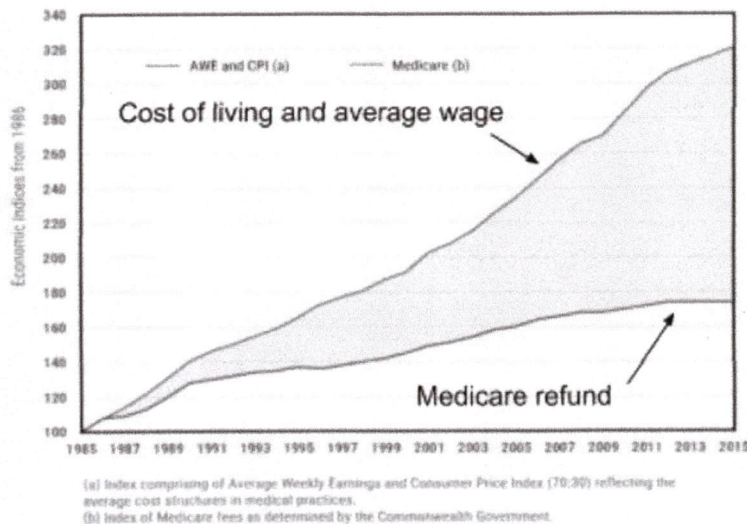


AN OPEN LETTER TO ALPHA MEDICAL CENTRE PATIENTS

In the current political climate, there is a lot of misinformation out there surrounding Medicare rebates and bulk billing. We as a practice want to provide our side of the story. The mission of Alpha Medical Centre is to provide high quality care by a team proud of our work and community. Our focus is the patient journey and how we can enhance this with the services we provide, the skills and knowledge of the staff we work hard to attract, and extensive quality in technology and equipment. To continue to deliver the best possible quality of care, we feel that we have no choice but to move away from accepting the value that the government places on our services (a maximum of \$39.75 for up to 20 minutes of our expertise), to something that is more in line with the standard costs of other services: eg. tradespeople, allied health and alternative therapists, where out of pocket costs can be substantial. Medicare is not doctors income but it is only a subsidy to the doctor's charges. For many years, Medicare rebates have failed to keep pace with inflation and do not reflect the cost of delivering high quality general practice services. The Government froze Medicare rebates for 4 years (taking over a billion dollars from General Practices) and then in 2017 began indexing them at just 1.4% per year. However, the cost of running a practice has continued to rise by 4 – 6% per year over the past 10 years (see Graph below).



By changing from bulk-billing to having a gap fee, will allow us to maintain a high level of care for our patients. For our patients who are under the age of 16, over the age of 65, or holding a concession card we will continue to bulk-bill. All other patients will incur a \$30 gap fee.

We hope that in future Medicare will provide a higher rebate to our patients so that accessing healthcare will have a lower out-of-pocket cost.

If you have concerns about the rising out-of-pocket cost for healthcare, please notify your local state and federal members. If you have any questions please speak to the Practice Manager or your GP.

Kind Regards,

Alpha Staff