



The Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health
Minister for Sport

MEDIA RELEASE

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Strongest bulk billing rates since Medicare's inception

More Australian patients are visiting their doctor without having to reach for their wallet than ever before, with GP bulk billing rates for the March 2017 quarter increasing to 85.6% compared to 85.1% in the same quarter last year.

This is the highest bulk billing rate for any March quarter since the inception of Medicare.

During July 2016 to March 2017, patients received 228.1 million bulk billed Medicare services - representing an additional 7.3 million fully subsidised services compared to the same period 12 months earlier.

Over this period Australians accessed 110.2 million GP services - an increase of 3.6 million services.

The total cost of all Medicare benefits paid during this period was \$16.3 billion, an increase of 2.8%.

The Turnbull Government is guaranteeing Medicare and the 2017-18 Budget delivered an additional \$2.4 billion over the next four years.

We are restoring the indexation of the Medicare rebate, starting with GP bulk-billing incentives from 1 July 2017.

Indexation of standard GP and specialist consultations will resume on 1 July 2018, and specialist procedures and allied health from 1 July 2019.

As part of a \$957 million package, the Government will retain the bulk-billing incentives for Pathology and Diagnostic Imaging, including blood tests, x-rays, scans and pap smears.

We will also introduce indexation for targeted diagnostic imaging services including mammography, fluoroscopy, CT scans and interventional procedures, from 1 July 2020 – for the first time since 2004.

All Australians can be assured Medicare is not only here to stay, but will be strengthened into the future.

The figures released today by the Department of Health and the Department of Human Services show that Medicare is stronger than ever.

Universal access to medical services, public hospitals and medicines through Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme is something that Australians hold dear.

The 2017-18 Budget includes a \$10 billion package to invest in Australia's health system and the health of Australians.

Turnbull Government has a rock solid commitment to Medicare and improving access to medicines – with increased patient rebates and a strengthened Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme as key measures of our over \$94.2 billion overall investment in health, aged care and sport.

(ENDS)