

The Hon Nicola Roxon, MP
Minister for Health and Ageing
MG 50
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister Roxon,

Re: Medicare Funding of Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT)

I am writing to request that the issue of Medicare funding of Optical Coherence Tomography be urgently reviewed.

The cost of Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT) is being borne entirely by patients as a result of the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC) decision which failed to recommend public funding of OCT for the assessment of macular disease, in particular Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD).

Optical Coherence Tomography forms an essential part of the assessment and management of AMD. It is a painless, non-invasive, risk free diagnostic test that has been utilised in clinical practice in Australia for over five years and is an internationally accepted test used around the world.

The Government generously funds, via the PBS, the AMD treatment drug, Lucentis, which is administered by injection. The OCT test is an integral part of patient treatment as it determines whether another Lucentis injection is required and guides the maintenance therapy, yet it is not funded by Medicare.

The only alternative to OCT is to have a fluorescein angiogram, which is an invasive test with occasional severe side-effects, which is funded by Medicare.

Medicare accepts OCT as evidence for the funding of Lucentis treatment for AMD if a fluorescein angiogram is contraindicated.

OCT has been funded by the Australian Department of Veterans' Affairs since 2005.

The OCT test must be subsidised with a Medicare rebate. I sincerely request that the matter be reviewed as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely,

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____