



Minister for Health and Aged Care
Minister for Sport
THE HON SUSSAN LEY MP

Media Release

6 September 2016

Medicare items review backed by health professionals, patients

The majority of health professionals and patients support the Turnbull Government's commitment to ensure every taxpayer dollar invested in Medicare delivers clinically-relevant, up-to-date and safe care, a new study has found.

Minister for Health and Aged Care Sussan Ley will today release the interim report of the Turnbull Government's clinician-led review of all 5700 items on the Medicare Benefit Schedule (MBS), which included consultation with over 2000 health professionals and patients across stakeholder forums, written submissions and an online survey.

Ms Ley said 93 per cent of health professionals surveyed considered parts of the MBS out-of-date and a review was required, while one-in-two nominated specific Medicare items they believed were used for "low-value purposes".

"The Turnbull Government continues to demonstrate a commitment to working with doctors and patients to build a healthier Medicare and our MBS Review is a perfect example of that," Ms Ley said.

"We are increasing our investment in Medicare by \$4 billion over the next four years as part of our commitment to delivering affordable, universal healthcare for all Australians.

"We appreciate and understand Australians consider Medicare essential, however our consultations also show health professionals and the public understands changes need to be made from time-to-time to keep it healthy and up-to-date with modern medical practices."

For example, Ms Ley said one in every four patients surveyed believed they, or an acquaintance, had received or been recommended a consultation, medical procedure or test that they believed to be unnecessary.

"We are having a genuine conversation with the Australian people and health professionals about what they want and expect from Medicare and we appreciate the time and effort taken by the thousands of participants in this important consultation.

"We recognise the important role clinicians undertake in keeping Australians happy, healthy and out-hospital and this work is about delivering the right balance for health professionals, patients, taxpayers and the future of Medicare in general."

Ms Ley said the MBS Taskforce's interim report was designed to give an update on consultations and what Australian patients and health professionals thought about current Medicare-funded health

services, with further consultation to be undertaken as individual MBS items were identified for removal or rule changes.

Ms Ley said the MBS Review, combined with rolling out the Turnbull Government's *Medicare Health Care Homes* and the revamped *My Health Record*, aimed to cut down on low-value use of MBS items through a greater focus on integrated care and stronger rules, education and compliance.

"For example, our *Medicare Health Care Homes* will see a patient with chronic illness sign up with one GP who will manage all of their integrated health care needs, cutting down on the potential for duplicate tests and procedures.

"The same goes with having an electronic health record that patients can use to share information with their GP, specialist, pharmacist, psychologist, practice nurse and emergency department doctor to ensure they're all on the same page regarding everything from medical history through to recent tests, scans, prescriptions and allergies.

"In return, our work on *Health Care Homes* and the *My Health Record* will help the clinicians working on the MBS Review to ensure rules around Medicare items reflect modern, integrated clinical practice."

Ms Ley said the results also supported the Government's intention that the review was not just about removing low-value or outdated items from the MBS altogether, but equally ensuring the rules around a common item's usage reflected best clinical practice targeted at the appropriate patient cohorts, with the report finding:

"Reported 'low-value services' were very rarely inappropriate for all patient groups; more commonly the complaint concerned the provision of services in circumstances where for that particular type of patient the benefits did not outweigh the risk or costs."

Ms Ley said the Taskforce's work on the removal or amendment of specific MBS items was an ongoing process and each item put forward was subject to further consultation before changes were made.

"This independent clinician-led Taskforce is committed to ensuring the right patient gets the right test at the right time.

"That's why it has established around 40 Clinical Committees and working groups, with more than 300 clinicians actively involved in examining the MBS items they use on a daily basis to ensure we get this right first time."

The MBS Review Taskforce's interim report is available to view on the [Department of Health website](#).

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Media contacts: Randal Markey 0417 318 620 or Jessica Howe 0428 426 293