



The Hon Tony Abbott
Minister for Health and Ageing

The Hon Christopher Pyne
Minister for Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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Better health services for older Australians

The Commonwealth Government today announced new Medicare-funded comprehensive health checks for people aged 65 and over to improve their quality of care.

Elderly people often suffer from chronic disease and cognitive impairment. These new measures will ensure that the Medicare system is more responsive to the needs of elderly patients.

New Medicare items for comprehensive geriatric assessment and management of patients aged 65 and over will be introduced from 1 November 2007.

The new measures will be available for patients who have been referred by a GP to a geriatric specialist.

Under these items, these specialists – known as geriatricians – will be remunerated for an initial comprehensive assessment, the development of a patient care management plan and a review of this plan.

The assessment will have a particular focus on cognition, polypharmacy, incontinence and falls, which often lead to older people prematurely entering an aged care facility or ending up in hospital.

The new items are expected to cost around \$15 million over four years and will improve the quality and accessibility of appropriate medical care for patients in need of geriatric services.

“Over the past few years, the Howard Government has introduced new Medicare-funded health checks and care plans for people with chronic illnesses. The Government has expanded Medicare to ensure comprehensive treatment is available to those most in need. This new measure for older Australians builds on these initiatives,” Tony Abbott said.

“This new measure will provide comprehensive ongoing care for older Australians. It provides more support to geriatricians who are best placed to manage the health of elderly people with serious health problems,” Christopher Pyne said.

For more information call Mr Abbott's office on ph 02 6277 7220.
