



# Changes to Medicare



## What's changed with Medicare?

Last November, the Government began offering medical practices across Australia incentives aimed at encouraging bulk billing. As well as changes to expand the tripling of the bulk-billing incentives to all Australians, the Bulk Billing Practice Incentives Program (BBPIP) was introduced.

Practices that join the BBPIP accept the full Medicare rebate as payment for nearly all services, including standard GP consultations – meaning no gap fee.

## Did our practice take up the Bulk Billing Practice Incentive Program?

We looked carefully at what was offered and understand that patients want affordable healthcare. We know you also want comprehensive, high-quality care.

Despite what has been said in the media, the reality is these new incentive payments still don't cover the cost of providing care for all patients, particularly for patients needing longer and more complex consultations. This is one of the reasons many practices are not able to join the program.

As the incentives aren't enough to cover the costs of running our practice to the highest quality standard, we will need to charge a fee for most consultations.

This is not new to our practice, it is a continuation of the fee-paying arrangements we already have in place.

## Why should I still come to this practice if I can go to another bulk billing practice?

Research shows health outcomes are better under the continuous, comprehensive care of a GP who knows you.

We want to deliver care that is sustainable, without putting unreasonable pressure on our doctors to see people quickly or make it harder for you to get an appointment.

Of course, it is your health and your choice. We value you as our patient and want to maintain a long-term relationship with you.

## Are you giving feedback to the Government that Medicare is still not as well funded as it needs to be?

Yes. The Royal Australian College of GPs (RACGP) is the peak representative organisation for general practice and continues to advocate on your behalf for increased funding to better support the health and wellbeing of all Australians.



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