Cheaper Medicines – Information for patients on the PBS co-payment freeze

From 1 January 2025, the Australian Government introduced a freeze on the patient co-payment for Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) medicines.

This initiative aims to ease cost pressures for patients and ensure continued access to essential medicines.

# Key changes for prescribers

## For most Medicare cardholders:

* The patient co-payment is frozen at $31.60 for 2025, with no indexation increases for one year.

## For pensioners and Commonwealth concession cardholders:

* The patient co-payment for PBS medicines will remain at $7.70 until 2030, instead of increasing annually with inflation.

# Optional $1 discount

* The optional $1 discount that pharmacists can apply to the cost of PBS medicines will be gradually reduced from 1 January 2025, while PBS co-payments are frozen. It will decrease by the amount of indexation that would have applied to a patient’s PBS co-payment each year until it reaches zero.

# How it benefits your patients

* Patients’ out-of-pocket costs will not increase, especially those on long-term or multiple medications.
* Household budgets face less strain as medication prices remain stable, unaffected by inflation.

# How prescribers can support patients

## Encourage open conversations about medication costs

* Ask patients about their ability to afford prescribed medicines.
* Suggest affordable options, such as generic or biosimilar medicines.

## Educate patients about PBS coverage

* Help patients understand if their prescribed medicines are PBS-listed.
* Direct them to the PBS Medicine List (https://www.pbs.gov.au/browse/medicine-listing).

## Explain cost-management strategies

* Highlight how the PBS Safety Net can help patients to reduce their long-term medication expenses.
* Suggest patients track their medication costs for Safety Net benefits.

# More information

For more details on the PBS co-payment freeze or how it may benefit your patients, visit health.gov.au/cheapermedicines (https://www.health.gov.au/cheaper-medicines).