

November 4th, 2012

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

References Committee

Christine McDonald, Secretary

PO Box 6100,

Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600 Tel: (02) 6277 3530 Fax: (02) 6277 5809

Email: fpa.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Madame Secretary,

Re: Submission - **Inquiry into Medicare funding for Hyperbaric Oxygen Treatment**

I am Manager of Podiatry at Austin Health, Heidelberg, Victoria as well as a Private Practitioner. The service provides holistic management of patients with foot ulcers stemming from a variety of aetiologies. We have medical and surgical support, however in a limb-threatening situation, where revascularization has been performed and infection has been treated, chronic wounds can persist. There are many factors that contribute to this, one of which is hypoxia.

Over many years, I have been witness to the success of treating our patients' chronic foot and leg wounds with hyperbaric oxygen therapy. Chronic wounds are an enormous financial burden on the health care system – hospital bed days, antibiotics, wound dressings, Specialist consultations etc. To the person with a chronic wound, there are many additional burdens such as social (isolation, wound odour and leakage, job stress or job loss, dependence, financial strain – cost of dressings and treatment), and psychological (depression, anxiety, frustration, anger).

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy is an evidence-based form of non-invasive treatment that has only positive effects on tissue to aid healing. The patients themselves speak very highly of the service and are so happy and thankful when their wounds finally heal after many months or years!!

It is disappointing to hear of Medicare funding being cancelled for non-diabetes wounds that may benefit from this form of treatment. The alternative is increased hospital admissions, delayed healing, surgery – debridements and skin grafts, more antibiotics and possibly amputation. I do not see the cost advantage.

Please re-consider.

Julie A. Miller

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