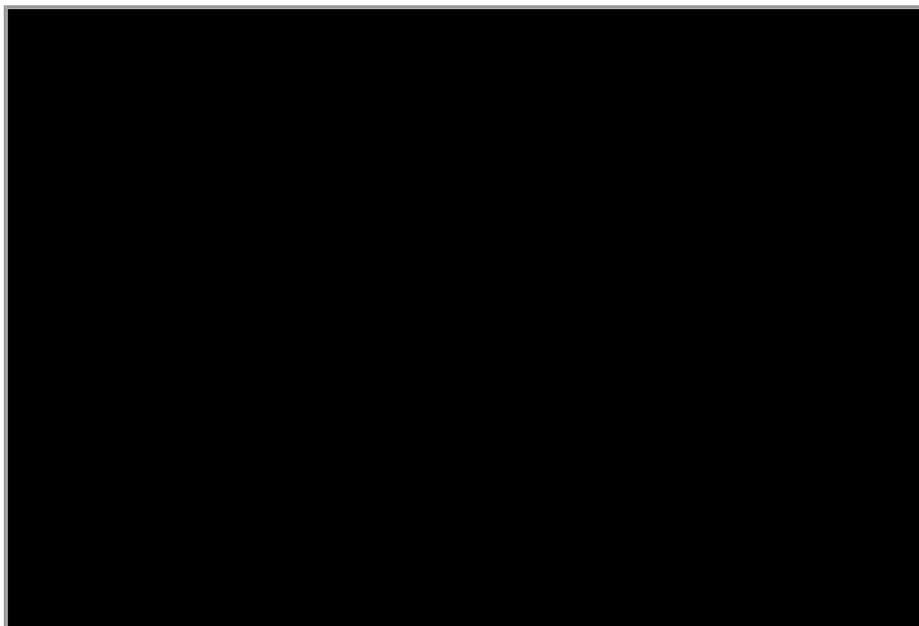


GP campaign targets Medicare reviews

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GPs are shying away from subspecialising in crucial fields because of the threat of coming to the attention of Medicare and the Professional Services Review (PSR), according to supporters of a new campaign.



The campaign, led by Adelaide practice management consultant David Dahm, features a YouTube video broadly calling for less government involvement in general practice matters and a rethink of how GPs are scrutinised by Medicare.

Mr Dahm said GPs who specialised in certain areas, such as female GPs who consulted female patients, unfairly appeared on Medicare records as “statistical outliers” as their consult times tended to be higher than average.

“Women find it hard enough to go and get a Pap smear and they find it hard enough to find a female,” Mr Dahm said.

“These services that people want and need, they’re not getting access to it. Practices who want to innovate can’t and won’t because they don’t want to appear on the Medicare radar. There is no profile of clinical subspecialty when it comes to Medicare.”

Mr Dahm, who wants posters demanding less government involvement in GPs’ waiting rooms across the country, said the PSR was not sufficiently independent because it was funded by the federal government. To determine a fairer Medicare regulation system the government needed “to seriously consult the medical profession and the appropriate medical professional bodies.

“You’ve got to have clinical bodies that set the clinical standards; that’s where this conversation needs to be moving towards.”

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Australian Doctors Union spokesman Dr Scott Masters said as well as female GPs, the PSR targeted GPs working in Indigenous medicine, who typically billed for longer consults, and country GPs who were often called to the hospital for one particular procedure.

“It should be a better system, rather than just picking on statistical outliers,” he said. “They could just do random audits. The simplest system would be just to make the MBS more straightforward. At the moment it’s a 600-page waffle that nobody can interpret.”

The campaign has a working title of ‘I Want To Get Between Your Legs’, but Mr Dahm said he was holding a competition for a permanent moniker.