



# Changes to Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) Items for Spinal X-Ray Services

Last updated: 23/10/2017

**Effective from 1 November 2017**

## What do the changes involve?

Requesting of MBS three and four region spinal x-ray items will be restricted to medical practitioners, physiotherapists and osteopaths only. In conjunction with the above amendment, the MBS one and two region spinal x-ray items will be amended so that allied health practitioners cannot request more than one, of any of the one and two region spinal x-ray services for the same patient on the same day.

## Why is the Government making this change?

The changes follow the Government's consideration of recommendations of the MBS Review Taskforce as part of the Diagnostic Imaging Committee's (Committee) MBS Review of Imaging for Low Back Pain. The changes are being made to support the government's priority of ensuring that medical services receiving subsidies through the MBS are safe, clinically relevant and cost-effective. The changes will align MBS items with clinical best practice, enhance item specificity and reduce inappropriate requesting of spinal x-ray MBS items.

In light of its findings that there has been a high volume of unnecessary testing, and considering the associated radiation risks, the Committee proposed that requesting three and four region radiography of the spine be restricted. It was noted that this type of imaging has a limited clinical role largely confined to medical specialist assessment and management of scoliosis.

The Committee considered two region spinal radiographs to have clinical value in circumstances where the suspected pathology is at or close to the junction of two areas of the spine.

## What does this mean for MBS claiming?

The change will mean that chiropractors will no longer be able to request Medicare-rebateable three and four region spinal x-ray items. All allied health practitioners will be restricted from requesting more than one, of any of the one and two region spinal x-ray service for the same patient on the same day. Medical practitioners are not affected by any of the changes.



## Changes to items:

Draft amendments to items in the MBS (final wording of items subject to finalisation and passage of legislation):

Service	Item/s	Description of change
Spinal x-ray Three region	58121	The requesting rights for these items will be restricted to medical practitioners, physiotherapists and osteopaths. Chiropractors will no longer be able to request these items.
	58127	Under the recommendations only requesting rights are to be amended. In all other regards the items, including fees, remain unchanged.
Spinal x-ray Four region	58120	The requesting rights for these items will be restricted to medical practitioners, physiotherapists and osteopaths. Chiropractors will no longer be able to request these items.
	58126	Under the recommendations only requesting rights are to be amended. In all other regards the items, including fees, remain unchanged.
Spinal x-ray One region	58100	These items will be amended to restrict allied health practitioners from requesting more than one of these items for the same patient on the same day.
	58102	
	58103	
	58105	Only requesting rights are to be amended. In all other regards the items, including medical practitioner access and MBS recommended fees, remain unchanged.
	58106	
	58109	
58111		
58117		
Spinal x-ray Two region	58112	These items will be amended to restrict allied health practitioners from requesting more than one of these items for the same patient on the same day.
	58123	Only requesting rights are to be amended. In all other regards the items, including medical practitioner access and MBS recommended fees, remain unchanged.