

13 July 2026

The Hon Mark Butler MP
Minister for Health and Aging

The Hon John-Paul Langbroek
Minister for Education and the Arts

By email: [REDACTED]

Subject: Federal government assignment of benefits and GPs in schools program

Dear Ministers

The Australian government recently made changes to how patients assign their Medicare benefit to doctors who bulk bill. The changes have caused significant concerns for AMA Queensland members, including GPs working in the Queensland government's GPs in schools program.

Doctors advise that school students accessing the program are often from vulnerable, refugee or migrant backgrounds, and unfamiliar with our health system. Many are under 15 years. Doctors report that these patients are usually competent to consent to health care but they believe the changes will now require them to obtain written consent from students' parents or guardians for them to be bulk billed.

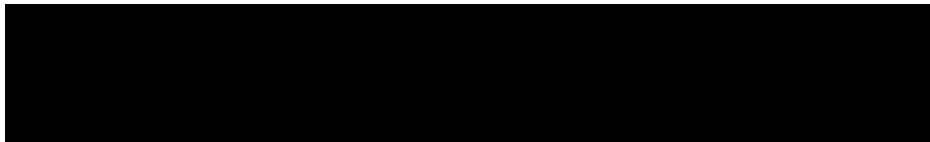
This creates significant risks for the GPs in schools program since it is difficult to obtain consent from parents and guardians who have English as a second language and where the students travel long distances to attend specific schools suited to their needs (e.g. campuses offering intensive English language programs).

Our members seek guidance from both the Australian and Queensland governments on the impact the assignment of benefit changes will have on the GPs in schools program. They have also suggested the following solutions to resolve their concerns

- An enduring assignment of benefit arrangement for school students attending schools that participate in the GPs in schools program, to be signed upon enrolment (and a process to obtain such consents for students already enrolled)
- Explicit advice from the Australian government that Gillick competence is sufficient for assignment of benefit for bulk billing
- Exemption from the changes for practitioners working within recognised state-funded school health programs.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely



Assoc Prof Erica Gannon
President
AMA Queensland

Dr Brett Dale
Chief Executive Officer
AMA Queensland

Copied to: The Hon Tim Nicholls MP, Minister for Health and Ambulance Services