

**Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing**

Medicare Benefits Schedule Book

Category 7

Operating from 01 November 2011

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At the time of printing, the relevant legislation giving authority for the changes included in this edition of the book may still be subject to the approval of Executive Council and the usual Parliamentary scrutiny. This book is not a legal document, and, in cases of discrepancy, the legislation will be the source document for payment of Medicare benefits.

The latest Medicare Benefits Schedule information is available from *MBS Online* at <http://www.health.gov.au/mbsonline>

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G.1.1. THE MEDICARE BENEFITS SCHEDULE - INTRODUCTION

Schedules of Services

Each professional service contained in the Schedule has been allocated a unique item number. Located with the item number and description for each service is the Schedule fee and Medicare benefit, together with a reference to an explanatory note relating to the item (if applicable).

If the service attracts an anaesthetic, the word (Anaes.) appears following the description. Where an operation qualifies for the payment of benefits for an assistant, the relevant items are identified by the inclusion of the word (Assist.) in the item description. Medicare benefits are not payable for surgical assistance associated with procedures which have not been so identified.

In some cases two levels of fees are applied to the same service in General Medical Services, with each level of fee being allocated a separate item number. The item identified by the letter "S" applies in the case where the procedure has been rendered by a recognised specialist in the practice of his or her specialty and the patient has been referred. The item identified by the letter "G" applies in any other circumstance.

Higher rates of benefits are also provided for consultations by a recognised consultant physician where the patient has been referred by another medical practitioner or an approved dental practitioner (oral surgeons).

Differential fees and benefits also apply to services listed in Category 5 (Diagnostic Imaging Services). The conditions relating to these services are set out in Category 5.

Explanatory Notes

Explanatory notes relating to the Medicare benefit arrangements and notes that have general application to services are located at the beginning of the schedule, while notes relating to specific items are located at the beginning of each Category. While there may be a reference following the description of an item to specific notes relating to that item, there may also be general notes relating to each Group of items.

G.1.2. MEDICARE - AN OUTLINE

The Medicare Program ('Medicare') provides access to medical and hospital services for all Australian residents and certain categories of visitors to Australia. **Medicare Australia** administers Medicare and the payment of Medicare benefits. The major elements of Medicare are contained in the *Health Insurance Act 1973*, as amended, and include the following:

- (a) Free treatment for public patients in public hospitals.
- (b) The payment of 'benefits', or rebates, for professional services listed in the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS). In general, the Medicare benefit is 85% of the Schedule fee, otherwise the benefits are
 - i. 100% of the Schedule fee for services provided by a general practitioner to non-referred, non-admitted patients;
 - ii. 100% of the Schedule fee for services provided on behalf of a general practitioner by a practice nurse or registered Aboriginal Health Worker;
 - iii. 75% of the Schedule fee for professional services rendered to a patient as part of an episode of hospital treatment (other than public patients);
 - iv. 75% of the Schedule fee for professional services rendered as part of a privately insured episode of hospital-substitute treatment.

Medicare benefits are claimable only for 'clinically relevant' services rendered by an appropriate health practitioner. A 'clinically relevant' service is one which is generally accepted by the relevant profession as necessary for the appropriate treatment of the patient.

When a service is not clinically relevant, the fee and payment arrangements are a private matter between the practitioner and the patient.

Services listed in the MBS must be rendered according to the provisions of the relevant Commonwealth, State and Territory laws. For example, medical practitioners must ensure that the medicines and medical devices they use have been supplied to them in strict accordance with the provisions of the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989*.

Where a Medicare benefit has been inappropriately paid, Medicare Australia may request its return from the practitioner concerned.

G.1.3. MEDICARE BENEFITS AND BILLING PRACTICES

Key information on Medicare benefits and billing practices

The *Health Insurance Act 1973* stipulates that Medicare benefits are payable for professional services. A professional service is a clinically relevant service which is listed in the MBS. A medical service is clinically relevant if it is generally accepted in the medical profession as necessary for the appropriate treatment of the patient.

Medical practitioners are free to set their fees for their professional service. However, the amount specified in the patient's account must be the amount charged for the service specified. The fee may not include a cost of goods or services which are not part of the MBS service specified on the account.

Billing practices contrary to the Act

A *non-clinically relevant service* must not be included in the charge for a Medicare item. The non-clinically relevant service must be separately listed on the account and not billed to Medicare.

Goods supplied for the patient's home use (such as wheelchairs, oxygen tanks, continence pads) must not be included in the consultation charge. Medicare benefits are limited to services which the medical practitioner provides at the time of the consultation – any other services must be separately listed on the account and must not be billed to Medicare.

Charging part of all of an episode of hospital treatment or a hospital substitute treatment to a non-admitted consultation is prohibited. This would constitute a false or misleading statement on behalf of the medical practitioner and no Medicare benefits would be payable.

An account may not be re-issued to include charges and out-of-pocket expenses excluded in the original account. The account can only be reissued to correct a genuine error.

Potential consequence of improperly issuing an account

The potential consequences for improperly issuing an account are

- (a). No Medicare benefits will be paid for the service;
- (b). The medical practitioner who issued the account, or authorised its issue, may face charges under sections 128A or 128B of the *Health Insurance Act 1973*.
- (c). Medicare benefits paid as a result of a false or misleading statement will be recoverable from the doctor under section 129AC of the *Health Insurance Act 1973*.

Providers should be aware that Medicare Australia is legally obliged to investigate doctors suspected of making false or misleading statements, and may refer them for prosecution if the evidence indicates fraudulent charging to Medicare. If Medicare benefits have been paid inappropriately or incorrectly, Medicare Australia will take recovery action.

G.2.1. PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY FOR MEDICARE

To be eligible to provide medical service which will attract Medicare benefits, or to provide services for or on behalf of another practitioner, practitioners must meet one of the following criteria:

- (a) be a recognised specialist, consultant physician or general practitioner; or
- (b) be in an approved placement under section 3GA of the *Health Insurance Act 1973*; or
- (c) be a temporary resident doctor with an exemption under section 19AB of the *Health Insurance Act 1973*, and working in accord with that exemption.

Any practitioner who does not satisfy the requirements outlined above may still practice medicine but their services will not be eligible for Medicare benefits.

NOTE: New Zealand citizens entering Australia do so under a special temporary entry visa and are regarded as temporary resident doctors.

NOTE: It is an offence under Section 19CC of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* to provide a service without first informing a patient where a Medicare benefit is not payable for that service (i.e. the service is not listed in the MBS).

Non-medical practitioners

To be eligible to provide services which will attract Medicare benefits under MBS items 10950-10977 and MBS items 80000-88000 and 82100-82140 and 82200-82215, allied health professionals, dentists, and dental specialists, participating midwives and participating nurse practitioners must be

- (a) registered according to State or Territory law or, absent such law, be members of a professional association with uniform national registration requirements; and
- (b) registered with Medicare Australia to provide these services.

G.2.2. PROVIDER NUMBERS

Practitioners eligible to have Medicare benefits payable for their services and/or who for Medicare purposes wish to raise referrals for specialist services and requests for pathology or diagnostic imaging services, may apply *in writing* to Medicare Australia for a Medicare provider number for the locations where these services/referrals/requests will be provided. The form may be downloaded from www.medicareaustralia.gov.au

For Medicare purposes, an account/receipt issued by a practitioner must include the practitioner's name and **either** the provider number for the location where the service was provided **or** the address where the services were provided.

Medicare provider number information is released in accord with the secrecy provisions of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* (section 130) to authorized external organizations including private health insurers, the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Department of Health and Ageing.

When a practitioner ceases to practice at a given location they must inform Medicare promptly. Failure to do so can lead to the misdirection of Medicare cheques and Medicare information.

Practitioners at practices participating in the Practice Incentives Program (PIP) should use a provider number linked to that practice. Under PIP, only services rendered by a practitioner whose provider number is linked to the PIP will be considered for PIP payments.

G.2.3. LOCUM TENENS

Where a locum tenens will be in a practice for more than two weeks **or** in a practice for less than two weeks but on a regular basis, the locum should apply for a provider number for the relevant location. If the locum will be in a practice for less than two weeks and will not be returning there, they should contact Medicare Australia (provider liaison – 132 150) to discuss their options (for example, use one of the locum's other provider numbers).

A locum must use the provider number allocated to the location if

- (a) they are an approved general practice or specialist trainee with a provider number issued for an approved training placement; or
- (b) they are associated with an approved rural placement under Section 3GA of the *Health Insurance Act 1973*; or
- (c) they have access to Medicare benefits as a result of the issue of an exemption under section 19AB of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* (i.e. they have access to Medicare benefits at specific practice locations); or
- (d) they will be at a practice which is participating in the Practice Incentives Program; or
- (e) they are associated with a placement on the MedicarePlus for Other Medical Practitioners (OMPs) program, the After Hours OMPs program, the Rural OMPs program or Outer Metropolitan OMPs program.

G.2.4. OVERSEAS TRAINED DOCTOR

Ten year moratorium

Section 19AB of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* states that services provided by overseas trained doctors (including New Zealand trained doctors) and former overseas medical students trained in Australia, will not attract Medicare benefits for 10 years from **either**

- (a) their date of registration as a medical practitioner for the purposes of the *Health Insurance Act 1973*; **or**
- (b) their date of permanent residency (the reference date will vary from case to case).

Exclusions - Practitioners who before 1 January 1997 had

- (a) registered with a State or Territory medical board **and** retained a continuing right to remain in Australia; **or**
- (b) lodged a valid application with the Australian Medical Council (AMC) to undertake examinations whose successful completion would normally entitle the candidate to become a medical practitioner.

The Minister of Health and Ageing may grant an overseas trained doctor (OTD) or occupational trainee (OT) an exemption to the requirements of the ten year moratorium, with or without conditions. When applying for a Medicare provider number, the OTD or OT must

- (a) demonstrate that they need a provider number and that their employer supports their request; and
- (b) provide the following documentation:
 - i. Australian medical registration papers; and
 - ii. a copy of their personal details in their passport and all Australian visas and entry stamps; and
 - iii. a letter from the employer stating why the person requires a Medicare provider number and/or prescriber number is required; and
 - iv. a copy of the employment contract.

G.2.5. ADDRESSES OF MEDICARE AUSTRALIA, SCHEDULE INTERPRETATION AND CHANGES TO PROVIDER DETAILS

<p>NEW SOUTH WALES Medicare Australia Paramatta Office 130 George Street PARRAMATTA NSW 2150</p>	<p>VICTORIA Medicare Australia Melbourne Office Level 10 595 Collins Street</p>	<p>QUEENSLAND Medicare Australia Brisbane Office 143 Turbot Street BRISBANE QLD 4000</p>
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	MELBOURNE VIC 3000	
SOUTH AUSTRALIA Medicare Australia Adelaide Office 209 Greenhill Road EASTWOOD SA 5063	WESTERN AUSTRALIA Medicare Australia Perth Office Level 4 130 Stirling Street PERTH WA 6003	TASMANIA Medicare Australia Hobart Office 199 Collins Street HOBART TAS 7000
NORTHERN TERRITORY As per South Australia	AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY Medicare Australia National Office 134 Reed Street North GREENWAY ACT 2901	

Schedule Interpretations

The day-to-day administration and payment of benefits under the Medicare arrangements is the responsibility of Medicare Australia. Inquiries concerning matters of interpretation of Schedule items should be directed to Medicare Australia and not to the Department of Health and Ageing. The following telephone numbers have been reserved by Medicare Australia exclusively for inquiries relating to the Schedule:

Provider Enquiries: 132 150

Public Enquiries: 132 011

Changes to Provider Details

It is important that Medicare Australia be notified promptly of changes to practice addresses to ensure correct provider details for each practice location. Changes to practice address details can be made in writing to the Medicare Australia office, listed above, in the State of the practice location.

G.3.1. PATIENT ELIGIBILITY FOR MEDICARE

An "eligible person" is a person who resides permanently in Australia. This includes New Zealand citizens and holders of permanent residence visas. Applicants for permanent residence may also be eligible persons, depending on circumstances. Eligible persons must enrol with Medicare before they can receive Medicare benefits.

Medicare covers services provided only in Australia. It does not refund treatment or evacuation expenses overseas.

G.3.2. MEDICARE CARDS

The **green** Medicare card is for people permanently in Australia. Cards may be issued for individuals or families.

The **blue** Medicare card bearing the words "INTERIM CARD" is for people who have applied for permanent residence.

Visitors from countries with which Australia has a Reciprocal Health Care Agreement receive a card bearing the words "RECIPROCAL HEALTH CARE"

G.3.3. VISITORS TO AUSTRALIA AND TEMPORARY RESIDENTS

Visitors and temporary residents in Australia are not eligible for Medicare and should therefore have adequate private health insurance.

G.3.4. RECIPROCAL HEALTH CARE AGREEMENTS

Australia has Reciprocal Health Care Agreements with New Zealand, Ireland, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Italy, Malta and Belgium.

Visitors from these countries are entitled to medically necessary treatment while they are in Australia, comprising public hospital care (as public patients), Medicare benefits and drugs under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). Visitors must enroll with Medicare Australia to receive benefits. A passport is sufficient for public hospital care and PBS drugs.

Exceptions:

- Visitors from Ireland and New Zealand are entitled to public hospital care and PBS drugs, and should present their passports before treatment as they are not issued with Medicare cards.
- Visitors from Italy and Malta are covered for a period of six months only.

The Agreements do not cover treatment as a private patient in a public or private hospital. People visiting Australia for the purpose of receiving treatment are not covered.

G.4.1. GENERAL PRACTICE

Some MBS items may only be used by general practitioners. For MBS purposes a general practitioner is a medical practitioner who is

- (a) vocationally registered under section 3F of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* (see General Explanatory Note below); or
- (b) a Fellow of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (FRACGP), who participates in, and meets the requirements for the RACGP Quality Assurance and Continuing Medical Education Program; or
- (c) a Fellow of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) who participates in, and meets the requirements for the ACRRM Quality Assurance and Continuing Medical Education Program; or
- (d) is undertaking an approved general practice placement in a training program for **either** the award of FRACGP **or** a training program recognised by the RACGP being of an equivalent standard; or
- (e) is undertaking an approved general practice placement in a training program for **either** the award of FACRRM **or** a training program recognised by ACRRM as being of an equivalent standard.

A medical practitioner seeking recognition as an FRACGP should apply to Medicare Australia, having completed an application form available from Medicare Australia's website. A general practice trainee should apply to General Practice Education and Training Limited (GPET) for a general practitioner trainee placement. GPET will advise Medicare Australia when a placement is approved. General practitioner trainees need to apply for a provider number using the appropriate provider number application form available on Medicare Australia's website.

Vocational recognition of general practitioners

The only qualifications leading to vocational recognition are FRACGP and FACRRM. The criteria for recognition as a GP are:

- (a) certification by the RACGP that the practitioner
 - is a Fellow of the RACGP; and
 - practice is, or will be within 28 days, predominantly in general practice; and
 - has met the minimum requirements of the RACGP for taking part in continuing medical education and quality assurance programs.
- (b) certification by the General Practice Recognition Eligibility Committee (GPREC) that the practitioner
 - is a Fellow of the RACGP; and
 - practice is, or will be within 28, predominantly in general practice; and
 - has met minimum requirements of the RACGP for taking part in continuing medical education and quality assurance programs.
- (c) certification by ACRRM that the practitioner
 - is a Fellow of ACRRM; and
 - has met the minimum requirements of the ACRRM for taking part in continuing medical education and quality assurance programs.

In assessing whether a practitioner's medical practice is predominantly in general practice, the practitioner must have at least 50% of clinical time and services claimed against Medicare. Regard will also be given as to whether the practitioner provides a comprehensive primary medical service, including treating a wide range of patients and conditions using a variety of accepted medical skills and techniques, providing services away from the practitioner's surgery on request, for example, home visits and making appropriate provision for the practitioner's patients to have access to after hours medical care.

Further information on eligibility for recognition should be directed to:

Program Relations Officer, RACGP

Tel: (03) 8699 0494 Email at: gacpd@racgp.org.au

Secretary, General Practice Recognition Eligibility Committee:

Tel: (02) 6124 6753 Email at co.medicare.eligibility@medicareaustralia.gov.au

Executive Assistant, ACRRM:

Tel: (07) 3105 8200 Email at acrrm@acrrm.org.au

How to apply for vocational recognition

Medical practitioners seeking vocational recognition should apply to Medicare Australia using the approved Application Form available on the Medicare Australia website: www.medicareaustralia.gov.au. Applicants should forward their applications, as appropriate, to

Chief Executive Officer

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
College House
1 Palmerston Crescent
SOUTH MELBOURNE VIC 3205

Chief Executive Officer
Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine
GPO Box 2507
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Secretary
The General Practice Recognition Eligibility Committee
Medicare Australia
PO Box 1001
TUGGERANONG ACT 2901

The relevant body will forward the application together with its certification of eligibility to the Medicare Australia CEO for processing.

Continued vocational recognition is dependent upon:

- (a) the practitioner's practice continuing to be predominantly in general practice (for medical practitioners in the Register only); and
- (b) the practitioner continuing to meet minimum requirements for participation in continuing professional development programs approved by the RACGP or the ACRRM.

Further information on continuing medical education and quality assurance requirements should be directed to the RACGP or the ACRRM depending on the college through which the practitioner is pursuing, or is intending to pursue, continuing medical education.

Medical practitioners refused certification by the RACGP, the ACRRM or GPREC may appeal in writing to the General Practice Recognition Appeal Committee (GPRAC), Medicare Australia, PO Box 1001, Tuggeranong, ACT, 2901.

Removal of vocational recognition status

A medical practitioner may at any time request Medicare Australia to remove their name from the Vocational Register of General Practitioners.

Vocational recognition status can also be revoked if the RACGP, the ACRRM or GPREC certifies to Medicare Australia that it is no longer satisfied that the practitioner should remain vocationally recognised. Appeals of the decision to revoke vocational recognition may be made in writing to GPRAC, at the above address.

A practitioner whose name has been removed from the register, or whose determination has been revoked for any reason must make a formal application to re-register, or for a new determination.

G.5.1. RECOGNITION AS A SPECIALIST OR CONSULTANT PHYSICIAN

A medical practitioner who:

- is registered as a specialist under State or Territory law; or
 - holds a fellowship of a specified specialist College and has obtained, after successfully completing an appropriate course of study, a relevant qualification from a relevant College
- and has formally applied and paid the prescribed fee, may be recognised by the Minister as a specialist or consultant physician for the purposes of the *Health Insurance Act 1973*.

A relevant specialist College may also give Medicare Australia's Chief Executive Officer a written notice stating that a medical practitioner meets the criteria for recognition.

A medical practitioner who is training for a fellowship of a specified specialist College and is undertaking training placements in a private hospital or in general practice, may provide services which attract Medicare rebates. Specialist trainees should consult the information available at www.medicareaustralia.gov.au.

Once the practitioner is recognised as a specialist or consultant physician for the purposes of the *Health Insurance Act 1973*, Medicare benefits will be payable at the appropriate higher rate for services rendered in the relevant speciality, provided the patient has been appropriately referred to them.

Further information about applying for recognition is available at www.medicareaustralia.gov.au.

G.5.2. EMERGENCY MEDICINE

A practitioner will be acting as an emergency medicine specialist when treating a patient within 30 minutes of the patient's presentation, and that patient is

- (a) at risk of serious morbidity or mortality requiring urgent assessment and resuscitation; or
- (b) suffering from suspected acute organ or system failure; or
- (c) suffering from an illness or injury where the viability or function of a body part or organ is acutely threatened; or
- (d) suffering from a drug overdose, toxic substance or toxin effect; or
- (e) experiencing severe psychiatric disturbance whereby the health of the patient or other people is at immediate risk; or
- (f) suffering acute severe pain where the viability or function of a body part or organ is suspected to be acutely threatened; or
- (g) suffering acute significant haemorrhage requiring urgent assessment and treatment; and
- (h) treated in, or via, a bona fide emergency department in a hospital.

Benefits are not payable where such services are rendered in the accident and emergency departments or outpatient departments of public hospitals.

G.6.1. REFERRAL OF PATIENTS TO SPECIALISTS OR CONSULTANT PHYSICIANS

For certain services provided by specialists and consultant physicians, the Medicare benefit payable is dependent on acceptable evidence that the service has been provided following referral from another practitioner.

A reference to a referral in this Section does not refer to written requests made for pathology services or diagnostic imaging services.

What is a Referral?

A "referral" is a request to a specialist or a consultant physician for investigation, opinion, treatment and/or management of a condition or problem of a patient or for the performance of a specific examination(s) or test(s).

Subject to the exceptions in the paragraph below, for a valid "referral" to take place

- (i) the referring practitioner must have undertaken a professional attendance with the patient and turned his or her mind to the patient's need for referral and have communicated relevant information about the patient to the specialist or consultant physician (this need not mean an attendance on the occasion of the referral);
- (ii) the instrument of referral must be in writing as a letter or note to a specialist or to a consultant physician and must be signed and dated by the referring practitioner; and
- (iii) the specialist or consultant physician to whom the patient is referred must have received the instrument of referral on or prior to the occasion of the professional service to which the referral relates.

The exceptions to the requirements in paragraph above are that

- (a) sub-paragraphs (i), (ii) and (iii) do not apply to
 - a pre-anaesthesia consultation by a specialist anaesthetist (items 16710-17625);
- (b) sub-paragraphs (ii) and (iii) do not apply to
 - a referral generated during an episode of hospital treatment, for a service provided or arranged by that hospital, where the hospital records provide evidence of a referral (including the referring practitioner's signature); or
 - an emergency where the referring practitioner or the specialist or the consultant physician was of the opinion that the service be rendered as quickly as possible; and
- (c) sub-paragraph (iii) does not apply to instances where a written referral was completed by a referring practitioner but was lost, stolen or destroyed.

Examination by Specialist Anaesthetists

A referral is not required in the case of pre-anaesthesia consultation items 17610-17625. However, for benefits to be payable at the specialist rate for consultations, other than pre-anaesthesia consultations by specialist anaesthetists (items 17640 - 17655) a referral is required.

Who can Refer?

The general practitioner is regarded as the primary source of referrals. Cross-referrals between specialists and/or consultant physicians should usually occur in consultation with the patient's general practitioner.

Referrals by Dentists or Optometrists or Participating Midwives or Participating Nurse Practitioners

For Medicare benefit purposes, a referral may be made to

- (i) a recognised specialist:
 - (a) by a registered dental practitioner, where the referral arises from a dental service; or
 - (b) by a registered optometrist where the specialist is an ophthalmologist; or

- (c) by a participating midwife where the specialist is an obstetrician or a paediatrician, as clinical needs dictate. A referral given by a participating midwife is valid until 12 months after the first service given in accordance with the referral and for I pregnancy only or
 - (d) by a participating nurse practitioner to specialists and consultant physicians. A referral given by a participating nurse practitioner is valid until 12 months after the first service given in accordance with the referral.
- (ii) a consultant physician, by an approved dental practitioner (oral surgeon), where the referral arises out of a dental service.

In any other circumstances (i.e. a referral to a consultant physician by a dentist, other than an approved oral surgeon, or an optometrist, or a referral by an optometrist to a specialist other than a specialist ophthalmologist), it is not a valid referral. Any resulting consultant physician or specialist attendances will attract Medicare benefits at unreferred rates.

Registered dentists and registered optometrists may refer themselves to specialists in accordance with the criteria above, and Medicare benefits are payable at the levels which apply to their referred patients.

Billing

Routine Referrals

In addition to providing the usual information required to be shown on accounts, receipts or assignment forms, specialists and consultant physicians must provide the following details (unless there are special circumstances as indicated in paragraph below):-

- - name and either practice address or provider number of the referring practitioner;
- - date of referral; and
- - period of referral (when other than for 12 months) expressed in months, eg "3", "6" or "18" months, or "indefinitely" should be shown.

Special Circumstances

(i) Lost, stolen or destroyed referrals.

If a referral has been made but the letter or note of referral has been lost, stolen or destroyed, benefits will be payable at the referred rate if the account, receipt or the assignment form shows the name of the referring medical practitioner, the practice address or provider number of the referring practitioner (if either of these are known to the consultant physician or specialist) and the words 'Lost referral'. This provision only applies to the initial attendance. For subsequent attendances to attract Medicare benefits at the referred rate a duplicate or replacement letter of referral must be obtained by the specialist or the consultant physician.

(ii) Emergencies

If the referral occurred in an emergency, benefit will be payable at the referred rate if the account, receipt or assignment form is endorsed 'Emergency referral'. This provision only applies to the initial attendance. For subsequent attendances to attract Medicare benefits at the referred rate the specialist/consultant physician must obtain a letter of referral.

(iii) Hospital referrals.

Private Patients - Where a referral is generated during an episode of hospital treatment for a service provided or arranged by that hospital, benefits will be payable at the referred rate if the account, receipt or assignment form is endorsed 'Referral within (name of hospital)' and the patient's hospital records show evidence of the referral (including the referring practitioner's signature). However, in other instances where a medical practitioner within a hospital is involved in referring a patient (e.g. to a specialist or a consultant physician in private rooms) the normal referral arrangements apply, including the requirement for a referral letter or note and its retention by the specialist or the consultant physician billing for the service.

Public Hospital Patients

State and Territory Governments are responsible for the provision of public hospital services to eligible persons in accordance with the National Healthcare Agreement.

Bulk Billing

Bulk billing assignment forms should show the same information as detailed above. However, faster processing of the claim will be facilitated where the provider number (rather than the practice address) of the referring practitioner is shown.

Period for which Referral is Valid

The referral is valid for the period specified in the referral which is taken to commence on the date of the specialist's or consultant physician's first service covered by that referral.

Specialist Referrals

Where a referral originates from a specialist or a consultant physician, the referral is valid for 3 months, except where the referred patient is an admitted patient. For admitted patients, the referral is valid for 3 months or the duration of the admission whichever is the longer.

As it is expected that the patient's general practitioner will be kept informed of the patient's progress, a referral from a specialist or a consultant physician must include the name of the patient's general practitioners and/or practice. Where a patient is unable or unwilling to nominate a general practitioner or practice this must be stated in the referral.

Referrals by other Practitioners

Where the referral originates from a practitioner other than those listed in *Specialist Referrals*, the referral is valid for a period of 12 months, unless the referring practitioner indicates that the referral is for a period more or less than 12 months (eg. 3, 6 or 18 months or valid indefinitely). Referrals for longer than 12 months should only be used where the patient's clinical condition requires continuing care and management of a specialist or a consultant physician for a specific condition or specific conditions.

Definition of a Single Course of Treatment

A single course of treatment involves an initial attendance by a specialist or consultant physician and the continuing management/treatment up to the stage where the patient is referred back to the care of the referring practitioner. It also includes any subsequent review of the patient's condition by the specialist or the consultant physician that may be necessary. Such a review may be initiated by either the referring practitioner or the specialist/consultant physician.

The presentation of an unrelated illness, requiring the referral of the patient to the specialist's or the consultant physician's care would initiate a new course of treatment in which case a new referral would be required.

The receipt by a specialist or consultant physician of a new referral following the expiration of a previous referral for the same condition(s) does not necessarily indicate the commencement of a new course of treatment involving the itemisation of an initial consultation. In the continuing management/treatment situation the new referral is to facilitate the payment of benefits at the specialist or the consultant physician referred rates rather than the unreferred rates.

However, where the referring practitioner:-

- (a) deems it necessary for the patient's condition to be reviewed; and
 - (b) the patient is seen by the specialist or the consultant physician outside the currency of the last referral; and
 - (c) the patient was last seen by the specialist or the consultant physician more than 9 months earlier
- the attendance following the new referral initiates a new course of treatment for which Medicare benefit would be payable at the initial consultation rates.

Retention of Referral Letters

The prima facie evidence that a valid referral exists is the provision of the referral particulars on the specialist's or the consultant physician's account.

A specialist or a consultant physician is required to retain the instrument of referral (and a hospital is required to retain the patient's hospital records which show evidence of a referral) for 18 months from the date the service was rendered.

A specialist or a consultant physician is required, if requested by the Medicare Australia CEO, to produce to a medical practitioner who is an employee of Medicare Australia, the instrument of referral within seven days after the request is received. Where the referral originates in an emergency situation or in a hospital, the specialist or consultant physician is required to produce such information as is in his or her possession or control relating to whether the patient was so treated.

Attendance for Issuing of a Referral

Medicare benefit is attracted for an attendance on a patient even where the attendance is solely for the purpose of issuing a referral letter or note. However, if a medical practitioner issues a referral without an attendance on the patient, no benefit is payable for any charge raised for issuing the referral.

Locum-tenens Arrangements

It should be noted that where a non-specialist medical practitioner acts as a locum-tenens for a specialist or consultant physician, or where a specialist acts as a locum-tenens for a consultant physician, Medicare benefit is only payable at the level appropriate for the particular locum-tenens, eg, general practitioner level for a general practitioner locum-tenens and specialist level for a referred service rendered by a specialist locum tenens.

Medicare benefits are not payable where a practitioner is not eligible to provide services attracting Medicare benefits acts as a locum-tenens for any practitioner who is eligible to provide services attracting Medicare benefits.

Fresh referrals are not required for locum-tenens acting according to accepted medical practice for the principal of a practice ie referrals to the latter are accepted as applying to the former and benefit is not payable at the initial attendance rate for an attendance by a locum-tenens if the principal has already performed an initial attendance in respect of the particular instrument of referral.

Self Referral

Medical practitioners may refer themselves to consultant physicians and specialists and Medicare benefits are payable at referred rates.

G.7.1. BILLING PROCEDURES

Itemised Accounts

Where the doctor bills the patient for medical services rendered, the patient needs a properly itemised account/receipt to claim Medicare benefits.

Under the provisions of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* and *Regulations*, a Medicare benefit is not payable for a professional service unless it is recorded on the account setting out the fee for the service or on the receipt for the fee in respect of the service, the following particulars

- i. patient's name;
- ii. the date the professional service was rendered;
- iii. the amount charged for the service;
- iv. the total amount paid in respect of the service;
- v. any amount outstanding in respect of the service;
- vi. for professional services rendered to a patient as part of an episode of hospital treatment; an asterisk '*' directly after an item number where used; or a description of the professional service sufficient to identify the item that relates to that service, preceded by the words 'admitted patient' ;
- vii. for professional services rendered as part of a privately insured episode of hospital-substitute treatment and the patient who receives the treatment chooses to receive a benefit from a private health insurer, the words 'hospital-substitute treatment' directly after an item number where used; or a description of the professional service sufficient to identify the item that relates to that service, preceded by the words 'hospital-substitute treatment' ;
- viii. the name and practice address or name and provider number of the practitioner who actually rendered the service; (where the practitioner has more than one practice location recorded with Medicare Australia, the provider number used should be that which is applicable to the practice location at or from which the service was given);
- ix. the name and practice address or name and provider number of the practitioner claiming or receiving payment of benefits, or assignment of benefit:-
 - a. for services in Groups A1 to A14, D1, T1, T4 to T9 of the General Medical Services, Groups O1 to O7 (Oral and Maxillofacial services), and Group P9 of Pathology - where the person claiming payment is NOT the person who rendered the service;
 - b. for services in Groups D2, T2, T3, I2, to I5 - for every service;
- x. if the service was a Specified Simple Basic Pathology Test (listed in Category 6 - Pathology, Group P9 of the Schedule) that was determined necessary by a practitioner who is another member of the same group medical practice, the surname and initials of that other practitioner;
- xi. where a practitioner has attended the patient on more than one occasion on the same day and on each occasion rendered a professional service to which an item in Category 1 of the Medicare Benefits Schedule relates (i.e. professional attendances), the time at which each such attendance commenced; and
- xii. where the professional service was rendered by a consultant physician or a specialist in the practice of his/her speciality to a patient who has been referred:- (a) the name of the referring medical practitioner; (b) the address of the place of practice or provider number for that place of practice; (c) the date of the referral; and (d) the period of referral (where other than for 12 months) expressed in months, e.g. "3", "6" or "18" months, or "indefinitely".

NOTE: If the information required to be recorded on accounts, receipts or assignment of benefit forms is included by an employee of the practitioner, the practitioner claiming payment for the service bears responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of the information.

Practitioners should note that payment of claims could be delayed or disallowed where it is not possible from account details to clearly identify the service as one which qualifies for Medicare benefits, or the practitioner as a registered medical practitioner at the address the service was rendered. Practitioners are therefore encouraged to provide as much detail as possible on their accounts, including Medicare Benefits Schedule item number and provider number.

The *Private Health Insurance Act 2007* provides for the payment of private health insurance benefits for hospital treatment and general treatment. Hospital treatment is treatment that is intended to manage a disease, injury or condition that is provided to a person by a hospital or arranged with the direct involvement of a hospital. General treatment is treatment that is intended to manage or prevent a disease, injury or condition and is not hospital treatment. Hospital-substitute treatment is a sub-set of General Treatment and a direct substitute for an episode of hospital treatment. Health insurers can cover specific professional services as hospital-substitute treatment in accordance with the *Private Health Insurance (Health Insurance Business) Rules*.

Claiming of Benefits

The patient, upon receipt of a doctor's account, has three courses open for paying the account and receiving benefits.

Paid Accounts

The patient may pay the account and subsequently present the receipt at a Medicare customer service centre for assessment and payment of the Medicare benefit in cash.

In these circumstances, where a claimant personally attends a Medicare office to obtain a cash or EFT deposit for the payment of Medicare benefits, the claimant is not required to complete a Medicare Patient Claim Form (PC1).

A Medicare patient claim form (PC1) must be completed where the claimant is mailing his/her claim for a cheque or EFT payment of Medicare benefits or arranging for an agent to collect cash on the claimant's behalf at a Medicare office.

Alternatively a patient may lodge their claim electronically from the doctors' surgery using Medicare Australia's Online claiming.

Claims for professional services rendered as part of an episode of hospital-substitute treatment should be submitted to the health insurer in the first instance for the payment of private health insurance benefits. The insurer of the patient will forward the claim to Medicare Australia for the payment of Medicare benefits

Unpaid and Partially Paid Accounts

Where the patient has not paid the account, the unpaid account may be presented to Medicare with a Medicare claim form. In this case Medicare will forward to the claimant a benefit cheque made payable to the doctor.

It will be the patient's responsibility to forward the cheque to the doctor and make arrangements for payment of the balance of the account if any. "Pay doctor" cheques involving Medicare benefits, must (by law), not be sent direct to medical practitioners or to patients at a doctor's address (even when the claimant requests this). "Pay doctor" cheques are required to be forwarded to the claimant's last known address.

When issuing a receipt to a patient for an account that is being paid wholly or in part by a Medicare "pay doctor" cheque the medical practitioner should indicate on the receipt that a "Medicare" cheque for \$..... was included in the payment of the account.

Where a patient has reached the relevant extended Medicare safety net threshold, the Medicare benefit payable is the Medicare rebate for the service plus 80% of the out-of-pocket cost of the service (ie difference between the fee charged by the doctor and the Medicare rebate). The patient must pay at least 20% of the out-of-pocket cost of the account before extended Medicare safety net benefits become payable for the out-of-pocket cost. Medicare will apportion the benefit accordingly.

Claims for professional services rendered as part of an episode of hospital-substitute treatment should be submitted to the health insurer in the first instance for the payment of private health insurance benefits. The insurer of the patient will forward the claim to Medicare Australia for the payment of Medicare benefits.

Assignment of Benefit (Direct – Billing) Arrangements

Under the Health Insurance Act an Assignment of Benefit (direct-billing) facility for professional services is available to all persons in Australia who are eligible for benefit under the Medicare program. This facility is **NOT** confined to pensioners or people in special need.

If a medical practitioner direct-bills, he/she undertakes to accept the relevant Medicare benefit as full payment for the service. Additional charges for that service (irrespective of the purpose or title of the charge) cannot be raised against the patient, with the exception of certain vaccines.

Under these arrangements:-

- the patient's Medicare number must be quoted on all direct-bill assignment forms for that patient;
- the assignment forms provided are loose leaf to enable the patient details to be imprinted from the Medicare Card;
- the forms include information required by Regulations under Section 19(6) of the Health Insurance Act;
- the doctor must cause the particulars relating to the professional service to be set out on the assignment form, before the patient signs the form and cause the patient to receive a copy of the form as soon as practicable after the patient signs it;

Where a patient is unable to sign the assignment form:

- the signature of the patient's parent, guardian or other responsible person (other than the doctor, doctor's staff, hospital proprietor, hospital staff, residential aged care facility proprietor or residential aged care facility staff) is acceptable; or
- In the absence of a "responsible person" the patient signature section should be left blank.

Where the signature space is either left blank or another person signs on the patient's behalf, the form **must** include:

- the notation "Patient unable to sign" and
- in the section headed 'Practitioner's Use', an explanation should be given as to why the patient was unable to sign (e.g. unconscious, injured hand etc.) and this note should be signed or initialled by the doctor. If in the opinion of the practitioner the reason is of such a "sensitive" nature that revealing it would constitute an unacceptable breach of patient confidentiality or unduly embarrass or distress the recipient of the patient's copy of the assignment of benefits form, a concessional reason "due to medical condition" to signify that such a situation exists may be substituted for the actual reason. However, this should not be used routinely and in most cases it is expected that the reason given will be more specific.

Where the patient is direct-billed, an additional charge can **ONLY** be raised against the patient by the practitioner where the patient is provided with a vaccine/vaccines from the practitioner's own supply held on the practitioner's premises. This exemption only applies to general practitioners and other non-specialist practitioners in association with attendance items 3 to 96, 5000 to 5267 (inclusive) and item 10993 and only relates to vaccines that are not available to the patient free of charge through Commonwealth or State funding arrangements or available through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. The additional charge must only be to cover the supply of the vaccine.

Use of Medicare Cards in Direct Billing

The Medicare card plays an important part in direct billing as it can be used to imprint the patient details (including Medicare number) on the assignment forms. A special Medicare imprinter is used for this purpose and is available free of charge, on request, from Medicare.

The patient details can, of course, be entered on the assignment forms by hand, but the use of a card to imprint patient details assists practitioners and ensures accuracy of information. The latter is essential to ensure that the processing of a claim by Medicare is expedited.

The Medicare card number must be quoted on assignment forms. If the number is not available, then the direct-billing facility should not be used. To do so would incur a risk that the patient may not be eligible and Medicare benefits not payable.

Where a patient presents without a Medicare card and indicates that he/she has been issued with a card but does not know the details, the practitioner may contact a Medicare telephone enquiry number to obtain the number.

It is important for the practitioner to check the eligibility of patients to Medicare benefits by reference to the card, as enrolees have entitlement limited to the date shown on the card and some enrolees, eg certain visitors to Australia, have restricted access to Medicare.

Assignment of Benefit Forms

To meet varying requirements the following types of stationery are available from Medicare Australia. Note that these are approved forms under the Health Insurance Act, and no other forms can be used to assign benefits without the approval of Medicare Australia.

1. Form DB2-GP. This form is designed for the use of optical scanning equipment and is used to assign benefits for General Practitioner Services other than requested pathology, specialist and optometrical services. It is loose leaf for imprinting and comprises a throw away cover sheet (after imprinting), a Medicare copy, a Practitioner copy and a Patient copy. There are 4 pre-printed items with provision for two other items. The form can also be used as an "offer to assign" when a request for pathology services is sent to an approved pathology practitioner and the patient does not attend the laboratory.
2. Form DB2-OP. This form is designed for the use of optical scanning equipment and is used to assign benefits for optometrical services. It is loose leaf to enable imprinting of patient details from the Medicare card and is similar in most respects to Form DB2-GP, except for content variations. This form may not be used as an offer to assign pathology services.
3. Form DB2-OT. This form is designed for the use of optical scanning equipment and is used to assign benefits for all specialist services. It is loose leaf to enable imprinting of patient details from the Medicare card and is similar in most respects to Form DB2-GP, except for content variations. There are no pre-printed items on this form.
4. Form DB3. This is used to assign or offer to assign benefits for pathology tests rendered by approved pathology practitioners. It is loose leaf to enable imprinting of patient details from the Medicare card and is similar in most respects to Form DB2, except for content variations. The form may not be used for services other than pathology.
5. Form DB4. This is a continuous stationery version of the DB2, and has been designed for use on most office accounting machines.
6. Form DB5. This is a continuous stationery form for pathology services which can be used on most office machines. It cannot be used to assign benefits and must therefore be accompanied by an offer to assign (Form DB2, DB3 or DB4) or other form approved by Medicare Australia for that purpose.

The Claim for Assigned Benefits (Form DB1N, DB1H)

Practitioners who accept assigned benefits must claim from Medicare using either Claim for Assigned Benefits form DB1N or DB1H. The DB1N form should be used where services are rendered to persons for treatment provided out of hospital or day hospital treatment. The DB1H form should be used where services are rendered to persons while hospital treatment is provided in a hospital or day hospital facility (other than public patients). Both forms have been designed to enable benefit for a claim to be directed to a practitioner other than the one who rendered the services. The facility is intended for use in situations such as where a short term locum is acting on behalf of the principal doctor and setting the locum up with a provider number and pay-group link for the principal doctor's practice is impractical. Practitioners should note that this facility cannot be used to generate payments to or through a person who does not have a provider number.

Each claim form must be accompanied by the assignment forms to which the claim relates.

The DB1N and DB1H are also loose leaf to enable imprinting of practitioner details using the special Medicare imprinter. For this purpose, practitioner cards, showing the practitioner's name, practice address and provider number are available from Medicare on request.

Direct-Bill Stationery (Forms DB6Ba & DB6Bb)

Medical practitioners wishing to direct-bill may obtain information on direct-bill stationery by telephoning 132150.

- Form DB6Ba. This form is used to order larger stocks of forms DB3, DB4 and DB5 (and where a practitioner uses these forms, DB1N and DB1H), kits for optical scanning stationery (which comprises DB2's (GP, OP and OT)), DB1's pre addressed envelopes and an instruction sheet for the use of direct-bill scanning stationery.
- Form DB6Bb. This form is used to order stocks of forms and additional products (including Medicare Safety Net forms and promotional material). These forms are available from Medicare.

Time Limits Applicable to Lodgement of Claims for Assigned Benefits

A time limit of two years applies to the lodgement of claims with Medicare under the direct-billing (assignment of benefits) arrangements. This means that Medicare benefits are not payable for any service where the service was rendered more than two years earlier than the date the claim was lodged with Medicare.

Provision exists whereby in certain circumstances (eg hardship cases, third party workers' compensation cases), the Minister may waive the time limits. Special forms for this purpose are available, if required, from the processing centre to which assigned claims are directed.

G.8.1. PROVISION FOR REVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

The Professional Services Review (PSR) reviews and investigates service provision by health practitioners to determine if they have engaged in inappropriate practice when rendering or initiating Medicare services, or when prescribing or dispensing under the PBS.

Section 82 of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* defines inappropriate practice as conduct that is such that a PSR Committee could reasonably conclude that it would be unacceptable to the general body of the members of the profession in which the practitioner was practicing when they rendered or initiated the services under review. It is also an offence under Section 82 for a person or officer of a body corporate to knowingly, recklessly or negligently cause or permit a practitioner employed by the person to engage in such conduct.

Medicare Australia monitors health practitioners' claiming patterns. Where Medicare Australia detects an anomaly, it may request the Director of PSR to review the practitioner's service provision. On receiving the request, the Director must decide whether to conduct a review and in which manner the review will be conducted. The Director is authorized to require that documents and information be provided.

Following a review, the Director must:
decide to take no further action; or
enter into an agreement with the person under review (which must then be ratified by an independent Determining Authority); or
refer the matter to a PSR Committee.

A PSR Committee normally comprises three medically qualified members, two of whom must be members of the same profession as the practitioner under review. However, up to two additional Committee members may be appointed to provide wider range of clinical expertise.

The Committee is authorized to:
investigate any aspect of the provision of the referred services, and without being limited by the reasons given in the review request or by a Director's report following the review;
hold hearings and require the person under review to attend and give evidence;

require the production of documents (including clinical notes).

The methods available to a PSR Committee to investigate and quantify inappropriate practice are specified in legislation:

(a) Patterns of Services - The *Health Insurance (Professional Services Review) Regulations 1999* specify that when a general practitioner or other medical practitioner reaches or exceeds 80 or more attendances on each of 20 or more days in a 12-month period, they are deemed to have practiced inappropriately.

A professional attendance means a service of a kind mentioned in group A1, A2, A5, A6, A7, A9, A11, A13, A14, A15, A16, A17, A18, A19, A20, A21, A22 or A23 of Part 3 of the General Medical Services Table.

If the practitioner can satisfy the PSR Committee that their pattern of service was as a result of exceptional circumstances, the quantum of inappropriate practice is reduced accordingly. Exceptional circumstances include, but are not limited to, those set out in the *Regulations*. These include:

an unusual occurrence;

the absence of other medical services for the practitioner's patients (having regard to the practice location); and
the characteristics of the patients.

(b) Sampling - A PSR Committee may use statistically valid methods to sample the clinical or practice records.

(c) Generic findings - If a PSR Committee cannot use patterns of service or sampling (for example, there are insufficient medical records), it can make a 'generic' finding of inappropriate practice.

Additional Information

A PSR Committee may not make a finding of inappropriate practice unless it has given the person under review notice of its intention to review them, the reasons for its findings, and an opportunity to respond. In reaching their decision, a PSR Committee is required to consider whether or not the practitioner has kept adequate and contemporaneous patient records (See general explanatory note G15.1 for more information on adequate and contemporaneous patient records).

The practitioner under review is permitted to make submissions to the PSR Committee before key decisions or a final report is made.

If a PSR Committee finds that the person under review has engaged in inappropriate practice, the findings will be reported to the Determining Authority to decide what action should be taken:

- (i)** a reprimand;
- (ii)** counselling;
- (iii)** repayment of Medicare benefits; and/or
- (iv)** complete or partial disqualification from Medicare benefit arrangements for up to three years.

Further information is available from the PSR website - www.psr.gov.au

G.8.2. MEDICARE PARTICIPATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Medicare Participation Review Committee determines what administrative action should be taken against a practitioner who:

- (a) has been successfully prosecuted for relevant criminal offences;
- (b) has breached an Approved Pathology Practitioner undertaking;
- (c) has engaged in prohibited diagnostic imaging practices; or
- (d) has been found to have engaged in inappropriate practice under the Professional Services Review scheme and has received Final Determinations on two (or more) occasions.

The Committee can take no further action, counsel or reprimand the practitioner, or determine that the practitioner be disqualified from Medicare for a particular period or in relation to particular services for up to five years.

Medicare benefits are not payable in respect of services rendered by a practitioner who has been fully disqualified, or partly disqualified in relation to relevant services under the *Health Insurance Act 1973* (Section 19B applies).

G.8.3. REFERRAL OF PROFESSIONAL ISSUES TO REGULATORY AND OTHER BODIES

The *Health Insurance Act 1973* provides for the following referral, to an appropriate regulatory body:

- i. a significant threat to a person's life or health, when caused or is being caused or is likely to be caused by the conduct of the practitioner under review; or
- ii. a statement of concerns of non-compliance by a practitioner with 'professional standards'.

G.8.4. COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR THE MBS

The Government announced the Comprehensive Management Framework for the MBS in the 2011-12 Budget to improve MBS management and governance into the future. As part of this framework, the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC) Terms of Reference and membership have been expanded to provide the Government with independent expert advice on all new proposed services to be funded through the MBS, as well as on all proposed amendments to existing MBS items. Processes developed under the previously funded MBS Quality Framework are now being integrated with MSAC processes under the Comprehensive Management Framework for the MBS.

G.8.5. MEDICAL SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC) advises the Minister on the strength of evidence relating to the safety, effectiveness and cost effectiveness of new and emerging medical services and technologies and under what circumstances public funding, including listing on the MBS, should be supported.

MSAC members are appointed by the Minister and include specialist practitioners, general practitioners, health economists, a health consumer representative, health planning and administration experts and epidemiologists.

For more information on the MSAC refer to their website – www.msac.gov.au or email on msac.secretariat@health.gov.au or by phoning the MSAC secretariat on (02) 6289 6811.

G.8.6. PATHOLOGY SERVICES TABLE COMMITTEE

This Pathology Services Table Committee comprises six representatives from the interested professions and six from the Australian Government. Its primary role is to advise the Minister on the need for changes to the structure and content of the Pathology Services Table (except new medical services and technologies) including the level of fees.

G.8.7. MEDICARE CLAIMS REVIEW PANEL

There are MBS items which make the payment of Medicare benefits dependent on a 'demonstrated' clinical need. Services requiring prior approval are those covered by items 11222, 11225, 12207, 12215, 12217, 14124, 21965, 21997, 30214, 32501, 42771, 42783, 42786, 42789, 42792, 45019, 45020, 45528, 45557, 45558, 45559, 45585, 45586, 45588, 45639 .

Claims for benefits for these services should be lodged with Medicare Australia for referral to the National Office of Medicare Australia for assessment by the Medicare Claims Review Panel (MCRP) and must be accompanied by sufficient clinical and/or photographic evidence to enable Medicare Australia to determine the eligibility of the service for the payment of benefits.

Practitioners may also apply to Medicare Australia for prospective approval for proposed surgery.

Applications for approval should be addressed to:

The MCRP Officer
PO Box 1001
Tuggeranong ACT 2901

G.9.1. PENALTIES AND LIABILITIES

Penalties of up to \$10,000 or imprisonment for up to five years, or both, may be imposed on any person who makes a statement (oral or written) or who issues or presents a document that is false or misleading in a material particular and which is capable of being used with a claim for benefits. In addition, any practitioner who is found guilty of such offences by a court shall be subject to examination by a Medicare Participation Review Committee and may be counselled or reprimanded or may have services wholly or partially disqualified from the Medicare benefit arrangements.

A penalty of up to \$1,000 or imprisonment for up to three months, or both, may be imposed on any person who obtains a patient's signature on a direct-billing form without the obligatory details having been entered on the form before the person signs, or who fails to cause a patient to be given a copy of the completed form.

G.10.1. SCHEDULE FEES AND MEDICARE BENEFITS

Medicare benefits are based on fees determined for each medical service. The fee is referred to in these notes as the "Schedule fee". The fee for any item listed in the MBS is that which is regarded as being reasonable on average for that service having regard to usual and reasonable variations in the time involved in performing the service on different occasions and to reasonable ranges of complexity and technical difficulty encountered.

In some cases two levels of fees are applied to the same service in General Medical Services, with each level of fee being allocated a separate item number. The item identified by the letter "S" applies in the case where the procedure has been

rendered by a recognised specialist in the practice of his or her speciality and the patient has been referred. The item identified by the letter "G" applies in any other circumstances.

As a general rule Schedule fees are adjusted on an annual basis, usually in November.

The Schedule fee and Medicare benefit levels for the medical services contained in the MBS are located with the item descriptions. Where appropriate, the calculated benefit has been rounded to the nearest higher 5 cents. However, in no circumstances will the Medicare benefit payable exceed the fee actually charged.

There are presently three levels of Medicare benefit payable:

(a) **75% of the Schedule fee:**

- i. for professional services rendered to a patient as part of an episode of hospital treatment (other than public patients). Medical practitioners must indicate on their accounts if a medical service is rendered in these circumstances by placing an asterisk "*" directly after an item number where used; or a description of the professional service, preceded by the word 'patient';
- ii. for professional services rendered as part of an episode of hospital-substitute treatment, and the patient who receives the treatment chooses to receive a benefit from a private health insurer. Medical practitioners must indicate on their accounts if a medical service is rendered in these circumstances by placing the words 'hospital-substitute treatment' directly after an item number where used; or a description of the professional service, preceded by the words 'hospital-substitute treatment'.

(b) **100% of the Schedule fee** for non-referred attendances by general practitioners to non-admitted patients and services provided by a practice nurse or registered Aboriginal Health Worker on behalf of a general practitioner.

(c) **85% of the Schedule fee**, or the Schedule fee less \$73.70 (indexed annually), whichever is the greater, for all other professional services.

Public hospital services are to be provided free of charge to eligible persons who choose to be treated as public patients in accordance with the National Healthcare Agreement.

A medical service rendered to a patient on the day of admission to, or day of discharge from hospital, *but prior to admission or subsequent to discharge*, will attract benefits at the 85% or 100% level, not 75%. This also applies to a pathology service rendered to a patient prior to admission. Attendances on patients at a hospital (other than patients covered by paragraph (i) above) attract benefits at the 85% level.

The 75% benefit level applies even though a portion of the service (eg. aftercare) may be rendered outside the hospital. With regard to obstetric items, benefits would be attracted at the 75% level where the confinement takes place in hospital.

Pathology tests performed after discharge from hospital on bodily specimens taken during hospitalisation also attract the 75% level of benefits.

It should be noted that private health insurers can cover the "patient gap" (that is, the difference between the Medicare rebate and the Schedule fee) for services attracting benefits at the 75% level. Patient's may insure with private health insurers for the gap between the 75% Medicare benefits and the Schedule fee or for amounts in excess of the Schedule fee where the doctor has an arrangement with their health insurer.

G.10.2. MEDICARE SAFETY NETS

The Medicare Safety Nets provide families and singles with an additional rebate for out-of-hospital Medicare services, once annual thresholds are reached. There are two safety nets: the original Medicare safety net and the extended Medicare safety net.

Original Medicare Safety Net:

Under the original Medicare safety net, the Medicare benefit for out-of-hospital services is increased to 100% of the Schedule Fee (up from 85%) once an annual threshold in gap costs is reached. Gap costs refer to the difference between the Medicare benefit (85%) and the Schedule Fee. The threshold from 1 January 2011 is \$399.60. This threshold applies to all Medicare-eligible singles and families.

Extended Medicare Safety Net:

Under the extended Medicare safety net (EMSN), once an annual threshold in out-of-pocket costs for out-of-hospital Medicare services is reached, Medicare will pay for 80% of any future out-of-pocket costs for out-of-hospital Medicare services for the remainder of the calendar year. However, where the item has an EMSN benefit cap, there is a maximum limit on the EMSN benefit that will be paid for that item. Further explanation about EMSN benefit caps is provided below. Out-of-pocket costs refer to the difference between the Medicare benefit and the fee charged by the practitioner.

In 2011, the threshold for singles and families that hold Commonwealth concession card, families that received Family Tax Benefit Part (A) (FTB(A)) and families that qualify for notional FTB(A) is \$578.60. The threshold for all other singles and families is \$1,157.50.

The thresholds for both safety nets are indexed on 1 January each year.

Individuals are automatically registered with Medicare Australia for the safety nets; however couples and families are required to register in order to be recognised as a family for the purposes on the safety nets. In most cases, registered families have their expenses combined to reach the safety net thresholds. This may help to qualify for safety net benefits more quickly. Registration forms can be obtained from Medicare Australia offices, or completed online at www.medicareaustralia.gov.au.

EMSN Benefit Caps:

The EMSN benefit cap is the maximum EMSN benefit payable for that item and is paid in addition to the standard Medicare rebate. Where there is an EMSN benefit cap in place for the item, the amount of the EMSN cap is displayed in the item descriptor.

Once the EMSN threshold is reached, each time the item is claimed the patient is eligible to receive up to the EMSN benefit cap. As with the safety nets, the EMSN benefit cap only applied to out-of-hospital services.

Where the item has an EMSN benefit cap, the EMSN benefit is calculated as 80% of the out-of-pocket cost for the service. If the calculated EMSN benefit is less than the EMSN benefit cap; then calculated EMSN rebate is paid. The calculated EMSN benefit is greater than the EMSN benefit cap; the EMSN benefit cap is paid.

For example:

Item A has a Schedule fee of \$100, the out-of-hospital benefit is \$85 (85% of the Schedule fee). The EMSN benefit cap is \$30. Assuming that the patient has reached the EMSN threshold:

- o If the fee charged by the doctor for Item A is \$125, the standard Medicare rebate is \$85, with an out-of-pocket cost of \$40. The EMSN benefit is calculated as $\$40 \times 80\% = \32 . However, as the EMSN benefit cap is \$30, only \$30 will be paid.
- o If the fee charged by the doctor for Item A is \$110, the standard Medicare rebate is \$85, with an out-of-pocket cost of \$25. The EMSN benefit is calculated as $\$25 \times 80\% = \20 . As this is less than the EMSN benefit cap, the full \$20 is paid.

G.11.1. SERVICES NOT LISTED IN THE MBS

Benefits are not generally payable for services not listed in the MBS. However, there are some procedural services which are not specifically listed because they are regarded as forming part of a consultation or else attract benefits on an attendance basis. For example, intramuscular injections, aspiration needle biopsy, treatment of sebhorreic keratoses and less than 10 solar keratoses by ablative techniques and closed reduction of the toe (other than the great toe).

Enquiries about services not listed or on matters of interpretation should be directed to Medicare Australia on 132 150.

G.11.2. MINISTERIAL DETERMINATIONS

Section 3C of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* empowers the Minister to determine an item and Schedule fee (for the purposes of the Medicare benefits arrangements) for a service not included in the health insurance legislation. This provision may be used to facilitate payment of benefits for new developed procedures or techniques where close monitoring is desirable. Services which have received section 3C approval are located in their relevant Groups in the MBS with the notation "(Ministerial Determination)".

G.12.1. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Professional services which attract Medicare benefits include medical services rendered by or "on behalf of" a medical practitioner. The latter include services where a part of the service is performed by a technician employed by or, in accordance with accepted medical practice, acting under the supervision of the medical practitioner.

The *Health Insurance Regulations 1975* specify that the following medical services will attract benefits only if they have been personally performed by a medical practitioner on not more than one patient on the one occasion (i.e. two or more patients cannot be attended simultaneously, although patients may be seen consecutively), unless a group session is involved

(i.e. Items 170-172). The requirement of "personal performance" is met whether or not assistance is provided, according to accepted medical standards:-

- (a) All Category 1 (Professional Attendances) items (except 170-172, 342-346);
- (b) Each of the following items in Group D1 (Miscellaneous Diagnostic):- 11012, 11015, 11018, 11021, 11212, 11304, 11500, 11600, 11627, 11701, 11712, 11724, 11921, 12000, 12003;
- (c) All Group T1 (Miscellaneous Therapeutic) items (except 13020, 13025, 13200-13206, 13212-13221, 13703, 13706, 13709, 13750-13760, 13915-13948, 14050, 14053, 14218, 14221 and 14224);
- (d) Item 15600 in Group T2 (Radiation Oncology);
- (e) All Group T3 (Therapeutic Nuclear Medicine) items;
- (f) All Group T4 (Obstetrics) items (except 16400 and 16514);
- (g) All Group T6 (Anaesthetics) items;
- (h) All Group T7 (Regional or Field Nerve Block) items;
- (i) All Group T8 (Operations) items;
- (j) All Group T9 (Assistance at Operations) items;
- (k) All Group T10 (Relative Value Guide for Anaesthetics) items.

For the group psychotherapy and family group therapy services covered by Items 170, 171, 172, 342, 344 and 346, benefits are payable only if the services have been conducted personally by the medical practitioner.

Medicare benefits are not payable for these group items or any of the items listed in (a) - (k) above when the service is rendered by a medical practitioner employed by the proprietor of a hospital (not being a private hospital), except where the practitioner is exercising their right of private practice, or is performing a medical service outside the hospital. For example, benefits are not paid when a hospital intern or registrar performs a service at the request of a staff specialist or visiting medical officer.

G.12.2. SERVICES RENDERED ON BEHALF OF MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

Medical services in Categories 2 and 3 not included in the list above and Category 5 (Diagnostic Imaging) services continue to attract Medicare benefits if the service is rendered by:-

- (a) the medical practitioner in whose name the service is being claimed;
- (b) a person, other than a medical practitioner, who is employed by a medical practitioner or, in accordance with accepted medical practice, acts under the supervision of a medical practitioner.

See Category 6 Notes for Guidance for arrangements relating to Pathology services.

So that a service rendered by an employee or under the supervision of a medical practitioner may attract a Medicare rebate, the service must be billed in the name of the practitioner who must accept full responsibility for the service. Medicare Australia must be satisfied with the employment and supervision arrangements. While the supervising medical practitioner need not be present for the entire service, they must have a direct involvement in at least part of the service. Although the supervision requirements will vary according to the service in question, they will, as a general rule, be satisfied where the medical practitioner has:-

- (a) established consistent quality assurance procedures for the data acquisition; and
- (b) personally analysed the data and written the report.

Benefits are not payable for these services when a medical practitioner refers patients to self-employed medical or paramedical personnel, such as radiographers and audiologists, who either bill the patient or the practitioner requesting the service.

G.12.3. MASS IMMUNISATION

Medicare benefits are payable for a professional attendance that includes an immunisation, provided that the actual administration of the vaccine is not specifically funded through any other Commonwealth or State Government program, nor through an international or private organisation.

The location of the service, or advertising of it, or the number of patients presenting together for it, normally do not indicate a mass immunisation.

G.13.1. SERVICES WHICH DO NOT ATTRACT MEDICARE BENEFITS

Services not attracting benefits

- telephone consultations;
- issue of repeat prescriptions when the patient does not attend the surgery in person;
- group attendances (unless otherwise specified in the item, such as items 170, 171, 172, 342, 344 and 346);
- non-therapeutic cosmetic surgery;

- euthanasia and any service directly related to the procedure. However, services rendered for counselling/assessment about euthanasia will attract benefits.

Medicare benefits are not payable where the medical expenses for the service

- are paid/payable to a public hospital;
- are for a compensable injury or illness for which the patient's insurer or compensation agency has accepted liability. (Please note that if the medical expenses relate to a compensable injury/illness for which the insurer/compensation agency is disputing liability, then Medicare benefits are payable until the liability is accepted.);
- are for a medical examination for the purposes of life insurance, superannuation, a provident account scheme, or admission to membership of a friendly society;
- are incurred in mass immunisation (see General Explanatory Note 12 for further explanation).

Unless the Minister otherwise directs

Medicare benefits are not payable where:

- the service is rendered by or on behalf of, or under an arrangement with the Australian Government, a State or Territory, a local government body or an authority established under Commonwealth, State or Territory law;
- the medical expenses are incurred by the employer of the person to whom the service is rendered;
- the person to whom the service is rendered is employed in an industrial undertaking and that service is rendered for the purposes related to the operation of the undertaking; or
- the service is a health screening service.
- the service is a pre-employment screening service

Current regulations preclude the payment of Medicare benefits for professional services rendered in relation to or in association with:

- chelation therapy (that is, the intravenous administration of ethylenediamine tetra-acetic acid or any of its salts) other than for the treatment of heavy-metal poisoning;
- the injection of human chorionic gonadotrophin in the management of obesity;
- the use of hyperbaric oxygen therapy in the treatment of multiple sclerosis;
- the removal of tattoos;
- the transplantation of a thoracic or abdominal organ, other than a kidney, or of a part of an organ of that kind; or the transplantation of a kidney in conjunction with the transplantation of a thoracic or other abdominal organ, or part of an organ of that kind;
- the removal from a cadaver of kidneys for transplantation;
- the administration of microwave (UHF radio wave) cancer therapy, including the intravenous injection of drugs used in the therapy.

Pain pumps for post-operative pain management

The cannulation and/or catheterisation of surgical sites associated with pain pumps for post-operative pain management cannot be billed under any MBS item.

The filling or re-filling of drug reservoirs of ambulatory pain pumps for post-operative pain management cannot be billed under any MBS items.

Non Medicare Services

An item in the range 1 to 10943 does not apply to the service described in that item if the service is provided at the same time as, or in connection with, any of the services specified below

- Endoluminal gastropliation, for the treatment of gastro-oesophageal reflux disease;
- Endovenous laser treatment, for varicose veins;
- Gamma knife surgery;
- Intradiscal electro thermal arthroplasty;
- Intravascular ultrasound (except where used in conjunction with intravascular brachytherapy);
- Intro-articular viscosupplementation, for the treatment of osteoarthritis of the knee;
- Low intensity ultrasound treatment, for the acceleration of bone fracture healing, using a bone growth stimulator;
- Lung volume reduction surgery, for advanced emphysema;
- Photodynamic therapy, for skin and mucosal cancer;
- Placement of artificial bowel sphincters, in the management of faecal incontinence;
- Selective internal radiation therapy for any condition other than hepatic metastases that are secondary to colorectal cancer;
- Specific mass measurement of bone alkaline phosphatase;
- Transmyocardial laser revascularisation;
- Vertebral axial decompression therapy, for chronic back pain.
- Autologous Chondrocyte Implantation and Matrix-induced Autologous Chondrocyte Implantation.
- Vertebroplasty

Health Screening Services

Unless the Minister otherwise directs Medicare benefits are not payable for health screening services. A health screening service is defined as a medical examination or test that is not reasonably required for the management of the medical condition of the patient. Services covered by this proscription include such items as:

- multiphasic health screening;
- mammography screening (except as provided for in Items 59300/59303);
- testing of fitness to undergo physical training program, vocational activities or weight reduction programs;
- compulsory examinations and tests to obtain a flying, commercial driving or other licence;
- entrance to schools and other educational facilities;
- for the purposes of legal proceedings;
- compulsory examinations for admission to aged persons' accommodation and pathology services associated with clinical ecology.

The Minister has directed that Medicare benefits be paid for the following categories of health screening:

- a medical examination or test on a symptomless patient by that patient's own medical practitioner in the course of normal medical practice, to ensure the patient receives any medical advice or treatment necessary to maintain their state of health. Benefits would be payable for the attendance and tests which are considered reasonably necessary according to patients individual circumstances (such as age, physical condition, past personal and family history). For example, a Papanicolaou test in a woman (see General Explanatory note 13.6.4 for more information), blood lipid estimation where a person has a family history of lipid disorder. However, such routine check up should not necessarily be accompanied by an extensive battery of diagnostic investigations;
- a pathology service requested by the National Heart Foundation of Australia, Risk Evaluation Service;
- age or health related medical examinations to obtain or renew a licence to drive a private motor vehicle;
- a medical examination of, and/or blood collection from persons occupationally exposed to sexual transmission of disease, in line with conditions determined by the relevant State or Territory health authority, (one examination or collection per person per week). Benefits are not paid for pathology tests resulting from the examination or collection;
- a medical examination for a person as a prerequisite of that person becoming eligible to foster a child or children;
- a medical examination being a requisite for Social Security benefits or allowances;
- a medical or optometrical examination provided to a person who is an unemployed person (as defined by the *Social Security Act 1991*), as the request of a prospective employer.

The National Policy on screening for the Prevention of Cervical Cancer (endorsed by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Royal Australian College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia, the Australian Cancer Society and the National Health and Medical Research Council) is as follows:-

- an examination interval of two years for women who have no symptoms or history suggestive of abnormal cervical cytology, commencing between the ages of 18 to 20 years, or one or two years after first sexual intercourse, whichever is later;
- cessation of cervical smears at 70 years for women who have had two normal results within the last five years. Women over 70 who have never been examined, or who request a cervical smear, should be examined.

Note 1: As separate items exist for routine examination of cervical smears, treating practitioners are asked to clearly identify on the request form to the pathologist, if the smear has been taken as a routine examination or for the management of a previously detected abnormality (see paragraph PP.11 of Pathology Services Explanatory Notes in Category 6).

Note 2: See items 2501 to 2509, and 2600 to 2616 in Group A18 and A19 of Category 1 – Professional Attendances and the associated explanatory notes for these items in Category 1 – Professional Attendances.

Services rendered to a doctor's dependants, practice partner, or practice partner's dependants

Generally, Medicare benefits are not paid for professional services rendered by a medical practitioner to dependants or partners or a partner's dependants.

A 'dependant' person is a spouse or a child. The following provides definitions of these dependant persons:

a spouse, in relation to a dependant person means:

- (a) a person who is legally married to, and is not living, on a permanent basis, separately and apart from, that person; and
- (b) a de facto spouse of that person.

a child, in relation to a dependant person means:

- (a) a child under the age of 16 years who is in the custody, care and control of the person or the spouse of the person; and
- (b) a person who:
 - (i) has attained the age of 16 years who is in the custody, care and control of the person or the spouse of the person; or
 - (ii) is receiving full time education at a school, college or university; and

- (iii) is not being paid a disability support pension under the Social Security Act 1991; and
- (iv) is wholly or substantially dependent on the person or on the spouse of the person.

G.14.1. PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION OF THE MBS

Each professional service listed in the MBS is a complete medical service. Where a listed service is also a component of a more comprehensive service covered by another item, the benefit for the latter service will cover the former.

Where a service is rendered partly by one medical practitioner and partly by another, only the one amount of benefit is payable. For example, where a radiographic examination is started by one medical practitioner and finalised by another.

G.14.2. SERVICES ATTRACTING BENEFITS ON AN ATTENDANCE BASIS

Some services are not listed in the MBS because they are regarded as forming part of a consultation or they attract benefits on an attendance basis.

G.14.3. CONSULTATION AND PROCEDURES RENDERED AT THE ONE ATTENDANCE

Where, during a single attendance, a consultation (under Category 1 of the MBS) and another medical service (under any other Category of the Schedule) occur, benefits are payable subject to certain exceptions, for both the consultation and the other service. Benefits are not payable for the consultation in addition to an item rendered on the same occasion where the item is qualified by words such as "each attendance", "attendance at which", "including associated attendances/consultations", and all items in Group T6 and T9. In the case of radiotherapy treatment (Group T2 of Category 3) benefits are payable for both the radiotherapy and an initial referred consultation.

Where the level of benefit for an attendance depends upon the consultation time (for example, in psychiatry), the time spent in carrying out a procedure which is covered by another item in the MBS, may not be included in the consultation time.

A consultation fee may only be charged if a consultation occurs; that is, it is not expected that consultation fee will be charged on every occasion a procedure is performed.

G.14.4. AGGREGATE ITEMS

The MBS includes a number of items which apply only in conjunction with another specified service listed in the MBS. These items provide for the application of a fixed loading or factor to the fee and benefit for the service with which they are rendered.

When these particular procedures are rendered in conjunction, the legislation provides for the procedures to be regarded as one service and for a single patient gap to apply. The Schedule fee for the service will be ascertained in accordance with the particular rules shown in the relevant items.

G.14.5. RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE FACILITY

A residential aged care facility is defined in the *Aged Care Act 1997*; the definition includes facilities formerly known as nursing homes and hostels.

G.15.1. PRACTITIONERS SHOULD MAINTAIN ADEQUATE AND CONTEMPORANEOUS RECORDS

All practitioners who provide, or initiate, a service for which a Medicare benefit is payable, should ensure they maintain **adequate** and **contemporaneous** records.

Note: 'Practitioner' is defined in Section 81 of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* and includes: medical practitioners, dentists, optometrists, chiropractors, physiotherapists, podiatrists and osteopaths.

Since 1 November 1999 PSR Committees determining issues of inappropriate practice have been obliged to consider if the practitioner kept adequate and contemporaneous records. It will be up to the peer judgement of the PSR Committee to decide if a practitioner's records meet the prescribed standards.

The standards which determine if a record is adequate and contemporaneous are prescribed in the *Health Insurance (Professional Services Review) Regulations 1999*.

To be **adequate**, the patient or clinical record needs to:

- clearly identify the name of the patient; and
- contain a separate entry for each attendance by the patient for a service and the date on which the service was rendered or initiated; and

- each entry needs to provide clinical information adequate to explain the type of service rendered or initiated; and
- each entry needs to be sufficiently comprehensible that another practitioner, relying on the record, can effectively undertake the patient's ongoing care.

To be *contemporaneous*, the patient or clinical record should be completed at the time that the service was rendered or initiated or as soon as practicable afterwards. Records for hospital patients are usually kept by the hospital and the practitioner could rely on these records to document in-patient care.

CLEFT LIP AND CLEFT PALATE SERVICES
CATEGORY 7

C.1.1. INTRODUCTION - MEDICARE BENEFITS

The Medicare Benefits Schedule includes certain professional services in respect of the treatment of cleft lip and cleft palate conditions for which Medicare benefits are payable. These services are normally described as dental services. However, for the purposes of these Notes the word "medical" is to be interpreted to include "dental". The definition of professional service as contained in the Health Insurance Act provides that such a service must be "clinically relevant". A clinically relevant service means a service rendered by a medical or dental practitioner or optometrist that is generally accepted in the medical, dental or optometrical profession (as the case may be) as being necessary for the appropriate treatment of the patient to whom it is rendered.

Medicare benefits are payable in respect of services listed in the Schedule, when the services are rendered by eligible dental practitioners to prescribed dental patients.

The Schedule lists three categories of professional services:

- (Group C1) Orthodontic Services
- (Group C2) Oral and Maxillofacial Surgical Services
- (Group C3) General and Prosthodontic Services

C.2.1. DENTAL PRACTITIONER ELIGIBILITY

In order to attract Medicare benefits, all treatment must be carried out by eligible dental practitioners who are resident in Australia. Practitioner eligibility is covered under the provisions of Subsection 3(1) of the *Health Insurance Act 1973*.

All State registered dental practitioners are entitled to perform simple extraction services covered by Items 75200-75206 listed in Group C2 of the Schedule (see paragraph CG.6 of these notes) and the general and prosthodontic services listed in Group C3 of the Schedule. Practitioners do not need to apply for accreditation or approval to perform these services.

Dental practitioners who wish to be accredited for the purposes of Subsection 3(1) of the Act to perform those orthodontic services listed in Group C1 of the Schedule must submit an application for consideration by the Medical Benefits (Dental Practitioners) Advisory Committee. This Committee will recommend to the Minister the names of those dental practitioners who, in its opinion, should be accredited by the Minister to provide orthodontic services.

The criteria used in granting accreditation for orthodontic services are that the dental practitioner is a practitioner who is either -

- registered by one of the State Dental Boards as an orthodontist; or
- can substantiate by qualifications and experience a level of competence in the field of orthodontics equivalent to the above criterion.

Dental practitioners holding the FRACDS (OMS) or equivalent who were approved by the Minister prior to 1 November 2004 for the purposes of Subsection 3 (1) of the Act to carry out prescribed medical services (oral and maxillofacial surgery) contained in the Medicare Benefits Schedule book may perform prescribed medical services (oral and maxillofacial surgery) listed in Group C2 (on referral by an accredited orthodontist).

The Medical Benefits (Dental Practitioners) Advisory Committee considers applications lodged by dental practitioners and recommends to the Minister the names of those dental practitioners who, in its opinion, should be approved by the Minister for the purposes of subsection 3(1) of the Act. Such dental practitioners must be State registered oral and maxillofacial surgeons in the State in which he/she is practising. In making its recommendations, the Committee may take into account a practitioner's training and experience in the field of oral and maxillofacial surgery and other factors which it may consider relevant.

Practitioners who wish to be considered for approval or accreditation for the purposes of subsection 3(1) of the Act, should write to the

The Manager (Eligibility)
Medicare Australia
PO Box 1001
Tuggeranong ACT 2901

for an application form. Any enquiries may be directed to Medicare Australia at www.medicareaustralia.com.au

Where the Minister decides that a dental practitioner should not be accredited for orthodontic services, the dental practitioner may appeal to the Medical Benefits (Dental Practitioners) Appeals Committee, which is composed of dental practitioners who are not on the Advisory Committee. The Committee's address is the same as the Advisory Committee.

Both the Advisory and the Appeals Committees are composed of dental practitioners nominated by the Australian Dental Association.

C.3.1. PATIENT ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to claim benefits for Schedule services performed by eligible dental practitioners, a patient must satisfy the following criteria:

- (a) The patient must be an Australian resident or any other person or class of persons whom the Minister declares to be eligible. All eligible persons will be issued with a Medicare card on application as evidence of their eligibility.
- (b) Under the provisions of Section 3BA of the Health Insurance Act a patient must be a prescribed dental patient, ie
 - a person aged up to twenty-two years, in respect of whom, a certificate has been issued by a medical practitioner or dental practitioner approved by the Minister, stating that the person is suffering from a cleft lip or cleft palate condition*;
 - a person aged up to twenty-eight years, in respect of whom, prior to turning twenty-two years,
 - a certificate has been issued by a medical practitioner or dental practitioner approved by the Minister, stating that the person is suffering from a cleft lip or cleft palate condition*, and
 - that person commenced treatment for a cleft lip or cleft palate condition;
 - a person aged twenty-eight and over requiring a specific course of treatment for the repair of previous reconstructive surgery, provided that:
 - prior to turning twenty-two years, a certificate has been issued by a medical practitioner or dental practitioner approved by the Minister, stating that the person is suffering from a cleft lip or cleft palate condition*, and
 - the person received treatment for a cleft lip or cleft palate condition prior to turning twenty-eight years, and
 - if the Minister has declared in writing that he or she is satisfied that:
 - (i) because of exceptional circumstances, the person required repair of previous reconstructive surgery in connection with the condition, and
 - (ii) the person therefore needs to undergo that course of treatment.
 - a person aged up to twenty-two years in respect of whom a certificate has been issued by a medical practitioner or dental practitioner approved by the Minister, stating that the person is suffering from a condition determined by the Minister to be a condition to which the definition of a prescribed dental patient under Section 3BA of the Act applies.

The Department of Health and Ageing has completed an interim review of the conditions described as “other”, including the legislation underpinning the Cleft Lip and Cleft Palate Scheme. A Ministerial Determination is now in place for these ‘other’ conditions, enabling the payment of Medicare benefits for the conditions listed below. Any applications for the listed conditions received in the period between 17 September and the date of the new Determination will be eligible for registration under the Scheme. Similarly, any claims during this period for services provided under the CLACP scheme for applicants registered prior to 17 September will also be eligible.

Conditions for which a patient may be prescribed include the following:

- AARSKOG
- Achondroplasia & Craniofacial Anomaly
- Alagilles Syndrome
- Amelogenesis Imperfecta
- Anterior Open Bite
- Apert's Syndrome
- Branchial Arch Syndrome
- Charge Syndrome
- Choanal Atresia
- Cleidocranialdysostosis
- Craniometaphyseal Syndrome
- Craniosynostosis Syndrome
- Ectodermal Dysplasia
- Golden Har Syndrome
- Hypo Hidrotic Ectodermal Dysplasia
- Joubert Syndrome

- Left Hemifacial Microsomia
- Metopic Syndrome
- Oligodontia
- Pierre Robin
- Pierre Sequence
- Regional Odontodysplasia
- Right Unicoronal Synostosis
- Romberg's Syndrome
- Rubenstein-Taybi Syndrome
- Sprintzen Syndrome
- Sticklers Syndrome
- Tessier Cleft
- Treacher-Collins' Syndrome
- Trichorhinophalangeal Syndrome Type 1
- Unilateral Cleft Lip and Palate (UCLP)
- Velocardio Facial Syndrome (VCF)

*Note: The above conditions have been listed in the terminology that they are generally known under. Some conditions are similar to, or otherwise known as, other conditions on the list.

Please contact Medicare Australia by telephone on 1300 652 492 if the condition is not listed here.

C.3.2. APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL FOR REPAIRS TO PREVIOUS RECONSTRUCTIVE WORK

Applicants aged 28 and over seeking approval for repairs to previous reconstructive work under the Cleft Lip and Cleft Palate Scheme will be required to provide clinical details outlining the need for the repair of previous reconstructive surgery.

NOTE: *Patients aged over 28 years of age are not eligible to receive Medicare payments for treatment until approval from the Minister's delegate has been obtained.*

Applications should include the following:

- a treatment plan devised by the treating professional, for the repair of the reconstructive surgery to be performed, including:
 - an indicative time period for which patient eligibility for claiming related treatments should be reinstated
 - date/s the treatment is expected to commence and
 - date/s the treatment is expected to be completed.
- proof of previous eligibility and treatment under the Cleft Lip and Cleft Palate Scheme. This should take the form of a letter from the treating practitioner, which lists the patient details as follows:
 - full name
 - date of birth
 - address
 - condition
 - Cleft Palate Number
 - date (or approximate) of original surgery

This information will be forwarded to Medicare Australia for confirmation of eligibility;

- a clinical report from the treating professional, describing the nature of the repair, information detailing the previous reconstructive surgery provided and an outline of the work to be undertaken.

Applications made under Section 3BA(2A) should be addressed to:

The Assistant Secretary
 Medicare Benefits Branch
 MDP 850
 Department of Health and Ageing
 PO Box 9848
 Canberra ACT 2601

Assessment of Applications

Assessment will take into account the information provided by the applicant and consider the circumstances surrounding each individual application. In the assessment, "previous reconstructive surgery" means surgery undertaken to repair structural defects in connection with a cleft lip or cleft palate condition. Repairs to this surgery must be in relation to the failure or deterioration of this surgery and due to that failure or deterioration, the patient requires further surgical intervention to restore optimal function.

Repair to previous reconstructive surgery may involve items in both the main Medicare Benefits Schedule, and items in the Cleft Lip and Cleft Palate Schedule. Under Section 3BA (2A), upon gaining the Minister's approval, applicants will have full access to items in the Cleft Lip and Cleft Palate Schedule that are necessary for the restoration of optimal function (provided the items are rendered by suitably qualified / approved practitioners).

The identification of the cleft condition and the issue of the Certificate can be undertaken through a special cleft lip and cleft palate clinic or by a medical or dental practitioner authorised for this purpose by the Minister. Cleft lip and cleft palate clinics operate in at least one public hospital in each Australian State/Territory capital city. A list of these clinics and their addresses appears at the end of these Notes.

Practitioners whose patients are unable to attend the hospital clinic should send records of the cleft condition to the Clinic for identification of the condition and issue of the Certificate.

The Certificate is a formal document required under the provisions of the Act. Because the Certificate may have to last for up to twenty-eight years, each eligible patient will also be issued with a plastic identification card. These cards, which are more durable than the paper Certificates, can be used by patients (or parents or guardians) to claim Medicare benefits. Facsimiles of the Certificate and card appear at the end of these Notes.

Patients are eligible for Medicare benefits for treatment received from the date of issue of their Certificate. Where treatment is required immediately after birth, practitioners should telephone a Clinic or approved practitioner so that a Certificate can be prepared which will be effective from that day.

C.3.3. VISITORS TO AUSTRALIA

Medicare benefits for the Cleft Lip and Cleft Palate Scheme are generally not payable to visitors to Australia or temporary residents.

C.3.4. HEALTH CARE EXPENSES INCURRED OVERSEAS

Medicare does not cover medical or hospital expenses incurred outside Australia.

C.4.1. SCHEDULE FEES AND MEDICARE BENEFITS

Medicare benefits are based on fees determined for each Schedule service. The fee is referred to in these notes as the "Schedule fee". The fee for any item listed in the Schedule is that which is regarded as being reasonable on average for that service having regard to usual and reasonable variations in the time involved in performing the service on different occasions and to reasonable ranges of complexity and technical difficulty encountered.

The Schedule fee and Medicare benefit levels for the medical services contained in the Schedule are located with the item descriptions. Where appropriate, the calculated benefit has been rounded to the nearest higher 5 cents. However, in no circumstances will the Medicare benefit payable exceed the fee actually charged.

There are presently two levels of Medicare benefit payable for cleft lip and cleft palate services:

- (a) **75% of the Schedule fee:**
- for professional services rendered to a patient as part of an episode of hospital treatment (other than public patients). Medical practitioners must indicate on their accounts if a medical service is rendered in these circumstances by placing an asterisk '*' directly after an item number where used; or a description of the professional service, preceded by the word 'patient';
 - for professional services rendered as part of an episode of hospital-substitute treatment, and the patient who receives the treatment chooses to receive a benefit from a private health insurer. Medical practitioners must indicate on their accounts if a medical service is rendered in these circumstances by placing the words 'hospital-substitute treatment' directly after an item number where used; or a description of the professional service, preceded by the words 'hospital-substitute treatment'.
- (b) **85% of the Schedule fee, or the Schedule fee less \$73.70 (indexed annually), whichever is the greater, for all other professional services.**

It should be noted that the Health Insurance Act makes provision for private medical insurance to cover the "patient gap" (ie, the difference between the Medicare benefit and the Schedule fee) for services attracting benefit at the 75% level.

Patients may insure with private health insurance organisations for the gap between the 75% Medicare benefit and the Schedule fee or for amounts in excess of the Schedule fee where the patient has an agreement with their health fund.

C.4.2. WHERE MEDICARE BENEFITS ARE NOT PAYABLE

Medicare benefits are not payable in respect of a professional service where the medical expenses for the service:-

- (a) are paid/payable to a public hospital;
- (b) are for a compensable injury or illness for which the patient's insurer or compensation agency has accepted liability. (Please note that if the medical expenses relate to a compensable injury/illness for which the insurer/compensation agency is disputing liability, then Medicare benefits are payable until the liability is accepted);
- (c) are for a medical examination for the purposes of life insurance, superannuation, a provident account scheme, or admission to membership of a friendly society; or
- (d) are incurred in mass immunisation.

Unless the Minister otherwise directs, Medicare benefits are not payable where:

- (a) the service is rendered by or on behalf of, or under an arrangement with the Australian Government, a State or Territory, a local government body or an authority established under Commonwealth, State or Territory law;
- (b) the medical expenses are incurred by the employer of the person to whom the service is rendered;
- (c) the person to whom the service is rendered is employed in an industrial undertaking and that service is rendered for the purposes related to the operation of the undertaking; or
- (d) the services is a health screening service.

Benefits are not payable for items 75150 to 75621 unless the patient was referred by letter of Referral by a dental practitioner accredited for orthodontic services.

C.4.3. LIMITING RULE

In no circumstances will the benefit payable for a professional service exceed the fee charged for the service.

C.5.1. PENALTIES

Penalties of up to \$10,000 or imprisonment for up to five years, or both, may be imposed on any person who makes a statement (oral or written) or who issues or presents a document that is false or misleading in a material particular and which is capable of being used with a claim for benefits. In addition, any practitioner who is found guilty of such offences by a court shall be subject to examination by a Medicare Participation Review Committee and may be counseled or reprimanded or may have services wholly or partially disqualified from the Medicare benefit arrangements.

A penalty of up to \$1,000 or imprisonment for up to three months, or both, may be imposed on any person who obtains a patient's signature on a direct-billing form without the obligatory details having been entered on the form before the person signs, or who fails to cause a patient to be given a copy of the completed form.

C.6.1. BILLING OF THE PATIENT

Where the practitioner bills the patient for medical services rendered, the patient needs a properly itemised account/receipt to enable a claim to be made for Medicare benefits.

Under the provisions of the Health Insurance Act and Regulations, Medicare benefits are not payable in respect of a professional service unless there is recorded on the account setting out the fee for the service or on the receipt for the fee in respect of the service, the following particulars:-

- (a) Patient's name;
- (b) The date on which the professional service was rendered;
- (c) A description of the professional service sufficient to identify the item that relates to that service, including an indication where the service is rendered to a person while hospital treatment is provided in a hospital or day-hospital facility (other than a Medicare hospital patient), that is, the words (ie, accommodation and nursing care) "admitted patient" immediately preceding the description of the service or an asterisk "*" directly after an item number where used;
- (d) The name and practice address or name and provider number of the practitioner who actually rendered the service; (Where the practitioner has more than one practice location recorded with Medicare Australia, the provider number used should be that which is applicable to the practice location at or from which the service was given).

Each account must also carry a certification by the accredited dental practitioner that:-

- (a) the patient's eligibility certificate or identification card has been sighted (this can be done by quoting the number on the identification card); and
- (b) the service was required for the treatment associated with the cleft condition.

Where a practitioner wishes to apportion the total fee between the appropriate professional fee for the particular service and any balance outstanding in respect of services rendered previously, the practitioner should ensure that the balance is described in such a way (eg balance of account) that it cannot be mistaken as being a separate service. In particular no item number should be shown against the balance.

Only one original itemised account should be issued in respect of any one medical service and any duplicates of accounts or receipts should be clearly marked "duplicate" and should be issued only where the original has been lost. Duplicates should not be issued as a routine system for "accounts rendered".

C.6.2. CLAIMING OF BENEFITS

Claiming Benefits

The patient, upon receipt of a practitioner's account, has three courses open for paying the account and receiving benefits as outlined below.

Paid Accounts

The patient may pay the account and subsequently present the receipt at a Medicare customer service centre for assessment and payment of the Medicare benefit in cash. In these circumstances, where a claimant personally attends a customer service centre, the claimant is not required to complete a Medicare Patient Claim Form (PC1).

In circumstances where the claimant is seeking a cheque payment of the Medicare benefit or is arranging for an agent to receive the Medicare benefit on the claimant's behalf, completion of a Medicare Patient Claim Form (PC1) is still required.

Unpaid and Partially Paid Accounts

Where the patient has not paid the account, the unpaid account may be presented to Medicare with a Medicare claim form. In this case Medicare will forward to the claimant a benefit cheque made payable to the practitioner.

It will be the patient's responsibility to forward the cheque to the practitioner and make arrangements for payment of the balance of the account if any. "Pay doctor" cheques involving Medicare benefits cannot be sent direct to practitioners or to patients at a practitioner's address (even if requested by the patient to do so). "Pay doctor" cheques will be forwarded to the claimant's last known address.

When issuing a receipt to a patient in respect of an account that is being paid wholly or in part by a Medicare "pay doctor" cheque the practitioner should indicate on the receipt that a "Medicare" cheque for \$.....was involved in the payment of the account.

Assignment of Benefits (Direct-Billing) Arrangements

Under the Health Insurance Act the Assignment of Benefit (direct-billing) facility for professional services is available to all persons in Australia who are eligible for benefit under the Medicare program. This facility is NOT confined to pensioners or people in special need. If a practitioner direct-bills, the practitioner undertakes to accept the relevant Medicare benefit as full payment for the service. Additional charges for that service (irrespective of the purpose or title of the charge) cannot be raised against the patient. Under these arrangements:-

- The patient's Medicare card number must be quoted on all direct-bill forms for that patient.
- The basic forms provided are loose leaf to enable the patient details to be imprinted from the Medicare card.
- The forms include information required by Regulations under Subsection 19(6) of the Health Insurance Act.
- The practitioner must cause the particulars relating to the professional service to be set out on the assignment form before the patient signs the form and cause the patient to receive a copy of the form as soon as practicable after the patient signs it.

Where a patient is unable to sign the assignment form:

- the signature of the patient's parent, guardian or other responsible person (other than the doctor, doctor's staff, hospital proprietor, hospital staff, residential aged care facility proprietor or residential aged care facility staff) is acceptable; or
- In the absence of a "responsible person" the patient signature section should be left blank.

Where the signature space is either left blank or another person signs on the patient's behalf, the form **must** include:

- the notation "Patient unable to sign" and
- in the section headed 'Practitioner's Use', an explanation should be given as to why the patient was unable to sign (e.g. unconscious, injured hand etc.) and this note should be signed or initialled by the doctor. If in the opinion of the practitioner the reason is of such a "sensitive" nature that revealing it would constitute an unacceptable breach of patient confidentiality or unduly embarrass or distress the recipient of the patient's copy of the assignment of benefits form, a concessional reason "due to medical condition" to signify that such a situation exists may be

substituted for the actual reason. However, this should not be used routinely and in most cases it is expected that the reason given will be more specific.

The administration of the direct-billing arrangements under Medicare as well as the payment of Medicare benefits on patient claims is the responsibility of **Medicare Australia**. Any enquiries in regard to these matters should therefore be directed to Medicare offices or enquiry points.

Under Medicare any eligible dental practitioner can accept assignment of benefit and direct-bill for any eligible person.

Use of Medicare Cards in Direct Billing

An eligible person who applies to enrol for Medicare benefits (using a Medicare Enrolment/Amendment Application) will be issued with a uniquely numbered Medicare card which shows the Medicare card number, the patient identification number (reference number), the applicant's first given name, initial of second given name, surname and an effective "valid to" date. These cards may be issued on an individual or family basis. Up to 5 persons may be listed on the one Medicare card, and up to 9 persons may be listed under the one Medicare card number.

The Medicare card plays an important part in direct billing as it can be used to imprint the patient details (including Medicare number) on the basic direct-billing forms. A special Medicare imprinter has been developed for this purpose and is available free of charge, on request, from Medicare.

The patient details can of course be entered on the direct-bill forms by hand, but the use of a card to imprint patient details assists practitioners and ensures accuracy of information. The latter is essential to ensure that the processing of a claim by Medicare is expedited.

The Medicare card number must be quoted on direct-bill forms. If the number is not available, then the assignment of benefit facility should not be used. To do so would incur a risk that the patient is not eligible and Medicare benefits not payable.

Where a patient presents without a Medicare card and indicates that he/she has been issued with a card but does not know the details, the practitioner may contact a Medicare telephone enquiry number to obtain the number.

Assignment of Benefit Forms

To meet varying requirements the following types of stationery are available from Medicare. Note that these forms are approved forms under the Health Insurance Act, and no other forms can be used to assign benefits without the approval of Medicare Australia.

(a) *Form DB2*. This form is used to assign benefits for services other than requested pathology. It is loose leaf for imprinting and comprises a throw away cover sheet (after imprinting), a Medicare copy, a Patient copy and a Practitioner copy.

(b) *Form DB4*. Is a continuous stationery version of Form DB2, and has been designed for use on most office accounting machines.

The Claim for Assigned Benefits (Form DB1N, DB1H)

Practitioners who accept assigned benefits must claim from Medicare using either Claim for Assigned Benefits form DB1N or DB1H. The DB1N form should be used where services are rendered to persons for treatment provided out of hospital or day hospital treatment. The DB1H form should be used where services are rendered to persons while hospital treatment is provided in a hospital or day hospital facility (other than public patients). Both forms have been designed to enable benefit for a claim to be directed to a practitioner other than the one who rendered the services. The facility is intended for use in situations such as where a short term locum is acting on behalf of the principal doctor and setting the locum up with a provider number and pay-group link for the principal doctor's practice is impractical. Practitioners should note that this facility cannot be used to generate payments to or through a person who does not have a provider number.

The DB1N and DB1H are also loose leaf to enable imprinting of practitioner details using the special Medicare imprinter. For this purpose, practitioner cards, showing the practitioner's name, practice address and provider numbers are available from Medicare on request.

Direct-Bill Stationery

Medical practitioners and eligible dental practitioners wishing to direct-bill may obtain information on direct-bill stationery by telephoning **132150**. Information on the completion of the forms and direct-bill procedures are provided with the forms. Information on direct-billing is available from any Medicare office.

Time Limits Applicable to Lodgement of Claims for Assigned Benefits

A time limit of two years applies to the lodgement of claims with Medicare under the direct-billing (assignment of benefit) arrangements. This means that Medicare benefits are not payable for any service where the service was rendered more than two years earlier than the date the claim was lodged with Medicare.

Provision exists whereby in certain circumstances (eg hardship cases), the Minister may waive the time limits. Special forms for this purpose are available, if required, from the processing centre to which assigned claims are directed.

C.7.1. INTERPRETATION OF THE CLEFT LIP AND CLEFT PALATE SCHEME

The prescribed services in this section have been grouped according to the general nature of the services: orthodontic, oral surgical and general and prosthodontic.

Each professional service listed in the Schedule is a complete medical service in itself. Where a service is rendered partly by one practitioner and partly by another, only the one amount of benefit is payable.

C.7.2. MULTIPLE OPERATION RULE

The Schedule fee for two or more operations performed on a patient on the one occasion is calculated by the following rule:-

- 100% for the item with the greatest Schedule fee, plus 50% for the item with the next greatest Schedule fee, plus 25% for each other item.

NOTE:

1. Fees so calculated which result in a sum which is not a multiple of 5 cents are taken to the next higher multiple of 5 cents.
2. Where two or more operations performed on the one occasion have fees which are equal, one of these amounts shall be treated as being greater than the other or others of those amounts.
3. The Schedule fee for benefits purposes is the aggregate of the fees calculated in accordance with the above formula.

The above rule does not apply to an operation which is one of two or more operations performed under the one anaesthetic on the same patient by different dental practitioners unless either practitioner assists the other. In this case, the fees and benefits specified in the Schedule apply. For these purposes the term "operation" includes items 75200- 75615.

If the operation comprises a combination of procedures which are commonly performed together and for which a specific combined item is provided in the Schedule, it is regarded as the one item and service in applying the multiple operation rule.

C.7.3. ADMINISTRATION OF ANAESTHETICS

When a medical practitioner administers an anaesthetic in connection with a dental procedure prescribed for the payment of Medicare benefits (and the procedure has been performed by an eligible dental practitioner), Medicare benefits are payable for the administration of the anaesthetic on the same basis as if the procedure had been rendered by a medical practitioner.

To ascertain the Schedule fee for the anaesthetic, medical practitioners should refer to Group T10 – Relative Value Guide for Anaesthesia - of the Medicare Benefits Schedule Book.

C.7.4. DEFINITIONS

Orthodontic treatment planning

Orthodontic treatment planning is defined as the measurement and analysis of the face and jaws and occlusion providing a diagnosis and planned prescription of appliances and treatment required.

Study models

Study models are defined as orthodontic plaster casts of the upper and lower teeth and alveolar processes.

C.7.5. REFERRAL OF ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGICAL SERVICES - (ITEMS 75150 TO 75621)

Benefits are payable for items 75150 to 75621 only where the service has been rendered to a patient who has been referred by letter of Referral by a dental practitioner accredited for orthodontic services.

Item 75621 may be claimed in association with items 45720 to 45754 where the service is performed by a practitioner holding a FRACDS (OMS) qualification with access to Category 3 of the MBS.

C.7.6. GENERAL AND PROSTHODONTIC SERVICES - (ITEM 75800)

Item number 75800 refers to a consultation by a dentist for prevention and prophylaxis and includes such services as dietary advice, oral hygiene and fluoride treatment.

C.7.7. OVER-SERVICING

Over-servicing must be avoided. In the case of denture services, examples of over-servicing might be:-

- Unjustifiably frequent replacement of dentures;
- Provision of new dentures when relining or re-modelling of an existing prosthesis would meet the clinical need;
- Provision of metal dentures where an acrylic denture would meet the clinical need.

The Schedule includes an item for metal dentures to allow for the provision of a precise, long-term prosthesis. The item is not intended for use during the period of growth, where prostheses must be replaced or altered frequently, unless there is some definite and extraordinary clinical requirement.

C.8.1. CLEFT LIP AND CLEFT PALATE CLINICS

NEW SOUTH WALES

Dental Department
Westmead Children's Hospital
Locked Bag 4001
Cnr Hawkesbury Rd & Hainsworth Street
WESTMEAD 2145 (02) 9845 2582

Orthodontic Department
United Dental Hospital of Sydney
2nd Floor
2 Chalmers Street
SURRY HILLS 2010 (02) 9293 8314

Children's Outpatients
Sydney Children's Hospital
High Street
RANDWICK 2031 (02) 9382 1470

Paediatric Outpatient's Dept.
John Hunter Children's Hospital
Locked Bag 1
NEWCASTLE MC 2310 (02) 4921 3750

VICTORIA

Cleft Palate Clinic
Monash Medical Centre
246 Clayton Road
CLAYTON 3168 (03) 9594 2380

Cleft Coordinator
Department of Plastic and Maxillofacial Surgery
Royal Children's Hospital
Flemington Road
PARKVILLE 3052 (03) 9345 6582

QUEENSLAND

Children's Oral Health Service
Level 5, Coles Health Services Centre
Royal Children's Hospital
Herston Road
HERSTON 4029 (07) 3636 1025

Combined Cleft Lip & Palate Clinic
Townsville Cleft Palate Clinic
Special Clinics
Townsville General Hospital
Eyre Street
NORTH WARD QLD 4810 (07) 4781 9304

Children's Specialist Clinic

Mater Children's Hospital
Annerley Road
SOUTH BRISBANE QLD 4101 (07) 3840 8180

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Director
Paediatric Dental Unit
Women and Children's Hospital
72 King William Road
NORTH ADELAIDE 5006 (08) 8161 7379

Dental Clinic
Flinders Medical Centre
South Road
BEDFORD PARK 5042 (08) 8204 4188

Australian Craniofacial Unit
Women's and Children's Hospital
72 King William Road
NORTH ADELAIDE SA 5006 (08) 8161 7235

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Dental Unit
Princess Margaret Hospital
Thomas Street
SUBIACO 6008 (08) 9340 8342

TASMANIA

Oral and Maxillofacial Unit
Level 5A
Royal Hobart Hospital
Liverpool Street
HOBART 7000 (03) 6222 8413

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

School Dental Clinic
ACT Health
1st Floor
Cnr Alinga and Moore Streets
CANBERRA CITY 2600 (02) 6205 5111
(Enquiries only)

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Senior Dentist Urban
Northern Territory Department of Health
Dental Clinic
9 Scaturchio Street
CASURINA NT 0810 (08) 8922 6466

Northern Territory Department of Health
Dental Clinic
Community Health Centre
Flynn Drive
ALICE SPRINGS 0870 (08) 8951 6713

C.8.2. COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND AGEING ADDRESSES

Postal : GPO Box 9848 in each Capital City

NEW SOUTH WALES

Level 7
1 Oxford Street
SYDNEY 2000 Tel (02) 9263 3555

VICTORIA

Casselden Place
2 Lonsdale Street
MELBOURNE 3000 Tel (03) 9665 8888

QUEENSLAND

5th Floor
Samuel Griffith Building
340 Adelaide Street
BRISBANE 4000 Tel (07) 3360 2555

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Commonwealth Centre
55 Currie Street
ADELAIDE 5000 Tel (08) 8237 8111

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

152-158 St George's Terrace
PERTH 6000 Tel (08) 9346 5111

TASMANIA

Montpelier Building
21 Kirksway Place
BATTERY POINT 7004 Tel (03) 6221 1411

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Alexander Building
Furzer Street
PHILLIP 2606 Tel (02) 6289 1555

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Cascom Centre
13 Scaturchio Street
CASUARINA 0800 Tel (08) 8946 3444

C.8.3. MEDICARE AUSTRALIA ADDRESSES

Postal : Medicare, GPO Box 9822, in each Capital City
Phone Enquiries

Provider Enquiries: **132 150**

Public Enquiries: **132 011**

NEW SOUTH WALES

Medicare Australia Parramatta Office

150 George Street
PARRAMATTA NSW 2150

VICTORIA

Medicare Australia Melbourne Office

Level 10
595 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

QUEENSLAND

Medicare Australia Brisbane Office

143 Turbot Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Medicare Australia Adelaide Office

209 Greenhill Road
EASTWOOD SA 5063

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Medicare Australia Perth Office

Level 4
130 Stirling Street
PERTH WA 6003

TASMANIA

Medicare Australia Hobart Office

199 Collins Street
HOBART TAS 7000

NORTHERN TERRITORY

As per South Australia

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Medicare Australia National Office

134 Reed Street North
GREENWAY SA 2901

Schedules of Services

Each professional service contained in the Schedule has been allocated a unique item number. Located with the item number and description for each service is the Schedule fee and Medicare benefit, together with a reference to an explanatory note relating to the item (if applicable).

If the service attracts an anaesthetic, the word (Anaes.) appears following the description. Where an operation qualifies for the payment of benefits for an assistant, the relevant items are identified by the inclusion of the word (Assist.) in the item description. Medicare benefits are not payable for surgical assistance associated with procedures which have not been so identified.

In some cases two levels of fees are applied to the same service in General Medical Services, with each level of fee being allocated a separate item number. The item identified by the letter "S" applies in the case where the procedure has been rendered by a recognised specialist in the practice of his or her specialty and the patient has been referred. The item identified by the letter "G" applies in any other circumstance.

Higher rates of benefits are also provided for consultations by a recognised consultant physician where the patient has been referred by another medical practitioner or an approved dental practitioner (oral surgeons).

Differential fees and benefits also apply to services listed in Category 5 (Diagnostic Imaging Services). The conditions relating to these services are set out in Category 5.

Explanatory Notes

Explanatory notes relating to the Medicare benefit arrangements and notes that have general application to services are located at the beginning of the schedule, while notes relating to specific items are located at the beginning of each Category. While there may be a reference following the description of an item to specific notes relating to that item, there may also be general notes relating to each Group of items.

ORTHODONTIC	ORTHODONTIC
GROUP C1 - ORTHODONTIC SERVICES	
<p><i>Note: In this Group, benefit is only payable where the service has been rendered to a patient by a dental practitioner who has been accredited by the Minister to provide orthodontic services, except for the services covered by Items 75009-75023 which may also be rendered by a dental practitioner approved by the Minister to provide oral surgical services.</i></p>	
CONSULTATIONS	
75001	INITIAL PROFESSIONAL ATTENDANCE in a single course of treatment by an accredited orthodontist Fee: \$83.95 Benefit: 75% = \$63.00 85% = \$71.40
75004	PROFESSIONAL ATTENDANCE by an accredited orthodontist subsequent to the first professional attendance by the orthodontist in a single course of treatment Fee: \$42.20 Benefit: 75% = \$31.65 85% = \$35.90
75006	PRODUCTION OF DENTAL STUDY MODELS (not being a service associated with a service to which item 75004 applies) prior to provision of a service to which: (a) item 75030, 75033, 75034, 75036, 75037, 75039, 75045 or 75051 applies; or (b) an item in Group T8 or Groups 03 to 09 applies; in a single course of treatment Fee: \$74.85 Benefit: 75% = \$56.15 85% = \$63.65
RADIOGRAPHY	
75009	ORTHODONTIC RADIOGRAPHY orthopantomography (panoramic radiography), including any consultation on the same occasion Fee: \$66.90 Benefit: 75% = \$50.20 85% = \$56.90
75012	ORTHODONTIC RADIOGRAPHY ANTEROPOSTERIOR CEPHALOMETRIC RADIOGRAPHY with cephalometric tracings OR LATERAL CEPHALOMETRIC RADIOGRAPHY with cephalometric tracings including any consultation on the same occasion Fee: \$106.05 Benefit: 75% = \$79.55 85% = \$90.15
75015	ORTHODONTIC RADIOGRAPHY ANTEROPOSTERIOR AND LATERAL CEPHALOMETRIC RADIOGRAPHY, with cephalometric tracings including any consultation on the same occasion Fee: \$145.80 Benefit: 75% = \$109.35 85% = \$123.95
75018	ORTHODONTIC RADIOGRAPHY ANTEROPOSTERIOR AND LATERAL CEPHALOMETRIC RADIOGRAPHY, with cephalometric tracings and orthopantomography including any consultation on the same occasion Fee: \$185.70 Benefit: 75% = \$139.30 85% = \$157.85
75021	ORTHODONTIC RADIOGRAPHY hand-wrist studies (including growth prediction) including any consultation on the same occasion Fee: \$227.70 Benefit: 75% = \$170.80 85% = \$193.55
75023	INTRAORAL RADIOGRAPHY - single area, periapical or bitewing film Fee: \$45.60 Benefit: 75% = \$34.20 85% = \$38.80
PRESURGICAL INFANT MAXILLARY ARCH REPOSITIONING	
75024	PRESURGICAL INFANT MAXILLARY ARCH REPOSITIONING including supply of appliances and all adjustments of appliances and supervision - WHERE 1 APPLIANCE IS USED Fee: \$588.90 Benefit: 75% = \$441.70 85% = \$515.20
75027	PRESURGICAL INFANT MAXILLARY ARCH REPOSITIONING including supply of appliances and all adjustments of appliances and supervision WHERE 2 APPLIANCES ARE USED Fee: \$807.55 Benefit: 75% = \$605.70 85% = \$733.85
DENTITION TREATMENT	
75030	MAXILLARY ARCH EXPANSION not being a service associated with a service to which item 75039, 75042, 75045 or 75048 applies, including supply of appliances, all adjustments of the appliances, removal of the appliances and retention Fee: \$719.05 Benefit: 75% = \$539.30 85% = \$645.35

ORTHODONTIC		ORTHODONTIC
75033	MIXED DENTITION TREATMENT - incisor alignment using fixed appliances in maxillary arch, including supply of appliances, all adjustments of appliances, removal of the appliances and retention Fee: \$1,178.55 Benefit: 75% = \$883.95 85% = \$1,104.85	
75034	MIXED DENTITION TREATMENT - incisor alignment with or without lateral arch expansion using a removable appliance in the maxillary arch, including supply of appliances, associated adjustments and retention Fee: \$599.85 Benefit: 75% = \$449.90 85% = \$526.15	
75036	MIXED DENTITION TREATMENT - lateral arch expansion and incisor alignment using fixed appliances in maxillary arch, including supply of appliances, all adjustments of appliances, removal of appliances and retention Fee: \$1,627.80 Benefit: 75% = \$1,220.85 85% = \$1,554.10	
75037	MIXED DENTITION TREATMENT - lateral arch expansion and incisor correction - 2 arch (maxillary and mandibular) using fixed appliances in both maxillary and mandibular arches, including supply of appliances, all adjustments of appliances, removal of appliances and retention Fee: \$2,050.20 Benefit: 75% = \$1,537.65 85% = \$1,976.50	
75039	PERMANENT DENTITION TREATMENT SINGLE ARCH (mandibular or maxillary) TREATMENT (correction and alignment) using fixed appliances, including supply of appliances - initial 3 months of active treatment Fee: \$544.90 Benefit: 75% = \$408.70 85% = \$471.20	
75042	PERMANENT DENTITION TREATMENT - SINGLE ARCH (mandibular or maxillary) TREATMENT (correction and alignment) using fixed appliances, including supply of appliances - each 3 months of active treatment (including all adjustments and maintenance and removal of the appliances) after the first for a maximum of a further 33 months Fee: \$203.70 Benefit: 75% = \$152.80 85% = \$173.15	
75045	PERMANENT DENTITION TREATMENT 2 ARCH (mandibular and maxillary) TREATMENT (correction and alignment) using fixed appliances, including supply of appliances - initial 3 months of active treatment Fee: \$1,090.80 Benefit: 75% = \$818.10 85% = \$1,017.10	
75048	PERMANENT DENTITION TREATMENT - 2 ARCH (mandibular and maxillary) TREATMENT (correction and alignment) using fixed appliances, including supply of appliances - each subsequent 3 months of active treatment (including all adjustments and maintenance, and removal of the appliances) after the first for a maximum of a further 33 months Fee: \$279.75 Benefit: 75% = \$209.85 85% = \$237.80	
75049	RETENTION, FIXED OR REMOVABLE, single arch (mandibular or maxillary) - supply of retainer and supervision of retention Fee: \$327.40 Benefit: 75% = \$245.55 85% = \$278.30	
75050	RETENTION, FIXED OR REMOVABLE, 2-arch (mandibular and maxillary) - supply of retainers and supervision of retention Fee: \$632.05 Benefit: 75% = \$474.05 85% = \$558.35	
	JAW GROWTH GUIDANCE	
75051	JAW GROWTH guidance using removable or functional appliances, including supply of appliances and all adjustments to appliances Fee: \$970.20 Benefit: 75% = \$727.65 85% = \$896.50	

GROUP C2 - ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SERVICES			
	<p><i>Note: (i) In this Group, benefit is only payable where the service has been rendered to a patient who has been referred by an accredited orthodontist.</i></p> <p><i>(ii) While benefit is payable for simple extractions performed by a registered dental practitioner, benefit is only payable for surgical extractions and other surgical procedures where the service is rendered by a dental practitioner who has been approved by the Minister to provide oral surgical services. (see para CBI.5)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">CONSULTATIONS</p> <p>INITIAL PROFESSIONAL attendance in a single course of treatment by an accredited oral and maxillofacial surgeon where the patient is referred to the surgeon by an accredited orthodontist (See para C7.5 of explanatory notes to this Category)</p>		
75150	Fee: \$83.95	Benefit: 75% = \$63.00	85% = \$71.40
75153	<p>PROFESSIONAL ATTENDANCE by an accredited oral and maxillofacial surgeon subsequent to the first professional attendance by the surgeon in a single course of treatment where the patient is referred to the surgeon by an accredited orthodontist (See para C7.5 of explanatory notes to this Category)</p> <p>Fee: \$42.20 Benefit: 75% = \$31.65 85% = \$35.90</p>		
75156	<p>PRODUCTION OF DENTAL STUDY MODELS (not being a service associated with a service to which item 75153 applies) prior to provision of a service: (a) to which item 52321, 53212 or 75618 applies; or (b) to which an item in the series 52330 to 52382, 52600 to 52630, 53400 to 53409 or 53415 to 53429 applies; in a single course of treatment (See para C7.5 of explanatory notes to this Category)</p> <p>Fee: \$74.85 Benefit: 75% = \$56.15 85% = \$63.65</p>		
	SIMPLE EXTRACTIONS		
75200	<p>REMOVAL OF TOOTH OR TOOTH FRAGMENT not being treatment to which item 75400, 75403, 75406, 75409, 75412 or 75415 applies (See para C7.5 of explanatory notes to this Category)</p> <p>Fee: \$53.90 Benefit: 75% = \$40.45 85% = \$45.85</p>		
75203	<p>REMOVAL OF TOOTH OR TOOTH FRAGMENT under general anaesthesia (See para C7.5 of explanatory notes to this Category)</p> <p>Fee: \$80.90 Benefit: 75% = \$60.70 85% = \$68.80</p>		
75206	<p>REMOVAL OF EACH ADDITIONAL TOOTH OR TOOTH FRAGMENT at the same attendance at which a service to which item 75200 or 75203 applies is rendered (See para C7.5 of explanatory notes to this Category)</p> <p>Fee: \$26.85 Benefit: 75% = \$20.15 85% = \$22.85</p>		
	SURGICAL EXTRACTIONS		
75400	<p>SURGICAL REMOVAL OF ERUPTED TOOTH (See para C7.5 of explanatory notes to this Category)</p> <p>Fee: \$161.70 Benefit: 75% = \$121.30 85% = \$137.45</p>		
75403	<p>SURGICAL REMOVAL OF TOOTH with soft tissue impaction (See para C7.5 of explanatory notes to this Category)</p> <p>Fee: \$185.70 Benefit: 75% = \$139.30 85% = \$157.85</p>		
75406	<p>SURGICAL REMOVAL OF TOOTH with partial bone impaction (See para C7.5 of explanatory notes to this Category)</p> <p>Fee: \$211.65 Benefit: 75% = \$158.75 85% = \$179.95</p>		
75409	<p>SURGICAL REMOVAL OF TOOTH with complete bone impaction (See para C7.5 of explanatory notes to this Category)</p> <p>Fee: \$239.70 Benefit: 75% = \$179.80 85% = \$203.75</p>		
75412	<p>SURGICAL REMOVAL OF TOOTH FRAGMENT involving soft tissue only (See para C7.5 of explanatory notes to this Category)</p> <p>Fee: \$133.85 Benefit: 75% = \$100.40 85% = \$113.80</p>		

ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL		ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL
75415	SURGICAL REMOVAL OF TOOTH FRAGMENT involving bone (See para C7.5 of explanatory notes to this Category) Fee: \$161.70 Benefit: 75% = \$121.30 85% = \$137.45	
OTHER SURGICAL PROCEDURES		
75600	SURGICAL EXPOSURE, STIMULATION AND PACKING OF UNERUPTED TOOTH (See para C7.5 of explanatory notes to this Category) Fee: \$227.70 Benefit: 75% = \$170.80 85% = \$193.55	
75603	SURGICAL EXPOSURE OF UNERUPTED TOOTH for the purpose of fitting a traction device (See para C7.5 of explanatory notes to this Category) Fee: \$267.65 Benefit: 75% = \$200.75 85% = \$227.55	
75606	SURGICAL REPOSITIONING OF UNERUPTED TOOTH (See para C7.5 of explanatory notes to this Category) Fee: \$267.65 Benefit: 75% = \$200.75 85% = \$227.55	
75609	TRANSPLANTATION OF TOOTH BUD (See para C7.5 of explanatory notes to this Category) Fee: \$399.55 Benefit: 75% = \$299.70 85% = \$339.65	
75612	SURGICAL PROCEDURE for intra oral implantation of osseointegrated fixture (first stage) (See para C7.5 of explanatory notes to this Category) Fee: \$494.45 Benefit: 75% = \$370.85 85% = \$420.75	
75615	SURGICAL PROCEDURE FOR FIXATION of trans-mucosal abutment (second stage of osseointegrated implant) (See para C7.5 of explanatory notes to this Category) Fee: \$183.00 Benefit: 75% = \$137.25 85% = \$155.55	
75618	PROVISION AND FITTING OF A BITE RISING APPLIANCE or DENTAL SPLINT for the management of temporomandibular joint dysfunction syndrome (See para C7.5 of explanatory notes to this Category) Fee: \$227.30 Benefit: 75% = \$170.50 85% = \$193.25	
75621	THE PROVISION AND FITTING OF SURGICAL TEMPLATE in conjunction with orthognathic surgical procedures in association with an item in the range: (a) 45720 to 45754; or (b) 52342 to 52375; or (c) 52380 or 52382 (See para C7.5 of explanatory notes to this Category) Fee: \$227.30 Benefit: 75% = \$170.50 85% = \$193.25	

GENERAL AND PROSTHODONTIC		GENERAL AND PROSTHODONTIC	
GROUP C3 - GENERAL AND PROSTHODONTIC SERVICES			
<i>Note: Benefit is payable for services listed in this Group where they are rendered by a State registered dental practitioner</i>			
CONSULTATIONS			
ATTENDANCE BY AN ELIGIBLE DENTAL PRACTITIONER involving consultation, preventive treatment and prophylaxis, of not less than 30 minutes' duration each attendance to a maximum of 3 attendances in any period of 12 months (See para C7.6 of explanatory notes to this Category)			
75800	Fee: \$80.90	Benefit: 75% = \$60.70	85% = \$68.80
PROSTHODONTIC			
75803	PROVISION AND FITTING OF ACRYLIC BASE PARTIAL DENTURE, including retainers 1 TOOTH Fee: \$323.60	Benefit: 75% = \$242.70	85% = \$275.10
75806	PROVISION AND FITTING OF ACRYLIC BASE PARTIAL DENTURE, including retainers 2 TEETH Fee: \$379.55	Benefit: 75% = \$284.70	85% = \$322.65
75809	PROVISION AND FITTING OF ACRYLIC BASE PARTIAL DENTURE, including retainers 3 TEETH Fee: \$449.40	Benefit: 75% = \$337.05	85% = \$382.00
75812	PROVISION AND FITTING OF ACRYLIC BASE PARTIAL DENTURE, including retainers 4 TEETH Fee: \$499.35	Benefit: 75% = \$374.55	85% = \$425.65
75815	PROVISION AND FITTING OF ACRYLIC BASE PARTIAL DENTURE, including retainers 5 TO 9 TEETH Fee: \$609.30	Benefit: 75% = \$457.00	85% = \$535.60
75818	PROVISION AND FITTING OF ACRYLIC BASE PARTIAL DENTURE, including retainers 10 TO 12 TEETH Fee: \$719.05	Benefit: 75% = \$539.30	85% = \$645.35
75821	PROVISION AND FITTING OF CAST METAL BASE (cobalt chromium alloy) PARTIAL DENTURE including casting and retainers 1 TOOTH Fee: \$579.15	Benefit: 75% = \$434.40	85% = \$505.45
75824	PROVISION AND FITTING OF CAST METAL BASE (cobalt chromium alloy) PARTIAL DENTURE including casting and retainers 2 TEETH Fee: \$669.10	Benefit: 75% = \$501.85	85% = \$595.40
75827	PROVISION AND FITTING OF CAST METAL BASE (cobalt chromium alloy) PARTIAL DENTURE including casting and retainers 3 TEETH Fee: \$769.15	Benefit: 75% = \$576.90	85% = \$695.45
75830	PROVISION AND FITTING OF CAST METAL BASE (cobalt chromium alloy) PARTIAL DENTURE including casting and retainers 4 TEETH Fee: \$848.95	Benefit: 75% = \$636.75	85% = \$775.25
75833	PROVISION AND FITTING OF CAST METAL BASE (cobalt chromium alloy) PARTIAL DENTURE including casting and retainers 5 TO 9 TEETH Fee: \$1,038.60	Benefit: 75% = \$778.95	85% = \$964.90
75836	PROVISION AND FITTING OF CAST METAL BASE (cobalt chromium alloy) PARTIAL DENTURE including casting and retainers 10 TO 12 TEETH Fee: \$1,188.45	Benefit: 75% = \$891.35	85% = \$1,114.75
75839	PROVISION AND FITTING OF RETAINERS not being a service associated with a service to which item 75803, 75806, 75809, 75812, 75815, 75818, 75821, 75824, 75827, 75830, 75833 or 75836 applies each retainer Fee: \$26.85	Benefit: 75% = \$20.15	85% = \$22.85
75842	ADJUSTMENT OF PARTIAL DENTURE not being a service associated with a service to which item 75803, 75806, 75809, 75812, 75815, 75818, 75821, 75824, 75827, 75830, 75833 or 75836 applies Fee: \$40.00	Benefit: 75% = \$30.00	85% = \$34.00
75845	RELINING OF PARTIAL DENTURE by laboratory process and associated fitting Fee: \$199.85	Benefit: 75% = \$149.90	85% = \$169.90

GENERAL AND PROSTHODONTIC		GENERAL AND PROSTHODONTIC	
75848	REMODELLING AND FITTING OF PARTIAL DENTURE of more than 4 teeth Fee: \$239.70 Benefit: 75% = \$179.80 85% = \$203.75		
75851	REPAIR TO CAST METAL BASE OF PARTIAL DENTURE 1 or more points Fee: \$119.85 Benefit: 75% = \$89.90 85% = \$101.90		
75854	ADDITION OF A TOOTH OR TEETH to a partial denture to replace extracted tooth or teeth including taking of necessary impression Fee: \$119.85 Benefit: 75% = \$89.90 85% = \$101.90		