
Medicare Benefits Schedule Review Taskforce

Diagnostic Imaging Clinical Committee Low Back Pain Report Taskforce Findings

This document outlines the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) Taskforce’s recommendations relating to diagnostic imaging items for investigating low back pain.

The Taskforce has considered the recommendations from the Diagnostic Imaging Clinical Committee and feedback from the public consultation.

The Taskforce endorsed all of the recommendations from the Diagnostic Imaging Clinical Committee relating to low back pain and submitted them to the Minister for Health for Government consideration.

Number of items reviewed	45
Number of recommendations made	4

Taskforce recommendations

Consider allowing GP-requested Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) of the lumbo-sacral spine, for defined indications

The Taskforce recommends that consideration be given to allowing GP-requested MRI of the lumbo-sacral spine, for defined indications, with strategies for ensuring appropriate requesting by clinicians.

Consider limiting Computed Tomography (CT) requesting for low back pain by GPs

The Taskforce recommends that consideration be given to limiting CT requesting by GPs. In the event of a GP-requested item for MRI of the lumbo-sacral spine, CT should only be used to assess low back pain where MRI is unavailable or contraindicated.

Consider amending item descriptors to clarify the indications for low back imaging for each modality

The Taskforce recommends considering amending item descriptors to clarify the indications for low back imaging for each modality.

Prohibit allied health professionals from requesting three or four region radiography of the spine

The Taskforce recommends prohibiting requesting of three or four region radiography of the spine by allied health practitioners.

Information and evidence supporting each of these recommendations is included in the Diagnostic Imaging Clinical Committee report.