



National Association of
Specialist Obstetricians & Gynaecologists

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Please Don't Hurt Mothers-to-Be: Doctors Plead with Government.

Australian families who seek specialist obstetric care during pregnancy will be up to \$1,830 worse off if the Australian Government does not reconsider its proposed cuts to Medicare payments before the Senate this week.

Australia's peak group of specialist obstetricians warned today the Government's budget decision to cut key patient payments for obstetric services will significantly affect affordability for all Australian women seeking specialist assistance with their pregnancy and the birth of their child.

Dr Hilary Joyce, President of the National Association of Specialist Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (NASOG), warned that under the Bill going before the Senate this week, all patients embarking on having a family will be worse off when they go to see their specialist obstetrician.

"We are concerned about the families who won't be able to afford the choice of their own obstetrician because of these proposed Medicare cuts. Where will they go now? Will they be forced into the already overwhelmed public hospital system? That simply is not good enough for Australian women" said Dr Joyce.

Dr Joyce said that the majority Government Senate report into the impact of the proposed cuts to obstetric services expressed concern about the lack of consultation with patients and doctor groups.

"We want to work with the Government to show that the advice it has received on this complex issue contains many misconceptions and errors.

"All couples who undertake fertility treatments and then who need special obstetric care throughout their pregnancy will be hit hard with the double financial whammy of fertility treatment and maternity treatment cuts to Medicare", Dr Joyce said. "These patients now face significant additional out of pocket costs running into many thousands of dollars."

"I know our Minister for Health and Ageing cares about pregnant women and their babies. We are asking the Minister and all Senators to reconsider this proposal until all affected parties have been given an opportunity to consider the full range of implications and offer alternative solutions."

Dr Joyce said her organisation looked forward to working with the Minister, Senators and Members of the Parliament to seek a better way forward without hurting families.

"I have deep concerns for our patients who go through enormous stress and financial hardship to become pregnant and give birth in order to fulfil their dreams of parenthood," Dr Joyce said.

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About NASOG: 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. Australia is recognised as one of the safest countries in the world to give birth or to be born. **NASOG** strongly endorses our **collaborative, proactive model of obstetric and midwifery care** for all women giving birth in Australia. The safety of this existing model of care is confirmed by research from Australia and around the world. www.nasog.com.au