

Australian Medical Association Limited
ABN 37 008 426 793

42 Macquarie Street, Barton ACT 2600: PO Box 6090, Kingston ACT 2604
 Telephone: (02) 6270 5400 Facsimile (02) 6270 5499
 Website : <http://www.ama.com.au/>



EMPOWERING PATIENTS TO TALK ABOUT MEDICAL FEES
AMA launches Informed Financial Consent (IFC) guide

The AMA today released a new guide – *Informed Financial Consent: A Collaboration Between Doctors and Patients* – to empower patients with important information to help them understand medical costs, and give them confidence to discuss and question fees with their doctors.

The guide – co-badged with more than a dozen leading medical Colleges, Associations, and Societies – was launched this morning at Parliament House in Canberra by Health Minister, Greg Hunt.

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said the Informed Financial Consent (IFC) guide is a major step in helping to build health financial literacy for health consumers.

“The IFC guide will provide people with clear, easy-to-understand information to help them navigate the health system,” Dr Bartone said

“It will help patients in their conversations with doctors and practice managers about fees for their medical procedures.

“It will empower them to ask questions – the right questions.

“The whole IFC process will provide information that will give patients and their families greater comfort and security as they go into surgery or treatment.

“It is up to the medical profession to take the lead in this critical area, especially regarding private health insurance coverage and the complexity of costs for health care.

“Out-of-pocket medical costs are not the major cause of discontent with health insurance among consumers - unexpected gaps are the problem.

“Most consumers understand that they may need to contribute to the cost of their care.

“The problem facing consumers is that they don’t always know how much they are covered for by their insurer, and therefore their out-of-pocket cost.

“It’s why we have called this guide a collaboration – we are working with patients to try and end the uncertainty where possible.”

The AMA has been working to support doctors to improve their informed financial consent practices, to educate the public, and to inform the policy debate.

The Informed Financial Consent (IFC) guide includes:

- an Informed Financial Consent Form for doctors and patients to use together;
- information on fees and medical gaps; and
- questions for patients to ask their doctors about costs.

The AMA acknowledges the partnership, co-badging, and cooperation in the development and production of this guide from:

- Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP);
- Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP);
- Council of Procedural Specialists (COPS);
- Medical Surgical Assistants Society of Australia (MSA);
- Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS);
- The Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand (TSANZ);
- General Surgeons Australia (GSA);
- Australian and New Zealand Society of Cardiac and Thoracic Surgeons (ANZSCTS);
- Australian Doctors Federation (ADF);
- National Association of Specialist Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (NASOG);
- National Association of Practising Psychiatrists (NAPP);
- Australian Society of Orthopaedic Surgeons (ASOS); and
- Australasian Sleep Association (ASA).

The AMA and these groups will promote and disseminate the guide through their memberships. Other medical groups are expected to sign up to the guide and join in its promotion.

It will be available from doctors, medical practices, the AMA website, and the websites of other medical organisations.

Informed Financial Consent: A Collaboration Between Doctors and Patients is available at <https://ama.com.au/submission/informed-financial-consent-%E2%80%93-collaboration-between-doctors-and-patients>

More information is available at <https://ama.com.au/article/ama-informed-financial-consent>

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CONTACT: John Flannery 02 6270 5477 / 0419 494 761
 Maria Hawthorne 02 6270 5478 / 0427 209 753

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