Date Introduced: 27 August 1980
House: House of Representatives

Short Digest of Bill

Purpose

The Bill amends the Health Insurance Act 1973 ("the Act") to extend eligibility for pensioner health fringe benefits to sickness beneficiaries, and to include in the medical benefits schedule certain items which relate to orthodontic treatment for cleft lip and cleft palate conditions.

Background

The Bill brings sickness beneficiaries into line with other pensioner health beneficiaries.

The Bill also represents government recognition of the fact that some 600 children are born in Australia each year with cleft lip and cleft palate conditions which require multi-disciplinary treatment by doctors, orthodontists and related practitioners. The treatment is expensive and places a heavy burden on the families of such children.

Main Provisions

Clause 3(1) inserts in s.3 of the Act a definition of an "accredited dental practitioner", and includes in the definition of "professional services", a service by an accredited dental practitioner rendered to a referred dental patient under the age of 22 years. The clause also inserts a definition of "referred dental patient", being a person under the age of 22 years suffering from a cleft lip or cleft palate condition.

Clause 3(2) extends the definition of "eligible pensioner" in s.3(1)(a)(i) and s.3(10)(a) to include a person who is paid a sickness benefit.
Clause 4 provides that the medical services rendered overseas for which a medical benefit may be payable do not include services by 'accredited dental practitioners'.

10 September 1980

Education and Welfare Group
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