**Changes to record-keeping requirements under the Health Insurance Act from 1 July 2018**

The Health Legislation Amendment (Improved Medicare Compliance and Other Measures) Act 2018 came in to effect on 1 July 2018 and places a number of new requirements on health practitioners claiming Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) items, including record keeping obligations.

From 1 July 2018 the following requirements apply:

**Referrals**

**Allied health practitioners**

From 1 July 2018, allied health practitioners (with the exception of optometrists) must keep copies of referrals for two years from the date of the service.

This means that if a patient claims an item and receives a referral to see an allied health practitioner, that allied health practitioner is required to keep a copy of the referral for two years from *the date they provided the first MBS service* to the patient under that referral.

**Specialists and consultant physicians**

From 1 July 2018, specialists and consultant physicians must keep copies of patient referrals for two years from the date of service.

This means that if a patient claims an item and receives a referral to a specialist or consultant physician, that practitioner must keep copies of the patient referral for two years, *from the date of the first MBS service* provided by them to the patient under that referral.

**Plans required to be created as a condition of claiming an MBS item**

Practitioners will be required to keep copies of any plans that are created as a condition of claiming the MBS item for two years from the date of the professional service.

Examples of such plans include:

* GP Chronic Disease Management plan (required to be created under MBS item 721)
* GP Mental Health Plan (required to be created under MBS items 2700, 2701, 2715 or 2717)
* Consultant physician treatment and management plan (required to be created under item 132)

This means that if a patient claims an item such as those mentioned above, and the practitioner prepares such a plan as required by the MBS item, the GP must keep a copy of the plan for two years *from the date that it was prepared*.

**Summary of new requirements**

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| **Before 1 July 2018** | **From 1 July 2018** |
| Specialists and consultant physicians are required to keep copies of referrals for 18 months | Specialists and consultant physicians are required to keep copies of referrals for two years |
| Pathologists and radiologists are required to keep copies of referrals for 18 months | Pathologists and radiologists are required to keep copies of referrals for two years |
| There is no requirement for allied health practitioners to keep copies of referrals | Allied health practitioners (other than optometrists) are required to keep copies of referrals for two years |
| The payment of a rebate for a professional service may be conditional on the creation of a document, but there is no requirement for a practitioner to keep a copy of the document | If a document is specifically mentioned in an item (such as a GP Health Assessment), and is created by the practitioner, then the practitioner must keep a copy for two years |