



BETTER ACCESS  
— AUSTRALIA —

## **BETTER ACCESS AUSTRALIA CALLS FOR SENATE**

### **INTERVENTION ON OPIATE DEPENDENCE TREATMENT PROGRAM**

Better Access Australia has written to the Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Delegated Legislation seeking their urgent intervention to end the financial discrimination for patients accessing opiate dependence medicines on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

“After weeks of inaction on this issue by the Minister of Health the Hon Greg Hunt MP, Better Access Australia is calling on the Parliament to urgently review the legal basis for this continuing discrimination and end the gap in access for some of the most vulnerable in our community.

“Why are these the only medicines on the PBS where a patient can be denied their co-payment and safety net protections and be charged unlimited out of pocket expenses on a daily basis at the recommendation of the government? And on what basis is this program denying these patients their legal protections under the National Health Act 1953?

“The Government and its advisory committees acknowledge that over 75% of patients accessing these medicines are facing these out-of-pocket costs, and further acknowledge those costs are a barrier to people accessing treatment for their chronic disease.

“The time has come to end the arguments about cost-shifting with the states and territories and put the patient at the centre of the system.

“The time has also come for the Government and the Parliament to stop and consider whether what they are doing is legal under the National Health Act, legal under the Legislation Act 2003 and legal under the Antidiscrimination Act.

That’s why Better Access Australia has written to Senator the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Senator the Hon Kim Carr, Senator Raff Ciccone, Senator Perin Davey, Senator Nita Green and Senator Paul Scarr to address this circumvention of the Australian Parliament and in doing so address this discrimination and end this gap in equality of access once and for all.

Mind the gap in equality of access to the PBS. A copy of the letter can be accessed [here](#).

**Better Access Australia**

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**BETTER HEALTH, DISABILITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

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