

17 October 2018

Mr Trent Zimmerman MP  
Chairperson, Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport  
C/-Committee Secretariat  
PO Box 6021, Parliament House  
Canberra, ACT 2600

E: [health.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:health.reps@aph.gov.au)

Dear Mr Zimmerman,

**Re: Inquiry into Sleep Health Awareness in Australia**

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback and comments on the Terms of Reference for the above Inquiry.

General practitioners (GPs) are best placed to manage the sleep health of patients, along with the comorbidities that are often associated and present. It is important that an evidence-based, patient-centred approach is used for diagnosis and management. For sleep health issues, such as obstructive sleep apnoea, it is important to also consider the management of the patient's weight and stress.

In order to provide and encourage continuity of care in general practice, the RACGP believes the introduction of a Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) item number for organised sleep studies in general practice has the potential to greatly improve access to evidence based services for patients in need. Integration of such studies into primary care, and away from specialist based services and tertiary care, can potentially achieve more effective results and decrease costs. However, relevant standards should be in place before such studies can be undertaken,

A significant barrier to patients related with good sleep health is the cost and access associated with the diagnosis (eg sleep studies) and management (eg use and upkeep of equipment such as continuous positive airway pressure [CPAP]), especially for patients with lower socio-economic status, and those in regional, rural and remote communities. Appropriate standards need to be established to avoid the overdiagnosis and underdiagnosis of certain patient population groups.

We look forward to hearing about this Inquiry's progress and outcomes.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Harry Nespolon  
President