

Tips to Assist Practices with Mental Health Care MBS Items

Some points that may assist practices with these item numbers are:

- Psychological therapy and focused psychological strategies are able to be offered to patients meeting eligibility criteria. To be eligible to receive the allied mental health services that attract a Medicare rebate, patients must have in place a GP Mental Health Care Plan (MBS 2710) or review of a GP Mental Health Care Plan (MBS 2712) providing a structured approach to the management of their care needs. The preparation of a GP Mental Health Care Plan, MBS item 2710, must be billed for the patient before the patient can claim the Medicare rebate for the psychological service/s.
- Medicare rebates are available for up to 12 allied mental health services in a calendar year. Services can comprise both psychological therapy services or focused psychological strategy services. After an initial group of six services, upon review by the medical practitioner, an additional 6 sessions may be provided. The total number of individual psychological sessions cannot exceed 12 per calendar year. Patients are also eligible for up to 12 group sessions in addition to 12 individual sessions.
- In exceptional circumstances, the patient may be able to access 18 services per calendar year.
- Eligible providers must be registered with Medicare to provide the allied mental health consultation items. Eligible providers are
 - For psychological therapy – clinical psychologists,
 - For focused psychological strategies – general psychologists, and social workers and occupational therapists with mental health training.
- Psychological service providers funded by other Commonwealth or State programs are **not eligible** for Medicare rebates, for example Community Health Centre services, State Government hospital outpatient clinics or Department of Veterans' Affairs services.
- Referrals by GPs for psychological services are available to all GPs and can be made using a standard GP referral letter.
- Referrals for psychological services can also be made by paediatricians and psychiatrists. Services provided via these referrals count towards the 12 per calendar year available to the patient.
- A psychiatrist assessment and management plan (MBS 291 or 293) also enables the patient to qualify for the psychological therapy and focused psychological strategy session rebate.
- The allied mental health professional must be in receipt of the referral at the first allied mental health consultation.
- The allied mental health professional is required to provide a written report on the service to the referring medical practitioner and should include information on:
 - Assessments carried out on the patient,
 - Treatment provided; and
 - Recommendations on future management of the patient's disorder.
- Allied mental health professionals may set their own fees, however, for each item the Medicare schedule fee and patient rebate is fixed. These rates vary with time of consultation, the mode of consultation (individual or group sessions), along with the type of service delivered – psychological therapies or focused psychological strategies. The Medicare fees and rebates vary with the professional status of the service provider and the fees are listed in the Medicare Schedule.
- Level 2 trained and registered GPs are able to provide focused psychological strategies for up to 12 sessions per year (and up to 18 sessions in exceptional circumstances).

The Division's Mental Health Program Coordinator Michele Speak, is available to assist practices with any questions relating to the new Mental Health Care Medicare items.

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