



RACGP

## Your Medicare rebates have been frozen - fast facts

### Patient Medicare rebates on ice until 1 July 2018

The Federal Government is reducing its investment in your healthcare by freezing your Medicare rebates. This means your Medicare rebates will remain the same until 1 July 2018, despite the cost of services increasing.

The freeze is a co-payment by stealth and the Government has implemented this measure to reduce the amount it spends on all Medicare subsidised services, including general practice services.

Your health is important. Please do not let the freeze on your Medicare rebates stop you from seeking the healthcare you need.

#### A quick guide to how Medicare works

Medicare is a public health insurance scheme. It provides rebates (support payments) to you when you access eligible health services, such as GP services. These payments are yours, not your GP's. In most cases, the rebate you receive does not cover the total cost of the health service provided.

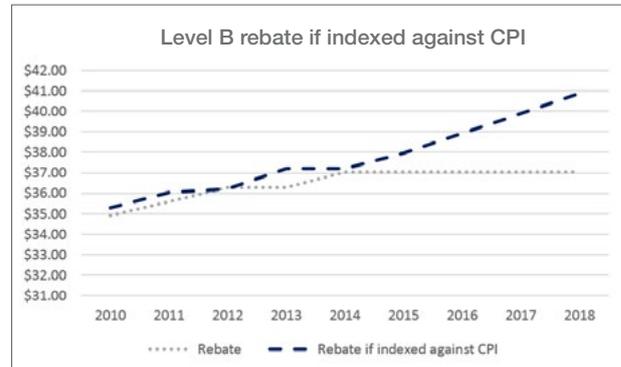
If you are 'bulkbilled', your GP accepts the Medicare rebate as full payment for the service and your signature allows Medicare to directly pay your rebate to your GP.

If you are 'privately' billed, you pay the GP's fee in full. You then receive the standard patient Medicare rebate, reimbursing you part of the fee you paid.

### What does the patient rebate indexation freeze mean for me?

Current and previous governments have failed to regularly increase patient rebates. This means Medicare rebates have never kept pace with the cost of living and have never covered the true cost of delivering quality medical care.

The graph shows how your rebate has not kept pace with the increasing cost of living. This will become worse over the next few years. The example below is for the most common service provided by GPs, a consultation lasting less than 20 minutes.



The freeze on Medicare rebates will negatively impact you and the sustainability of many general practices. To ensure that they can continue providing you with quality healthcare, while covering operational and business related costs, your practice may need to increase their fees and may even stop bulk billing patients.

Your practice can provide you with more information regarding any changes to their billing policy.

### Why has no one stopped this?

Many GPs and professional bodies, like the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), have lobbied extensively against the freeze on Medicare rebates since its announcement. Unfortunately, the Government has not listened and you are likely to face more out-of-pocket costs.

### What you can do to influence the Government

Join the RACGP's Antifreeze campaign which aims to pressure Government to lift the freeze on your Medicare rebates. Go to the RACGP's website: <http://yourgp.racgp.org.au/Your-GP/antifreeze> to access campaign materials including a template letter you can send to Health Minister Sussan Ley demanding the freeze be lifted.

You can also follow the conversation on Twitter using the dedicated campaign hashtag **#antifreeze**