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# Medicare Benefits Schedule Review Taskforce

## Taskforce Findings

### Diagnostic Medicine Clinical

### Committee Report

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This document outlines the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) Taskforce's recommendations in response to the Diagnostic Medicine Clinical Committee (DMCC) Report. The Taskforce considered the recommendations from the DMCC and feedback from stakeholders received during a targeted consultation period.

The Taskforce endorsed all recommendations from the DMCC and submitted them to the Minister for

<b>Number of items reviewed</b>	75
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Health for Government consideration. The recommendations are intended to encourage best practice, improve patient care and safety, and ensure that MBS services provide value for the patient and the healthcare system. This report contains details of the mechanisms identified to encourage better requesting of diagnostic services, in addition to item-level recommendations that were developed based on commissioned research for 75 items spread across 10 item groups referred to the Committee by the General Practitioner and Primary Care Clinical Committee. To inform its recommendations, DMCC commissioned a literature review to identify research on effective interventions that improve the appropriateness and clinical utility of diagnostic investigations requested by clinicians.

## List of Taskforce recommendations

### Mechanisms for better requesting of diagnostic tests

Of the nine identified mechanisms, clinical decision support was regarded as a superior intervention to improve requesting of diagnostic imaging and pathology services. This recommendation aims to provide clinicians access to up-to-date clinical advice at the point of care and information on specific tests for consumer education. The nine mechanisms for better requesting of diagnostic tests include:

- Consumer education
- Requester education
- Electronic Clinical Decision Support
- Requesting pattern transparency
- Requesting process
- Requester restrictions
- Provider feedback to the requester
- Provider service conditions
- Payment mechanisms

### Pathology item recommendations

#### Vitamin B12 item group

- Items 66838 and 66839: Change items descriptor to apply a time based restrictor on active B12 measurement.

#### Iron studies and ferritin testing item group

- Items 66593 and 66596: Change items descriptor to reflect contemporary practice.
- Create a new item (665XX) for 'exception iron studies'.

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- Item 66840: Change item descriptor to apply a time based restrictor and to reflect contemporary practice.

#### Urine testing item group

- Items 69300, 69333 and 73085: Change items descriptor to reflect contemporary practice.

#### Vitamin D item group

- Item 66833: Apply a 12-month frequency restriction and add explanatory note to explain patients at-risk of vitamin D deficiency and bone disease.
- Add new item 668XX for monitoring of vitamin D when previous test was abnormal. Apply three month frequency restriction to new item.

- Develop a clear national standard for defining serum levels of vitamin D deficiency

#### Prostate-specific antigen item group

- Items 66655, 66659 and 66660: Change items descriptors to reflect contemporary practice.
- Item 66656: Update explanatory note to better describe current best practice.

#### **Diagnostic imaging item recommendations**

##### Ankle/hind foot ultrasound

- Items 55836, 55837, 55838 and 55839: Change items descriptors to reflect contemporary practice.

##### Shoulder ultrasound

- Items 55808, 55809, 55810 and 55811: Change items descriptors to restrict co-claiming.

#### **Lower back imaging**

- Items 58109, 58112, 58115, 58120, 58121, 59700, 59724, 63151, 63201, 63154, 63204, 63164, 63222, 63176, 63234, 63179, 63237, 63167 and 63225: Implement a multicomponent intervention to improve requesting practices for lower back imaging.

#### **Head imaging**

- Items 56001, 56007, 56010, 56013, 56016, 56030, 56036, 63507, 63551, 63001, 63004, 63007, 63010, 63040, 63043, 63046, 63049, 63052, 63055, 63058, 63061, 63064, 63067, 63070 and 63073: Implement a multicomponent intervention to improve requesting practices for head imaging.

#### **Non-item recommendations**

- Develop a new item encompassing the key tests required for the care of patients with diabetes.

#### **Consumer Health Literacy**

- Review the issue of consumer health literacy, with the aim of developing a communication mechanism designed to provide more information to consumers on referred diagnostic testing.