
Medicare Benefits Schedule Review Taskforce

Obsolete MBS Items Report

Taskforce Findings

This document outlines the Medical Benefits Schedule (MBS) Taskforce’s recommendations relating to consultation on Obsolete MBS Items undertaken in 2015.

The Taskforce considered the recommendations from the Obsolete Items report and feedback from public consultation.

The Taskforce endorsed all of the recommendations that relate to a number of MBS items which were identified as obsolete by the first tranche of the MBS Review’s clinical committees to remove, or amend to restrict access to certain MBS items.

Number of items	26
Number of recommendations	3

The recommendations seek to reduce the use of services with limited clinical benefit to enable resources to be redirected to new or existing services with proven benefit.

List of Taskforce recommendations

1. The following items currently listed on the Medicare Benefits Schedule are obsolete.
2. The following items be removed from the MBS.

Item	Service— Short descriptor
Diagnostic imaging	
58924	Graham’s Test (cholecystography), with preliminary plain films and with or without tomography - (R)
58926	[Mirror item] Graham’s Test (cholecystography), with preliminary plain films and with or without tomography - (R)(NK)
59503	Pelvimetry, not being a service associated with a service to which item 57201 applies (R)*
59504	[Mirror item] Pelvimetry, not being a service associated with a service to which item 57201 applies (R)(NK)
59736	Vasoepididymography, 1 side (R)
59737	[Mirror item] Vasoepididymography, 1 side (R)(NK)
59760	Peritoneogram (herniography) with or without contrast medium including preparation - performed on a person >14 years of age (R)
59761	[Mirror item] Peritoneogram (herniography) with or without contrast medium including preparation - performed on a person >14 years of age (R)(NK)
61465	Venography (R)
61711	[Mirror item] Venography (R)(NK)

Item	Service—Short descriptor
Ear, nose and throat surgery	
11321	Glycerol induced cochlear function changes assessed by a minimum of 4 air conduction and speech discrimination tests (Klockoff's tests)
18246	Glossopharyngeal nerve, injection of an anaesthetic agent
41680	Cryotherapy to nose in the treatment of nasal haemorrhage (Anaes.)
41695	Turbinates, cryotherapy to (Anaes.)
41758	Division of pharyngeal adhesions (Anaes.)
41761	Postnasal space, direct examination of, with or without biopsy (Anaes.)
41849	Larynx, direct examination of, with biopsy (Anaes.) (Assist.)*
41852	Larynx, direct examination of, with removal of tumour (Anaes.) (Assist.)*
Gastroenterology	
13500	Gastric hypothermia by closed circuit circulation of refrigerant in the absence of gastrointestinal haemorrhage
13503	Gastric hypothermia by closed circuit circulation of refrigerant for upper gastrointestinal haemorrhage
32078	Sigmoidoscopic examination with diathermy or resection of 1 or more polyps where the time taken is ≤ 45 minutes (Anaes.)
32081	Sigmoidoscopic examination with diathermy or resection of 1 or more polyps where the time taken is > 45 minutes (Anaes.)*
Thoracic medicine	
11500	Bronchspirometry, including gas analysis
Obstetrics	
16504	Treatment of habitual miscarriage by injection of hormones each injection up to a maximum of 12 injections, where the injection is not administered during a routine antenatal attendance

3. That the following diagnostic imaging items are obsolete in relation to adult patients, and that they be amended by the Diagnostic Imaging Clinical Committee to restrict access to paediatric patients.

59715	Bronchography, 1 side, with or without preliminary plain films and with preparation and contrast injection - (R)
59716	[Mirror item] Bronchography, 1 side, with or without preliminary plain films and with preparation and contrast injection - (R)(NK)

Other matters

In addition, the Taskforce agreed that a number of the items considered for obsolescence are of questionable utility in their current form but, rather than be removed completely from the MBS, should be referred back for further consideration. These items are:

Diagnostic imaging	
58706	Intravenous Pyelography, with or without preliminary plain films and with or without tomography - (R)
58708	[Mirror item] Intravenous Pyelography, with or without preliminary plain films and with or without tomography - (R)(NK)

Ear, nose and throat surgery	
41846	Larynx, direct examination of the supraglottic, glottic and subglottic regions, not being a service associated with any other procedure on the larynx or with the administration of a general anaesthetic (Anaes.)

The Taskforce also agreed that a decision on the gastroenterology item 30493 (Biliary manometry) should be deferred pending further consideration by that Clinical Committee.

Public consultation

Between 21 December 2015 and 8 February 2016, stakeholder comment on the proposed obsolescence of these items was sought through online consultation. There were a total of 63 responses to the online survey: 36 respondents identified as health professionals and 23 as consumers. There were also nine written submissions made by a range of professional bodies. The feedback resulted in no changes to the recommendations.

In making these recommendations, the Taskforce is mindful of the potential adverse impact on patient care of the removal of an item from the MBS. However, the Taskforce is absolutely confident, in light of the opinions of the relevant Clinical Committees, the views of stakeholders, and the Taskforce's own expertise—that the removal of the items listed in this document will have no undesirable consequences. Rather, their removal will improve patient care overall by removing the option of the sub-optimal care that these items represent, and will encourage the use of better investigations and procedures listed on the MBS.