albert, etc.

When patients are very unwell or suffering from chronic conditions that include severe tiredness/exhaustion, it is extremely difficult to manage to travel far to visit the Dr, especially when there are no family members or anyone else to assist.

It is impossible to manage physically & economically to travel long distance to Canberra, Sydney or even Albury to visit a specialist, when even just shopping once every few weeks is too exhausting & barely manageable.

Of major concern is the extreme lack of bulk-billing specialists.

Basic specialties such as Physician, Surgeon, Gastroenterologist, Rheumatologist, Endocrinologist, Clinical Psychologist, Psychiatrist, Oncologist, Cardiologist, Ophthalmologist, etc. are much needed for appointments at the public hospital, as the initial visits to the private specialist's rooms are cost prohibitive for health-care card patients - to such an extent that we put off going altogether - thus contributing further to our health decline.

Also, ready access to bulk-billing Physiotherapists, Chiropractors, Remedial Massage Therapists, Podiatrists, Reflexologists & other allied health services at the hospital would be extremely beneficial.

It would be such a relief & much more accessible for miserable patients, if these basic specialists & allied services were all available in one location at the local hospital - using bulk-billing services.

It is also essential that basic, necessary tests are readily available locally & bulk-billed to ensure patients are not excluded due to costs - such as ultrasounds, x-rays, MRI's, cat scans, bone density scans, biopsies etc.

It has become impossible to get an economically feasible diagnosis for certain diseases - including suspected lupus -even at Wagga Wagga, with basic treatment such as hydroxychloroquine unable to be prescribed by a GP.

This is extremely difficult for patients with lupus, as they suffer so much unnecessarily for an extended period of time & foresee no help for the future for basic care to relieve severe symptoms.

The availability of bulk-billed, timely Dental Care is urgently needed too, as the extreme cost of dental checkups & basic treatment prohibits health-care card holders from seeking assistance. This can then end up leading to further dental harm & serious health problems.

Mental Health assistance is also extremely difficult to receive, even when in a desperate state.

Despite the advertised Access Line, it is so traumatising to ring this number - when severely depressed, desperate & struggling, only to be told after an extensive, long discussion ..... "go to your GP, we only deal with an immediate emergency!"

It appears that, unless you are about to kill yourself, they won't help you at all, which is terrible!