



Private Healthcare Australia
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Dr Rachel David
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

19th November 2020

The Hon Greg Hunt
Minister for Health
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

Re: Natural therapies review

I'm writing to recommend in light of the work generated for health funds and the Department of Health during this difficult period, and the low value at stake, that we draw the Natural Therapies Review to a close. The list of therapies that private health insurance is unable to cover should be repealed and the funding of those therapies left to the discretion of the funds.

There is no sound public policy argument for government intervention in this area. Private health insurers are capable of assessing the evidence and determining the market value of these therapies for their customers. They are also committed to the safety of their members and regularly monitor this sector for inappropriate claims.

Halting the review will free up resources in the Department of Health for other government priorities. The government will be able to disband the Natural Therapies Review Expert Advisory Panel and the Natural Therapies Working Committee to free up time for those individuals, including Professor Kidd who has had a key role in Australia's response to COVID-19. We are confident the departmental staff who have supported the review to this point could be used effectively in more important areas such as the pandemic response.

Halting the Natural Therapies Review will also save professional associations and interest groups the time, effort and expense of responding to the review.

We note that the information collected by the review to date will be valuable to health funds and ask that it remain public.

Repealing the list of therapies that private health insurers are unable to cover will allow funds to make choices about the products they offer their customers. It will also contribute to the government's 'cutting red tape' initiative.

Hundreds of thousands of Australians use the therapies subject to the review, and allowing health funds to cover some or all of these therapies (if they choose to do so) will ensure they are more accessible to the community.

Should you or your department have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact Ben Harris, Director Policy and Research, on telephone 0418 110 863 or email ben.harris@pha.org.au.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Rachel David
Chief Executive Officer