



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Health and Ageing**

**Medicare – Continuation of Bulk-billing Incentives for GPs in Areas of Workforce Shortage and Lower than Average Bulk-billing Rates**

**Why is this important?**

- This initiative will continue to improve access to bulk-billed GP services in eligible areas of doctor shortage with lower bulk-billing rates. Since the introduction of higher incentives, GPs in eligible metropolitan areas have increased bulk billing by almost 8 percentage points. This represents an additional 8.7 million bulk-billed consultations per year, with the higher incentive (currently \$7.85) paid to around 5,000 GPs.

**Who will benefit?**

- This initiative will benefit people with Commonwealth Concession Cards and children under 16 living in eligible metropolitan areas who will continue to have improved access to bulk-billed GP services. Around 1.6 million patients per year are expected to benefit from this initiative.

**What funding is the Government committing to this initiative?**

- The Government has committed continued funding of \$41.6 million over the next two years to continue higher bulk-billing incentives in eligible metropolitan areas. This is a demand-driven programme, and additional funding will be appropriated as required.

**What have we done in the past?**

- The Government first introduced incentives for bulk-billing Commonwealth Concession Card holders and children under 16 in February 2004. Higher bulk-billing incentives in eligible metropolitan areas became available from September 2004.

**When will the initiative conclude?**

- This initiative will be reviewed in the 2008-09 Budget.