
From: Phil Morrissey [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 10 June 2021 4:44 PM
To: Exemptions
Subject: AA1000542 - Honeysuckle Health - submission

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write in response to the Draft Determination related to the Application for authorisation lodged by Honeysuckle Health Pty Ltd and nib health funds limited in respect of the Honeysuckle Health Buying Group.

I am a consultant anaesthetist in mixed private and public practice in the ACT, and am greatly concerned by this proposed application by Honeysuckle Health. I am extremely concerned that this amounts to an attempt to bring in US-style managed care to Australia, and will result in deterioration of Australian healthcare standards. The system proposed risks pushing Australian healthcare headlong down the path to managed care. The US managed care healthcare system is the most expensive in the world, with clinical outcomes which lag well behind those in Australia. Approving this Draft Determination risks damaging the foundations of Australia's world class healthcare system.

I am very concerned about the power the proposed arrangement would place in the hands of large for-profit health corporations and their plans to change the funding and delivery of healthcare in Australia.

What is proposed in this Draft Determination will result in patients losing choice. Choice of hospitals, choice of allied health professionals, and (most importantly) choice of their own doctor.

Patients in Australia must be free to have a choice of doctor, and not be limited to a selection of doctors within a closed network run by an entity such as Honeysuckle Health.

Medical doctors, of all specialties, must be free to make choices about clinical care without burdensome pressure from contractual arrangements with for-profit health insurance companies. We cannot allow health insurance companies to dictate how and where patients will be treated.

Ultimately, these large for-profit companies main objective and fiduciary duties to their shareholders is to limit expenses and maximise shareholder returns. Approving this authorisation by Honeysuckle Health Buying Group will result in further intrusions into the Australian healthcare system by corporations who seek to decrease competition and take away the ability Australians have in choosing their own doctors, hospital, and allied health professionals. What this Draft Determination does is allow a 'foot in the door' of US-style managed care into the Australian healthcare system, which will only grow further once it has been introduced and will lead to decreasing health outcomes in our country.

I hope that the ACCC will see that this proposal will send Australia down the path of managed care, and put the welfare of Australian patients above that of corporate healthcare companies.

Yours sincerely,

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