

Australian Society of Ophthalmologists Inc. ABN 29 454 001 424

Did Sussan Ley really just say that?

ASO's disappointed by Minister's muddled explanation of Medicare

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Federal Health Minister Sussan Ley has given a muddled explanation of Medicare during Question Time in Parliament today, prompting the Australian Society of Ophthalmologists (ASO) to question her understanding of how the system works.

“Medicare is the system invested in by taxpayers that remunerates doctors for procedures they make on behalf of patients,” Ms Ley told Parliament.

“...Medicare pays your doctor the Medicare rebate then your doctor decides what they may or may not charge you,” she said.

Correction Minister, says the ASO. Medicare is a Commonwealth funded health insurance scheme that subsidises health care services to patients.

In fact, visit the official Medicare website and you will be greeted by the following introduction:

We provide payments and services that can help when you, or someone you care for, use health care services or buy medicines.

“Medicare **DOES NOT** exist to remunerate doctors,” ASO President Dr Michael Steiner said.

“Medicare is a publicly funded, universal health system operated by government authority. It entitles Australians to subsidised treatment from medical practitioners, eligible midwives, nurse practitioners and allied health professionals who have been issued a Medicare provider number. Patients can also receive free treatment in our public hospitals,” Dr Steiner said.

“With a major review of the system currently underway it is important the Health Minister understands the fundamentals of how Medicare operates,” he said.

“Medicare should reflect the costs of providing health care services. If it does there won't be gaps for patients and if it doesn't, then unfortunately there will be,” Dr Steiner said.

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