

FOR PATIENTS

How Do Medibank Private's Actions Impact My Healthcare?

What is Medibank Private Doing?

As reported recently in the media, Medibank Private is using its size and market power to impose measures on hospitals that mean nothing in the health care sector and will not improve care for patients like you and your family.

Medibank has developed a list of 165 events that may occur in a hospital, including falls and surgical complications. If one of these 165 events occur while you are in hospital, Medibank may not pay for your entire hospital treatment.

Medibank's claim that this strategy will improve the quality of your healthcare is false. This list of events was created in isolation by Medibank and is not based on accepted clinical standards. It has not been validated by any external safety and quality governing body.

In addition, Medibank Private is seeking to impose penalties on hospitals in certain circumstances involving complications or readmission to hospital within 28 days, even if the reason for readmission is out of the hospital's control. These penalties will inevitably make it harder for many patients, particularly those who are chronically ill or at end of life to receive care.

Why are hospitals opposed to Medibank's proposals?

Medibank's tactics are focused on increasing their shareholder's return and are not based on evidence of improvement of safety or quality of care. These tactics will impact harshly on Medibank Private members who are aged, vulnerable, chronically ill and those at the end of their lives.

This is an example of insurers dictating to private hospitals and doctors how they should provide medical care to their patients.

*Hospitals are **not opposed** to quality measures in contracts with health funds provided they are:*

- Based on evidence
- Likely to lead to improvements in healthcare delivery
- Relate to risks that hospitals can manage.

None of Medibank's measures fit these criteria.

What are hospitals and doctors doing?

Private hospitals are committed to safe and quality care and recognise the need to continually monitor and improve quality and performance for patients. We do not agree with Medibank's approach which infers that quality is not up to standard in private hospitals when all the evidence shows that we do in fact have a very high standard in this country. However, quality can always be improved and we are working with the medical profession and the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare (ACSQHC) to reach a consensus on agreed quality indicators that can lead to improved outcomes. We are urging all health funds, including Medibank, to join us in this endeavour.

What can you do?

- Talk to Medibank Private and register your concern about these actions. Encourage them to work with hospitals, doctors and the ACSQHC to develop measures that advance healthcare for all Australians.
- If you wish to switch to another health fund, you can do so without penalty. You can find out more at <http://www.phio.org.au/downloads/file/PublicationItems/RightToChange.pdf>