
MEDICARE BENEFITS SCHEDULE REVIEW TASKFORCE

Dear stakeholder,

Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) Review Taskforce – Report from the Specialist and Consultant Physicians Consultation Clinical Committee

As you will be aware, the MBS Review Taskforce is undertaking a program of work to consider how the more than 5,700 items on the MBS can be aligned with contemporary clinical evidence and practice in order to improve health outcomes for patients. The Taskforce has established Clinical Committees and Working Groups to undertake clinical reviews of MBS items.

As the Chair of the MBS Review Taskforce, I am writing to invite you to provide comments on the attached draft Report from the Specialist and Consultant Physicians Consultation Clinical Committee. I am keen to start a constructive conversation with clinical experts, health professionals and consumers about the significant changes to standard MBS attendance items for specialists and consultant physicians proposed in this draft Report.

The attendance items for specialists and consultant physicians are largely unchanged from their introduction in the 1970s. This landmark report proposes a comprehensive restructure that will better reflect current clinical practice. The draft Report proposes a move away from initial and subsequent consultations, differential rebates for specialists and consultant physicians and additional payments for complex planning, to a time-based structure similar to that applied in general practice.

The draft Report sets out a number of principles for establishing a new system for specialist and consultant physician attendances. There is potential benefit for both patients and providers from these recommendations in the long term, as they address concerns regarding patient access and quality of care and take steps to simplify the MBS, making it easier to use and understand. However, your views and feedback is critical to informing these recommendations.

Following consultations, and any subsequent deliberation by the Taskforce, additional work will be needed to inform how any final recommendations should be implemented. Importantly, this will include appropriate and equitable fee-setting for any new system, which will involve extensive data collection to ensure that any new model supports both high-value care and access to needed services for all Australians. Therefore, should these recommendations proceed, it will be also important to work with peak organisations, clinicians and consumers in order to further refine the detail of implementation, and ensure an effective and sustainable outcome.

I strongly encourage and welcome your written feedback on this draft Report by **17 May 2019**. Responses can be sent to the Taskforce via email at MBSReviews@health.gov.au. In particular I draw your attention to the overarching principles suggested relating to time-tiering and the streamlining of MBS rebates for standard consultations. Please mark your email for the attention of

Amanda Kennedy (Secretariat to the Specialist and Consultant Physicians Consultation Clinical Committee) in the Department of Health.

I also encourage you to circulate this report within your organisation and across your membership base to ensure we receive a wide range of perspectives on these important proposals.

I look forward to receiving your feedback and comments and thank you for supporting the work of the Taskforce's Clinical Committees through your valued advice and feedback. Please feel free to contact the MBS Review Unit in the Department of Health at the email address below if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bruce Robinson', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Professor Bruce Robinson

Chair

MBS Review Taskforce

MBSReviews@health.gov.au

5 February 2019