

# Plain Language Statement

Centre for Health Policy, School of Population and Global Health,  
Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry, and Health Sciences



## ***Project: Mind the gap: Price transparency in the Australian healthcare system***

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### **Introduction**

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research project. The following few pages will provide you with further information about the project, so that you can decide if you would like to take part in this research.

Please take the time to read this information carefully. You may ask questions about anything you don't understand or want to know more about.

Your participation is voluntary. If you don't wish to take part, you don't have to. If you begin participating, you can also stop at any time.

### **What is this research about?**

In the Australian private health care market, there is large variation in specialist fees, and patient out-of-pocket costs are rising. This topic has received widespread public attention, and has been the subject of a Senate inquiry, reports from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and a Four Corners investigation. This project seeks to describe inpatient out-of-pocket costs amongst specialties and geographic regions, explore reasons for variation in out-of-pocket costs for the same procedure, and gain a better understanding of the factors you use to set your fees, bulk bill, or use gap cover.

### **What will I be asked to do?**

Should you agree to participate, you will participate in a semi-structured interview via telephone with Dr. Prang or Dr La Brooy. The interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes and will be audio recorded for the purposes of analysis. These recordings will only be used by the research team to analyse the data. Topics we would like to discuss include your opinions on government rebates, insurance gap schemes, out-of-pocket healthcare costs, knowledge and usage of price transparency websites, how you set fees, and costs associated with your practice.

### **What are the possible benefits?**

The findings from the interviews will be used to help understand the context of fee setting and pricing decisions, so we can better understand the reasons why fees change and decisions to bulk bill or use gap cover. This will help understand the barriers and facilitators to reducing out-of-pocket costs for patients

whilst maintaining private practice business models in Australia, with the goal of developing/improving price transparency initiatives.

### **What are the possible risks?**

This is a very low risk project with negligible risk for participants.

### **Do I have to take part?**

No. Participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw unprocessed data.

### **Will I hear about the results of this project?**

Findings will be presented at conferences and a paper will be published in an open-access journal with quotes from participants de-identified. Participants will receive a summary of findings as well as access to the paper once published upon request.

### **What will happen to information about me?**

The digital recording of your interview will be transcribed, and a copy of the recording and the transcription will be securely stored on the computer. The recording of the interview will be deleted from the audio recorder. Both the audio and transcripts will identify participants by a study code number only, and quotes from participants will be de-identified in the published paper.

Data will be securely kept in a password-protected university server and will only be accessible to the researchers involved in the study. Data will be kept for five years and will be deleted from the university server after that.

### **How is this project being funded?**

This project is funded through the University of Melbourne and Medibank Better Health Foundation.

### **Where can I get further information?**

If you would like more information about the project, please contact the researchers; Prof Adam Elshaug at +61 3 8344 2595 [adam.elshaug@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:adam.elshaug@unimelb.edu.au) or Dr. Prang at +61 3 9035 8778 [khic-houy.prang@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:khic-houy.prang@unimelb.edu.au)

### **Who can I contact if I have any concerns about the project?**

This project has human research ethics approval from The University of Melbourne [13873]. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the research team, you should contact the Research Integrity Administrator, Office of Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. Tel: +61 8344 1376 or Email: [research-integrity@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:research-integrity@unimelb.edu.au). All complaints will be treated confidentially. In any correspondence please provide the name of the research team/or the name or ethics ID number of the research project.