



Overview – How the 2021–22 Budget is investing in Primary Health Care

Across the pillars of *Australia's Long Term National Health Plan*, the Australian Government is investing \$1.8 billion to provide Australians with timely and affordable access to high quality health care. The Government's guaranteed support for Medicare is key to providing Australians with universal health care.

The Government will invest \$125.7 billion in Medicare, an increase of \$6 billion over the forward estimates.

Hospital funding will also increase, with an investment of \$135.4 billion in National Health Reform funding over 5 years.

The Government's primary health care investments include:

- \$711.7 million to add new items to the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS), including genetic testing, gynecological procedures, paediatric and rare cancer treatment, treatment for major depression, and orthopedics
- \$204.6 million to extend telehealth measures, providing unprecedented access to health care services, including general practitioners (GPs), specialists, nursing, midwifery, allied health, and mental health services, until 31 December 2021
- \$87.5 million for the extended operation of up to 150 GPRCs through to 31 December 2021
- \$65.8 million to improve bulk billing rates in rural, regional and remote communities by increasing the Rural Bulk Billing Incentive payment for doctors
- \$71.9 million for the Primary Health Network's (PHN) After Hours for service delivery and improving integration in more communities
- \$365.7 million to improve access to primary care for senior Australians, including those living in residential aged care
- \$58.8 million to grow the mental health workforce and support GPs in primary mental health care

- \$107.9 million to help states and territories provide approximately 180,000 adult concession card holders with public dental services through a new National Partnership Agreement (NPA) for Public Dental Services for Adults
- \$7.3 million to improve access to the Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS), including allowing benefits for children under 2 years old
- \$37 million to modernise diagnostic imaging – replacing outdated equipment, improving the patient journey, and continuing support for private radiology oncology providers
- \$50.7 million to continue to develop an ICT system that enables a voluntary patient registration (VPR) initiative, to be known as MyGP, which will improve health outcomes and lift the quality of services delivered to Australian patients through continuity of care
- \$5.5 million to expand the National Health Call Centre Network, Healthdirect, to include Victoria, and
- \$5.7 million to modernise the Hearing Services Online (HSO) portal, helping deliver care to Australians with hearing loss.

For further information, refer to the relevant fact sheets.

Why is this important?

Primary health care is the frontline of Australia's health system, it includes people's local GP, nurses, allied health professionals, midwives, pharmacists, dentists, and Aboriginal health workers.

A strong, well-funded and accessible primary health system keeps people healthier and out of hospital by supporting them to manage their health issues, including chronic conditions, in the community. This reduces Australians' reliance on costly acute care, such as specialists, emergency department or other hospital services.

Who will benefit?

All Australians benefit from universal access to timely, affordable, and high quality health care, in what is one of the world's best health care systems.

The Australian Government's investment in Medicare and primary health care directly benefits patients, clinicians, medical practitioners and the healthcare workforce, health providers and communities around Australia.

How much will it cost?

Combined, the Australian Government will invest around \$1.8 billion in primary care initiatives.