



## MBS Items – Psychologists and Other Allied Mental Health Professionals

Since 1 November 2006, Medicare rebates have been available for patients with a mental disorder to receive up to 12 individual allied mental health services per calendar year. These services are generally provided in courses of treatment, with each course of treatment involving up to six services provided by an allied mental health professional. At the conclusion of each course of treatment, the allied mental health professional reports back to the referring medical practitioner on the patient's progress and the referring practitioner assesses the patient's need for further services.

The Better Outcomes – Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) and GP focussed psychological strategies services are also included in the 12 service limit for these items. In addition, eligible patients will also be able to claim for up to 12 group services (involving the same reporting and practitioner assessment processes as for the individual services) in a calendar year. Allied mental health services that can be provided under this initiative include Psychological Therapy services provided by eligible clinical psychologists, and Focussed Psychological Strategies services provided by eligible psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists.

Rebates for these services are available to patients with a mental disorder who have been referred by a medical practitioner managing the patient under a GP Mental Health Care Plan; a psychiatrist assessment and management plan; or on referral by a psychiatrist or paediatrician.

### Overview of the items

There are 20 MBS items for allied mental health services provided on referral by a GP, psychiatrist, or paediatrician:

- **Items 80000, 80005, 80010 and 80015** – Individual Psychological Therapy services provided by a clinical psychologist
- **Item 80020** – Group Psychological Therapy services provided by a clinical psychologist
- **Items 80100, 80105, 80110 and 80115** – Individual Focussed Psychological Strategies services provided by a psychologist
- **Item 80120** – Group Focussed Psychological Strategies services provided by a psychologist
- **Items 80125, 80130, 80135 and 80140** – Individual Focussed Psychological Strategies services provided by an occupational therapist
- **Item 80145** – Group Focussed Psychological Strategies services provided by an occupational therapist
- **Items 80150, 80155, 80160 and 80165** – Individual Focussed Psychological Strategies services provided by a social worker
- **Item 80170** – Group Focussed Psychological Strategies services provided by a social worker

Eligible allied mental health professionals may use only the items relevant to their discipline. For example, an occupational therapist may only use items 80125, 80130, 80135, 80140 and 80145. Allied mental health professionals may set their own fees, however, there is a set Medicare rebate for each item.



## Registration with Medicare Australia

Allied mental health professionals must be registered with Medicare Australia to be eligible to provide services under this initiative. To register, an allied mental health professional must be:

- A clinical psychologist; who is a member of the Australian Psychological Society's College of Clinical Psychologists; or who meets the requirements for such membership, based on assessment by the Australian Psychological Society, and is registered with the Psychologists Registration Board in the State or Territory in which they are practising;
- A psychologist registered with the Psychologists Registration Board in the State or Territory in which they are practising. (Psychologists whose State/Territory registration includes any limitation are not eligible to register with Medicare Australia to provide Focused Psychological Strategies under this initiative);
- A full or part-time member of OT AUSTRALIA with a minimum of two years experience in mental health who undertakes to abide by The Australian Competency Standards for Occupational Therapists in Mental Health; or
- A member of the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW), including certification by the AASW as meeting the standards for mental health set out in the AASW's *Standards for Mental Health Social Workers 1999*.

Information about registering with Medicare Australia to provide allied mental health services under this initiative is available from the Medicare Australia provider inquiry line on 132 150.

## Exceptional circumstances

In exceptional circumstances, patients may receive an additional six individual services above that already provided (to a maximum of 18 services per patient per calendar year). Exceptional circumstances apply when there has been a significant change in the patient's clinical condition or care circumstances which make it appropriate and necessary for the referring medical practitioner to increase the number of services beyond the usual calendar year limit of twelve.

## What information is required in the report to the referring practitioner?

On completion of a course of treatment (maximum of six services), allied mental health professionals must provide a written report to the referring medical practitioner. The written report should include information on:

- any assessments carried out on the patient;
- any treatment provided; and
- recommendations on future management of the patient's disorder.

**Note:** Before a rebate can be paid for the allied mental health service provided on referral from a medical practitioner, psychiatrist or paediatrician, either the patient must have already claimed a rebate, or the medical practitioner, psychiatrist or paediatrician must have already lodged a claim for direct payment from Medicare for the relevant GP Mental Health Care planning item or referral item.



## Other publicly funded programs

Where an exemption under subsection 19(2) of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* has been granted to an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service or State/Territory clinic, the allied mental health items apply for services provided by eligible allied mental health professionals salaried by, or contracted to the service, as long as all requirements of the items are met, including registration with Medicare Australia. These services must be direct billed (that is, the Medicare rebate is accepted as full payment for services).

### **Further information**

Detailed information on the Better Access initiative is provided in the *Medicare Benefits Schedule — Allied Health Services* book, copies of which are available online at [www.health.gov.au/mbsonline](http://www.health.gov.au/mbsonline). Alternatively, hard copies can be obtained by calling (02) 6289 4297 or emailing [alliedhealth.items@health.gov.au](mailto:alliedhealth.items@health.gov.au).

Additional information regarding eligibility, claiming and payment processes can also be obtained by calling Medicare Australia on 132 150 (for allied mental health professionals) or 132011 (for patients).