

An Open Letter to Australia's Parliamentarians on Supporting People Living With Chronic Diseases

03 March 2026



More than 15 million Australians live with complex chronic disease. To effectively manage their conditions these Australians require more time with their specialist GP, more often.

We acknowledge the current Federal Government's commitment to increase access to bulk billed care. But not every long consultation with a specialist GP can be bulk billed.

The only way to reduce out of pocket costs for patients who can't be bulk billed is to increase the Medicare rebate patients receive for longer consults.

That's why we are calling on the Government to increase the patient Medicare rebate for longer consultations by 40% (Level C [20–40 minutes] and Level D [40+ minutes]).

Currently, the per minute value of patient Medicare rebates decreases as patients spend more time with their specialist GP. That means, for many people, the sicker you are – the more you pay out of pocket.

When people can't afford longer GP appointments, health conditions get worse. Complications and other health issues develop. **People get sicker and need expensive hospital care.**

Affordable access to long GP appointments will continue to drive bulk billing rates up, reducing preventable hospital admissions and emergency department presentations to ease the strain on our hospitals.

Analysis shows increasing patient Medicare rebates for long GP appointments would deliver **more than \$338.9 million in annual healthcare system savings and mean more than 85% of these appointments could be bulk billed.**

Our health system must cover the care that keeps people well – not penalise the time it takes to deliver it because there is simply **no substitute for high-quality GP care** from a specialist GP who knows you and your history.

On behalf of our collective memberships, we are asking all Members and Senators to improve access to affordable GP care for people with chronic disease by publicly backing our call for a 40% increase to patient Medicare rebates for longer specialist GP consultations.

Yours sincerely,

ANZ Forum for Autoinflammatory Diseases | Australian Patient Advocacy Alliance | ausEE Inc | Australian Sickle Cell Advocacy | Dementia Australia | Diabetes Australia | Emerge Australia | Hidradenitis Suppurativa Australia | Kidney Health Australia | Metastatic Breast Cancer Action Australia | MND Australia | MS Australia | Palliative Care Australia | Parkinson's Australia | Parenteral Nutrition Down Under | Royal Australian College of General Practitioners | Rare Voices | Scleroderma Australia | Sexual and Reproductive Health Australia | Sjögren's Australia | Stroke Foundation.