



The private health insurance reforms are already happening. Here's what you can do: for you and your patients.

The Federal Government's major reforms to private health insurance include a major attack on complementary medicine in Australia. From 1 April 2019, 16 natural therapies will be banned from private health insurance coverage

The changes follow the outcome of a poorly designed Government-funded report that declared there was no evidence to support the efficacy of commonly used natural therapy services including:

- Alexander technique
- Aromatherapy
- Bowen therapy
- Buteyko
- Feldenkrais
- Homeopathy
- Iridology
- Kinesiology
- Naturopathy
- Pilates
- Reflexology
- Rolfing
- Shiatsu
- Tai Chi
- Yoga
- Western Herbal Medicine

The Government has introduced regulations to ban private health insurers in Australia from offering benefit payments for these therapies. This move is supported by Labor.

Insurers can still offer "incentive" payments, which is similar to how they provide payments for gym memberships, but this is not the same as the regular "benefit" payments that individuals receive each time they have a treatment.

The Government claims it is trying to reduce the excessive rises in private health insurance costs. However, we firmly believe that these changes will in fact cost the health system more.

We know that people who avail themselves of natural health options are more likely to take greater care of their health. Prevention isn't just better than cure, it's also cheaper than cure.

At BioCeuticals, we have lobbied the Government and the Opposition to reconsider their attack on complementary medicine. And we will continue to fight for our industry both before and after the federal election.

While it might be too late to stop the reforms coming into effect on 1 April, there are a few things you can do to look after your practice, your policy and your patients.



1. Your Health Your Choice Campaign

With two out of three Australians using complementary medicine, these reforms are limiting the right of choice when it comes to healthcare. The Your Health Your Choice Campaign, supported by Complementary Medicines Australia, is a petition to call for a Senate Inquiry into bias against natural therapies and to ascertain why positive evidence was ignored by the Government-funded report. For more information, to donate or sign, visit www.yourhealthyourchoice.com.au

2. Write to your private health insurer

Private health insurance companies can still offer incentive payments (rather than the regular benefit payments) at their own cost and without the private health insurance rebate. Writing to your private health insurer requesting their support of these beneficial therapies shows advocacy for our industry and can help encourage the inclusion and accessibility to complementary medicines.

3. Review your insurance cover

It is always a good idea to review your health insurance cover every three to five years, however, with the reforms coming into place now is the ideal time to see if your cover is still appropriate for your needs and your budget.

4. Inform your patients and ask for their support

All of the above recommendations are important for your patients to be aware of. You can ask for their support in campaigning to have the changes reviewed through either signing the Your Health Your Choice petition, having them write to their insurers or even seeing if they can reach out to their Members of Parliament for assistance.

At BioCeuticals, we stand by institutions that support qualified natural health practitioners and we advocate for a regulated, accessible and inclusive healthcare industry. We are here to support the work of our practitioners and want to help you in any way we can during these reforms.

If you have any queries or suggestions, please reach out to us at cs@bioceuticals.com.au