



# FACT SHEET **CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)**

## NATIONAL HEALTH PLAN

### Primary Health – MBS Pathology (Microbiology) Test for COVID-19 and Influenza

A new temporary item will be added to the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) to provide accessible and rapid lab testing of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, the virus which causes COVID-19.

#### **Why is this important?**

Rapid diagnosis is an important part of the Australian Government's strategy to contain the spread of COVID-19.

#### **Who benefits?**

The MBS item will provide for a pathology (microbiology) test to determine if a patient has contracted COVID-19 or influenza.

All medical practitioners can use the item, which must be bulk billed.

This is a temporary item for six months. Disease progression in the community and advice from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee will determine whether the item is required for a longer time.

#### **How can a patient get a test?**

A test can be obtained through a referral from a GP, a respiratory clinic or an onsite hospital emergency department or on the referral of any medical practitioner.

#### **How much will this cost?**

The accompanying aged care pathology testing measure will cost \$170 million over 2019-20 and 2020-21.