



28 August 2002

Ref: 02-025

GP Compliance Costs  
Productivity Commission  
Locked Bag 2  
Collins Street East Post Office  
MELBOURNE 8003  
(By e-mail)

Dear Ms Owens,

**RE: GP Compliance Costs**

The Policy Committee of North West Melbourne Division of General Practice considered the Terms of Reference for your research study into GP Compliance Costs on 23 August 2002.

The Policy Committee comprises 7 GPs (our Board of Directors) and 2 consumer representatives. A number of potential short-comings were identified and discussed. The Committee make the following comments:

- We note that a survey of GPs will be undertaken to assist with the identification of GP time in completing Commonwealth compulsory forms. The Committee is of the view that the timing of this survey is vital to ensure an accurate reflection of the time involved. Our GPs commented that the number of forms to be completed in any one week can vary significantly. You may wish to consider staggering the completion of the forms.
- It was unclear as to whether the GPs being surveyed would be paid to complete the survey. Our GPs members were strongly of the view that any GP participating in the survey should be paid to do so.
- It was noted that the requirement of Medicare for GPs to write referrals to hospitals and specialists was not to be included in the study. As you are aware a GP referral reduces the costs of specialist services to the consumer. Our GPs commented that the referral process can be extremely time consuming and as it is a Commonwealth requirement, should be included within the study.
- In the event that the survey is not to be a general survey for all GPs, the Policy Committee was strongly of the view that socio-economic factors must be taken into account when selecting areas and/or GPs to be surveyed. Those geographical areas with lower socio-economic populations would generally have greater call on the services requiring the forms to be completed. The Committee was also of the view that the demands on GPs working with lower socio-economic populations, may impact on their decision to participate in any survey being undertaken. This was one of the reasons for the second dot point above.

- Whilst it is evident that the survey is only to include Commonwealth requirements, the Committee was of the view that these requirements must be within the context of State and Local Government requirements, such as disabled parking permits. The Committee was of the view that an understanding of the general requirements of other government levels, would assist the Commission in its undertaking.

North West Melbourne Division of General Practice wishes you every success in your undertaking. The Division is happy to assist you however possible.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carolyn Searle".

Carolyn Searle  
**Executive Officer**