



GUARANTEEING MEDICARE – MBS TASKFORCE REVIEW – PAIN MANAGEMENT SERVICES

The Australian Government is making changes to Medicare-funded pain management services to ensure they reflect modern best practice, support high-value care, and improve patient experiences and safety. These changes follow recommendations from the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) Review Taskforce.

What are the changes?

On 1 March 2022, the Government will make a range of changes to MBS services for pain management to better reflect contemporary clinical practice in key areas related to implanted devices, nerve blocks, and surgical co-claiming.

Items will be changed to provide better clarity around how they should be used and support medical practitioners in providing the safest and most effective pain management services for patients.

This includes allowing for the use of an assistant, where required, when placing or removing neurostimulators. Guidance will also be developed on the use of implanted devices to ensure services are performed safely by the appropriate medical professionals.

Additionally, some items will be consolidated to simplify claiming arrangements, and obsolete items that are no longer best practice will be deleted.

A range of other changes will be made to simplify the items, clarify how they should be used, and improve billing consistency for patients.

A small number of pain management recommendations relating to allied health and primary care are still being considered by Government in line with other health reforms and recommendations from other MBS Review Taskforce clinical committees.

Why are these changes being made?

These changes were recommended by the independent MBS Review Taskforce, following a comprehensive review of the MBS items by clinicians, health system experts and consumers.

What does this mean for patients?

Patients will benefit from improved safety through access to pain management services that align with current best practice guidelines, and through the prevention of unnecessary or out-of-date treatments.

Patients will also benefit from more uniform billing arrangements and access to additional rebates for assistants during clinically relevant procedures.

What does this mean for providers?

These changes support contemporary best practice for providers and will simplify their billing arrangements.

The Department will work closely with peak bodies when implementing changes to the MBS items for pain management. More detail will be provided to the profession in due course.

Further detail will be available on
www.mbsonline.gov.au