



**NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Media Release**

**Tuesday 12 August 2014**

**COTA NSW URGES GOVT TO SCRAP MEDICARE CO-PAYMENT FOR PENSIONERS**

“News that the Government is reconsidering its plan to make pensioners pay \$7.00 when they visit their GP is very welcome,” says Ian Day, CEO of COTA NSW.

“Older people continually tell us that health is their top priority. We ran a poll during Seniors Week this year asking what most concerned people aged 50 and over. The overwhelming majority of respondents said they were worried about cost of living pressures and healthcare.”

“Obviously, if you start making people pay when they visit the doctor you increase cost of living pressures. Often, older people have medical needs which compel them to visit the doctor regularly. They don’t go to their GP because they’re malingering - they go because they’re managing their health responsibly.”

“Primary health care is the most efficient part of Australia’s health care system. Unfortunately, the Medicare co-payment announced in the Budget has the potential to stop people from going to the doctor when they needed to do so.”

“As many medical professionals have noted, if people don’t visit the doctor when they should, they run the risk of minor health issues turning into major health problems. Everybody is aware this is undesirable, both in terms of patient health and the country’s ability to fund healthcare.”

**COTA NSW CEO, Ian Day, is available for interview: 0417 210 234**

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