



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

MBS Online Update

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PLEASE NOTE:

- The **May 2007 Supplement** book will only be produced in electronic format.
- It will be available to download from **MBS Online** in early April 2007.
- Subscribe to the **MBS Online email subscription service** to receive the most up to date information on changes to the MBS.

Welcome to MBS Online Update



Welcome to the first edition of the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) Online newsletter - **MBS Online Update**.

We have prepared a hard copy of this newsletter to coincide with the revamped **MBS Online website** (available at www.health.gov.au/mbsonline).

Firstly, negotiations for proposed changes to the MBS with effect from 1 May 2007 are nearly finalised. Please read the **Proposed Changes column** below for more information.

Secondly, the MBS Online website has been revamped.

This has greatly improved the look, feel and functionality of the site. Please check out MBS Online and provide us with any feedback by emailing mbsonline@health.gov.au

Changes to the MBS were introduced on 1 March 2007, and 1 April 2007. Details of these updates is available on Page 2.

The Department will be producing the May 2007 Supplement to the MBS as an online production. More information about this can be found on Page 3.

From early April 2007, MBS Online will also offer an **email subscription service**. Users who register for this service will be able to choose between receiving email updates about any changes to the MBS (or

just the MBS category they are interested in) as they occur.

MBS Online Update will be published quarterly and will provide useful information on what is happening with the MBS book and MBS Online. All future editions will be available from MBS Online and you can subscribe to receive email notification of when each issue will be available.

We look forward to the MBS Online Update becoming a well established and valuable information tool for all interested parties including the medical profession, software developers, and health care consumers.

The MBS Online Team

Proposed changes for May 2007

There are a number of MBS changes proposed for introduction on 1 May 2007.

The proposed changes are still subject to the approval of Executive Council and the usual Parliamentary scrutiny and include:

- **Telepsychiatry:** Items 353, 355, 356, 357 and 358 will be amended to remove current geographical restrictions on location of the provider enabling all eligible providers to offer

telepsychiatry services to rural and remote patients and to restore the 15% rebate differential between telepsychiatry and face to face consultation items.

- **Telepsychiatry:** Items 364, 366, 367, 369 and 370 will be amended to remove the mandatory face to face consultation after every fourth telepsychiatry service.
- **Mental Health:** Items 2574, 2575, 2577, 2578, 2704, 2705, 2707 and

2708 will be removed as the services described are covered by the new mental health items introduced on 1 November 2006 as part of the Better Access To Mental Health initiative.

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What is MBS Online?

MBS Online (available from the Department of Health and Ageing website) allows both medical professionals and the public to look up information about Medicare items, scheduled fees and benefits.

The latest details will always be available from MBS Online because it is dynamically linked to the Department's Medicare Benefits Schedule database.

MBS Online lets users access searches, hyperlinks and explanatory notes relating to individual Medicare items.

Also, for the first time, users can view and print only the part or parts of the Schedule that they actually need.

Electronic Schedules available from MBS Online include:

- Medicare Benefits Schedule of 1 November 2006

- Optometrical Benefits Schedule of 1 November 2006
- Cleft Lip & Cleft Palate Schedule of 1 November 2006.
- Allied Health & Dental Services Schedule of 1 November 2006.

MBS Online also contains links to other documents related to the Schedule and general information about Medicare..

MBS Online can be found at: www.health.gov.au/mbsonline

MBS Online has already proven that it is a useful tool.

The November 2006 Medicare Benefits Schedule PDF file has been downloaded from MBS Online nearly 200,000 times between October 2006 and February 2007.

March & April 2007 updates to the MBS

There are a number of changes to the MBS that have been or will be introduced to take effect from 1 March and 1 April 2007.

1 March 2007: There were changes in relation to the emergency after hours items.

Existing items have been amended to rename the items "Urgent After-Hours". This allows:

- requests for attendances to be made up to two hours prior to the commencement of an after-hour period; and

- dedicated after-hours providers to claim the urgent out-of-surgery after-hours items.

1 April 2007: A new item (12323) will be introduced to coincide with the listing of the osteoporosis medication, Alendronate, on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). This medicine will be available on the PBS for patients with osteoporosis aged 70 years and over who are at high risk of fracture as measured by a bone mineral density test. MBS Item 12323 will allow the measurement of bone mineral

density for a person aged 70 years or over.

1 April 2007: The Registration criteria for a vocationally registered general practitioner has been expanded to include certification from the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM).

For more information on any of these changes please check out MBS Online which has more information on these as well as other MBS changes.

“MBS Online will work in partnership with all users to enable easy access to quality MBS information online.”

Proposed May 2007 Changes - continued

Continued from page 1

- **General Surgery:** New item 30062 will be introduced to provide the service of the removal of an Etonogestrel subcutaneous implant.
- **General Surgery:** Items 31300, 31305, 31310, 31315, 31320, 31325, 31330 and 31335 will be amended to clarify that these items can be used for recurrent and secondary melanotic lesions.
- **Cardiothoracic Surgery:** Items 38200, 38203 and 38206 will be amended to clarify the original intent of these items.
- **Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery:** Items 45564 and 45565 will be amended to specify where more than two microvascular anastomoses are performed.
- **Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery:** New item 45561 will be introduced for a new surgical procedure, supercharging of pedicled flaps, which is currently not covered by Medicare.
- **Diagnostic Imaging Nuclear Medicine:** Item 61462 (repeat scan) will be amended to assist with claims processing by removing the derived fee and including a separately calculated fee.
- **Diagnostic Imaging:** New item 61505 will be introduced for a CT scan performed at the same time and covering the same body area as single photon emission tomography for the purpose of anatomic localisation or attenuation correction where no separate diagnostic CT report is issued.
- **Pathology:** Two new items 65109 and 65110 will be introduced for the release of blood products (platelets and fresh frozen plasma).
- **Pathology:** Items 65099, 65102, 65105 and 65108 will have their fees reduced by \$2.60 to offset the cost of the two new blood product items.
- **Pathology:** Two new items 66756 and 66757 will be introduced for the diagnosis of inherited genetic diseases of inborn errors of metabolism and the monitoring of previously diagnosed inborn errors of metabolism. As a result, the following items will be removed 66713, 66737, 66809, 66818.
- **Pathology:** Three new items 69316, 69317, and 69319 will be introduced for the detection of Chlamydia Trachomatis by any method. As a result Item 69402 will be removed.
- **Pathology:** Nine new items – 73923, 73925, 73927, 73929, 73931, 73933, 73935, 73937, and 73939 will be introduced to allow the payment of a patient episode initiation fee for public laboratories, and the renumbering of existing P10 items. As a result, 73931, 73937 and 73939 may also be used by private laboratories.
- **Pathology:** The addition of 64 new items for tests which are referred from one laboratory to another unrelated laboratory to remunerate the receiving laboratory appropriately.
- **Mental Health:** The requirements for items 80000 to 80170 will be amended to make clear that specialist psychiatrists and paediatricians can directly refer to allied mental health professionals where an eligible specialist service (MBS items 104 to 109) has been provided to a patient with an assessed mental disorder.
- **Allied health group services for people with type 2 diabetes:** New allied health items (81100 to 81125) will allow people with type 2 diabetes to receive Medicare rebates for group services provided by eligible diabetes educators, exercise physiologists and dietitians, on referral from a GP. These services are in addition to the five individual allied health services available to eligible patients each calendar year under items 10950-10970. Further information will be available on the Department of Health and Ageing website at www.health.gov.au/epc in mid April.

The Department anticipates that the online May 2007 Supplement with all changes to the MBS will be available in early April 2007.

For more information on any of these changes please check out **MBS Online**.

May 2007 Supplement - Online availability

The production of the May 2007 supplement to the MBS is changing to an online publication rather than a printed booklet.

This will mean that no hard-copy of the booklet will be distributed by the Department. Instead it will be available to download from MBS Online.

Moving to an online Supplement will allow the Department and the wider medical profession more time and flexibility when developing and negotiating changes to the MBS.

The November MBS books will continue to be produced in hardcopy. Also, all changes made over the preceding 12 months will be incorporated into the November MBS books.

With both medical practitioners and allied health providers using MBS Online, the Department will have the opportunity to stagger changes to the MBS throughout the year.

These moves towards an online environment will not only improve the efficiency of the MBS

process, but will also enable the MBS to more accurately reflect current clinical practice and allow the Department to be more responsive to change.

The next online supplement is due for implementation on 1 July 2007.

Please check out **MBS Online** as it will provide more information on [changes to the MBS as they happen](#).

“MBS Online places the highest value on the quality, reliability and usefulness of the site. It aims to be user focused, easy to use and accurate.”

Medical Services Advisory Committee

It is Australian Government policy that before new medical technologies or procedures can be publicly funded they should be assessed by the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC).

MSAC's role is to assess the safety, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of new medical technologies and advise the Minister for Health and Ageing on

whether public funding of those technologies under Medicare is appropriate. This is to ensure that Medicare is used to provide medical services that are relatively safe, reasonably likely to provide beneficial health outcomes and represent value for money for Australians both as patients and taxpayers.

The medical profession and medical companies are welcome to submit applications to MSAC to review a new technology or procedure for the purpose of having it listed on the MBS. Further information about MSAC - including how to submit an application - can be found at their website: (www.msac.gov.au)



Further information on MBS Online can be found at: www.health.gov.au/mbsonline

Information can also be obtained by writing to MBS Online at:

mbsonline@health.gov.au

or

MBS Online

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Email Subscription service for MBS Online Information.

From early April 2007, MBS Online will offer an email subscription service. This service allows users to sign up to receive emails about important information pertaining to the MBS.

Simply go to the [subscription page](#) at MBS Online and follow the prompts. In a few short key strokes you can ensure that you are kept up-to-date with upcoming MBS information.

Revamping of MBS Online

Planning for the revamping of MBS Online has been underpinned by an awareness of the wider online environment. Key factors influencing MBS Online include:

- Huge increases in the number of Australians with Internet access;
- Rapid advances in information technology, and greater user sophistication;
- A thriving online marketplace with products and information for health professionals and consumers;
- A reliance on paper copies of the schedule that can quickly become outdated; and
- The Australian Government has a strong role in supporting certainty in the information economy.

MBS Online is constantly evolving and will keep up to date with changes that are occurring to MBS as they happen.

Don't forget to check MBS Online out at:
www.health.gov.au/mbsonline