

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June

Australian Competition & Consumer Commission  
GPO Box 3131  
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Sir or Madam,

**RE: AA1000542 – Honeysuckle Health – submission**

I am a consultant anaesthetist working in both the public and private sector in the Melbourne metropolitan area.

I am writing to you regarding the draft determination proposing to authorise Honeysuckle Health and nib health funds to form and operate a health services buying group for five years. I am personally very concerned about the power and influence of large for-profit health corporations and their plans to change the funding and delivery of healthcare in Australia. The Managed Care model effectively gives control of our health care standards to commercial interests and ultimately has the grave potential to damage the foundations of Australia's world-class healthcare system. Managed care is the predominant funding process in the United States, which represents the most expensive healthcare system with the poorest health outcomes.

Medical specialists must be free to make decisions about clinical care without burdensome pressure from contracts with health insurance companies. We cannot allow health insurance companies to dictate how and where patients will be treated. It is essential that we must protect the right of Australians to have a choice of doctor, and not be limited to a selection of doctors within a closed network.

I feel it is essential that the ACC to act to protect the independence of the doctor patient relationship and prevent the detrimental impact on both patients and the quality of the Australian health system. My thoughts are echoed by the vast majority of my colleagues in Victoria and collectively we feel the urgent need to intervene to protect our world-class healthcare system.

I trust that you share my concerns and I seek your reassurance that we are not moving towards Managed Care in Australia.

I look forward to receiving your reply.

Yours Sincerely,



Dr Thomas Callaghan  
Specialist Anaesthetist  
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