



35 Queens Parade, Clifton Hill VIC 3068 | P. 03 90883258 | F. 03 90883257  
[admin@thecranegp.com.au](mailto:admin@thecranegp.com.au) | [www.thecranegp.com.au](http://www.thecranegp.com.au)

## Why GPs can no longer bulk-bill

Medicare has failed bulk-billing. As a GP business owner and a believer in quality care, I would like to share the article below written by a GP colleague to patients. It is a long article but worth the read. Please share it with your personal networks, community groups, your local Members, your Councillors and your media contacts.

Thank you,  
Dr Shueh Hwuei Lim  
Principal GP.

“Friends, hear me out. Come at this from a place of learning and growth mindset, as the vast majority of people have no clue how the business of General Practice works.

Bulk-billing is no longer sustainable in Australia without substantial sacrifice to consultation time (think 5 minute medicine), and even then, many practices will struggle to survive. Gaps are now essential for practices to survive. GPs are now at breaking point, and it can't go on.

Please understand, the Medicare rebate is YOUR payout from the Government to help YOU pay for your healthcare. It has nothing to do with the ACTUAL COST of your healthcare, which is MORE THAN DOUBLE your rebate amount, as per the AMA recommendation.

Medicare does not pay GPs. Medicare pays YOU. When you're bulk-billed, you provide consent to redirect YOUR rebate to your GP as payment for their service. The GP just simply misses out on the difference between the Government's handout to you, and the actual value of their service provided.

At the moment, your rebate stands at \$39.10 for any consult lasting between 6 to 20 minutes, which has to cover... room rental, disposables and other overheads, nursing salary, receptionist salary, compulsory medicolegal insurance, income protection, superannuation, income tax, mandatory professional development, etc etc. And some left over for the doctor to live off. It's <\$10, just so you know. Times that by 4 per hour, because unless you're looking for a churn and burn practice, you expect at least 15 mins with your doc, right? Yeah.

The vast majority of GPs get NO annual/ sick/ maternity/ compassionate/ long service leave. No leave entitlements. At all. Sick at home? No pay. Have a baby? No pay. You don't show up to your appointment? Your GP doesn't get paid.

GPs are private small business owners. Just like your local independent retailer, your freelance artist, your tradie. They are not paid by Medicare. Medicare pays you, Medicare determines your rebate and how much help they want you to receive to pay your health bills. GPs have just been absorbing the difference for years, while slowly watching the profession erode under the strain.

So my suggestion to you is, before you get your knickers in a twist about the recent media attention over GPs moving away from bulk-billing and you start hating on GPs, ask yourself:

1. Do I really understand the issue fully? What is bulk-billing and who is actually holding back funding for my healthcare? (spoiler- it's not the GPs)
2. Who is it really that I should direct my frustration towards? (spoiler- it's not the GPs)

How much is 20 minutes of your GP's time worth to you? For example, I am a sole trader with 15 years worth of professional training behind me, so what is the economic value of my time to you? If your answer is "but healthcare should be free", take that up with your local member. Only the Government have the power to pay you more for your healthcare needs to be free of charge. They need to keep up with the cost of running a practice, and they haven't (not even close), so who suffers? You do, and so do the GPs.

Every time your GP bulk-bills your consult, they take more than a 50% pay cut to what the AMA recommends they should charge. They absorb that for you. It's slowly killing their business viability. That's why they're introducing a gap.

You know what is also slowly killing GPs? Misdirected anger. Please. It's not our fault. Please learn, and commit to understanding better. Want cheaper healthcare? Start turning up the heat on the Government to give you higher Medicare rebates. And perhaps show a little compassion for your hard-working GP who would be much better off if they got a cent for every time they have to explain to people that we're not Medicare-funded puppets, we're small business owners just trying to keep our business AND our patients alive while the media and some big wigs are trying very hard to make you believe that we're the enemy. ❤️

We're not the enemy.

Thanks for listening."