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## **Doctors working together to explain out-of-pocket expenses**

A new resource, developed in consultation with the National Association of Specialist Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (NASOG), aims to help patients and doctors better understand out-of-pocket expenses, and what medical costs are covered by the Government and health funds.

The Minister for Health the Hon Greg Hunt MP, released the *Informed Financial Consent* document at Parliament House today.

Developed by the AMA and cobranding by a number of doctors' groups – including NASOG – the document is designed to encourage a collaboration between doctors and patients, and will help patients to better understand their healthcare and its costs.

Vice President of NASOG Dr Gary Swift said the release of *Informed Financial Consent* was timely given the debate over out-of-pocket expenses.

“Unfortunately in the debate it is often the patient who is left wondering how these expenses come about and the Government’s plan for a website listing specialist doctors’ fees would do little to address this,” Dr Swift said.

“This resource fills in the information gap and explains clearly to patients what is often involved in their treatment.

“NASOG was an active participant in developing this resource because specialist obstetricians and gynaecologists also are concerned about out-of-pocket expenses and the pressure they put on patients accessing private care.

“Regrettably these pressures are most evident in areas like obstetrics and gynaecology where the Medicare Benefits Schedule has never valued these services.

The *Informed Financial Consent* document encourages greater communication between patients and doctors regarding the cost of treatment.

“As the document points out, the doctor-patient relationship is a partnership. Working together, we can achieve better healthcare outcomes. The relationship is built on mutual respect, communication, and trust.

“This means that both parties ask questions and provide information to agree on a treatment plan, together.

“Using the *Informed Financial Consent* document as a starting point we can improve the exchange of communication and help remove any doubt over typical medical costs.

Ultimately, informed financial consent outlines how a patient may have to pay for medical services, and how to talk to their fund to determine it.”

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**For all Media Inquiries**, please contact NASOG CEO Caroline Khalil on 0400 101 109.

The National Association of Specialist Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (NASOG) is a not-for-profit professional association representing specialist obstetricians and gynaecologists, the leading providers of specialist women’s health services.