



Andrew Wilkie MP
INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR CLARK

The Hon Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

Greg

I write in support of the request made by the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA) for a temporary counselling Medicare item to support community mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I understand there is a shortage of mental health services across Australia, particularly in regional areas, with long waiting times for psychology services. At the same time I am told PACFA members are ideally placed to assist vulnerable Australians in a timely manner, with good coverage outside major cities. A temporary COVID-19 Medicare item would enable endorsed PACFA counsellors and psychotherapists to provide greatly needed services following a GP referral.

This relatively cost effective, innovative solution is in line with other Government initiatives arising from the pandemic. It would immediately increase the capacity to provide mental health services in the community, using the existing qualified workforce already in situ.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Wilkie MP
Independent Member for Clark

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