



Australian Government
Department of Health

MBS Review

Update, September 2019

Overview

The independent Medicare Benefits Schedule Review Taskforce (the Taskforce) has been working since late 2015 to review the more than 5,700 items on the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) to better align them with contemporary clinical evidence and practice, and improve health outcomes for patients. To date more than 70 clinical committees and working groups have reviewed items across the MBS through a clinician-led process involving more than 700 clinicians, consumers and health system experts, providing detailed advice to the Taskforce on how to improve the MBS.

In May 2019, the Taskforce completed the first-pass review of all MBS items. More than 40 reports have been delivered by Taskforce to Government since the commencement of the Review and more than 15 of these reports have had recommendations implemented by Government. Over 20 reports remain to be finalised.

The [Renal Report](#) resulted in the creation of a new item (13105) enabling First Australians in remote areas to receive vital dialysis in their communities. The dialysis is provided by nurses, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners and Aboriginal health workers with appropriate training. Stakeholders have reported that this change is already making a difference to health of the people in these communities.

The 1 November 2018 changes to [Diagnostic Services for Sleep Disorders](#) resulted in a decrease in adult Level 1 laboratory sleep studies with a comparatively higher number of adult Level 2 home-based sleep studies. The changes better triage patients to the most suitable test, noting that patients who have high pre-test probability for uncomplicated obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA) are generally suitable for Level 2 home-based sleep studies.

The Taskforce held its 40th meeting in August 2019. The Taskforce considered 17 reports for endorsement to Government. The outcomes of the Taskforce meeting will be made available on the [Department's website](#) once they have been finalised.

Six draft reports, from the [Cleft Dental Services Working Group](#), [Consumer Panel](#), [Ophthalmology Clinical Committee](#), [Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Clinical Committee](#), [Paediatric Surgery Advisory Group](#) and [Psychiatry Clinical Committee](#), are now available for public consultation on the Department's website.

Consultation is open for sixteen weeks (until December 20) and interested parties are welcome to provide submissions by emailing MBSReviews@health.gov.au.

The Medicare Reviews Unit is providing this newsletter to help keep stakeholders informed of the progress of the MBS Review. It will be distributed every two months.

Please share with any colleagues who may be interested in the progress of the MBS Review. To subscribe please email MBSReviews@health.gov.au. You may unsubscribe using the link at the end of the email.

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Reference Group

The [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Reference Group](#) (ATSIHRG) was established in June 2018 and considered 21 items. The draft report was released for public consultation in February 2019 and closed in June 2019. Following this consultation process the clinical committee's draft report was presented at the August 2019 Taskforce. After considering this report, and the others relating to primary care, the Taskforce decided work should be undertaken to ensure consistency across all primary care and GPPCCC recommendations. This work is underway and is scheduled for completion prior to the end of 2019.

Written correspondence on the work of the ATSIHRG may be sent via email MBSReviews@health.gov.au attention Steve Dunlop.

Allied Health Reference Group

The [Allied Health Reference Group](#) (AHRG) was established in June 2018 and considered 26 items. The draft report was released for public consultation in February 2019 and closed in June 2019. Following this consultation process the clinical committee's draft report was presented at the August 2019 Taskforce. After considering this report, and the others relating to primary care, the Taskforce decided work should be undertaken to ensure consistency across all primary care and GPPCCC recommendations. This work is underway and is scheduled for completion prior to the end of 2019.

Written correspondence on the work of the AHRG may be sent via email MBSReviews@health.gov.au attention Steve Dunlop.

Anaesthesia Clinical Committee

The [Anaesthesia Clinical Committee](#) final report is available on the [Department's website](#). The Department has been engaging with stakeholders through an Implementation Liaison Group (ILG) to support the effective implementation of the Government endorsed recommendations.

From 1 November 2019, MBS items for anaesthesia services are changing to reflect contemporary anaesthesia practice. These changes are a result of the MBS Review Taskforce Recommendations and consultation with stakeholders. Information on these changes will be available on [MBS Online](#).

Please do not hesitate to email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Ransome McLean, if you have any questions about the report or recommendations.

Blood Products Working Group

The Blood Products Working Group (BPWG) report closed for stakeholder consultation in June 2018. The recommendations made by the BPWG have been endorsed by Taskforce and are now with Government for consideration.

If you have any questions about the BPWG report please email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention David O'Neill.

Cardiac Services Clinical Committee

The Taskforce endorsed the final report from the [Cardiac Services Clinical Committee](#) on 2 August 2018. More than 180 items were reviewed by the Clinical Committee and the report has been provided to Government for consideration.

The Department will be engaging with relevant stakeholders in the near future, with the aim of developing an Implementation Liaison Group (ILG). Any correspondence related to the Cardiac Services Review can be addressed to MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Ransome McLean.

Cleft Dental Services Working Group

The [Cleft Dental Services Working Group](#) reviewed 62 MBS items and its draft report is now available for public feedback.

Written feedback, informed by evidence, is welcomed by Friday 20 December 2019 via email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention David O'Neill.

Please do not hesitate to contact David if you have any questions about the Working Group's report or the recommendations.

Colorectal Surgery Clinical Committee

The consultation period for the [Colorectal Surgery Clinical Committee](#)'s draft report closed on 8 March 2019. 85 MBS items were reviewed, with the draft report provided to the Taskforce for consideration in August 2019 .

If you have any questions about the Colorectal Surgery Clinical Committee report please send an email to MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention David O'Neill.

Consumer Panel

The [Consumer Panel](#) report and [Consumer Engagement Resource](#) are available on the Department's website for public comment. The report outlines four detailed recommendations in relation to principles, practice, priorities and partnerships to progress consumer-centered review of the MBS and other health technologies. The resource has been developed by the Consumer Panel to assist consumers and committee chairs, and clinical and secretariat members to include consumer perspectives in deliberations and decisions.

Written feedback, informed by evidence, on the Consumer Panel draft report is welcomed by Friday 20 December 2019 to email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Steve Dunlop.

Diagnostic Imaging Clinical Committee

An Implementation Liaison Group (ILG) has been established to support the effective implementation of the Government endorsed recommendations of the [Diagnostic Imaging Clinical Committee](#) (DICC) report.

If you have any questions about the DICC report, please email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Kim Williams.

Diagnostic Medicine Clinical Committee

The [Diagnostic Medicine Clinical Committee](#) report, with the exception of vitamin D item recommendations, was presented at the August 2019 Taskforce to be considered for endorsement for Government.

If you have any questions about the Diagnostic Medicine report please email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Ransome McLean.

Eating Disorders Working Group

The [Government announced](#) the introduction of a new suite of MBS items to support a model of best practice evidence based care for patients with anorexia nervosa and other eligible patients with eating disorders. The introduction of these items was recommended by the independent clinician-led MBS Review Taskforce.

The new MBS items for patients with eating disorders are currently on track for implementation on 1 November, 2019. Further information will be available in the coming weeks.

For further information on the progress of the Eating Disorders Working Group please contact Steve Dunlop on email MBSReviews@health.gov.au.

Gastroenterology Clinical Committee

Recommendations from the [Gastroenterology Clinical Committee](#) were endorsed by the Taskforce and implemented with exception of colonoscopy items. Eight colonoscopy recommendations were reviewed by the Colonoscopy Working Group separately and subsequently endorsed by the Taskforce for Government consideration. The Government has endorsed the Taskforce recommendations and the resulting eight new colonoscopy MBS items are on track to be implemented on 1 November 2019.

If you have any questions about the Gastroenterology report, please send an email to MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Ransome McLean.

General Practice and Primary Care Clinical Committee

The [General Practice and Primary Care Clinical Committee](#) (GPPCCC) was established in 2016. Draft reports from the committee were released for public consultation in December 2018 and closed in March 2019. Following this consultation process, the committee's draft reports were presented at the August 2019 Taskforce. After considering these reports, and the others relating to primary care, the Taskforce

decided work should be undertaken to ensure consistency across all primary care and GPPCCC recommendations. This work is underway and is scheduled for completion prior to the end of 2019.

Written correspondence on the work of the GPPCCC may be sent via email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Roland Balodis.

General Surgery Clinical Committee

The [General Surgery Clinical Committee](#) report was endorsed for Government consideration by the MBS Review Taskforce in May 2019. The final report is available on the [Department's website](#).

If you have any questions about the General Surgery Clinical Committee report please email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Ransome McLean.

Gynaecology Clinical Committee

The [Gynaecology Clinical Committee](#) (GyCC) report considered 141 items and made recommendations to change many of the items. The GyCC report was presented at the August 2019 Taskforce to be considered for endorsement for Government.

If you have any questions about the (GyCC) report please email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Ransome McLean.

Intensive Care and Emergency Medicine Clinical Committee

The [Intensive Care and Emergency Medicine](#) (ICEM) Clinical Committee was established to review a range of attendance services and a small range of procedural items primarily provided in private emergency departments and intensive care units. The Taskforce reviewed 29 items related to ICEM. These changes were [announced by Government](#) in Budget 2019-20.

If you have any questions about the implementation of ICEM review please email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Michael Ryan.

Mental Health Reference Group

The [Mental Health Reference Group](#) report (MHRG) was established in June 2018 and considered 47 items. The draft report was released for public consultation in February 2019 and closed in June 2019. Following this consultation process the clinical committee's draft report was presented at the August 2019 Taskforce. After considering this report, and the others relating to primary care, the Taskforce decided work should be undertaken to ensure consistency across all primary care and GPPCCC recommendations. This work is underway and is scheduled for completion prior to the end of 2019.

Written correspondence on the work of the MHRG may be sent via email MBSReviews@health.gov.au attention Steve Dunlop.

Neurology and Neurosurgery Clinical Committee

A Neurosurgery and Neurology Implementation Liaison Group (NNILG) has been established to support the effective implementation of the Government endorsed recommendations of the [Neurosurgery and Neurology Clinical Committee](#).

If you have any questions about the NNILG please send an email to MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Ransome McLean.

Nurse Practitioner Reference Group

The [Nurse Practitioner Reference Group](#) (NPRG) was established in June 2018 and considered 10 items. The draft report was released for public consultation in February 2019 and closed in June 2019. Following this consultation process the clinical committee's draft report was presented at the August 2019 Taskforce. After considering this report, and the others relating to primary care, the Taskforce decided work should be undertaken to ensure consistency across all primary care and GPPCCC recommendations. This work is underway and is scheduled for completion prior to the end of 2019.

Written correspondence on the work of the NPRG may be sent via email MBSReviews@health.gov.au attention Steve Dunlop.

Oncology Clinical Committee

The [Oncology Clinical Committee](#) was made up of two working groups: Medical Oncology and Radiation Oncology. The Taskforce endorsed the Oncology Clinical Committee report and its recommendations in September 2018. The implementation process of both Medical and Radiation Oncology recommendations is underway.

If you have any questions about the Oncology Clinical Committee please send an email to MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Louise Morgan for Radiation Oncology and attention Michael Ryan for Medical Oncology.

Ophthalmology Clinical Committee

The [Ophthalmology](#) draft report is available for public feedback. 189 MBS items were reviewed, and draft recommendations have been provided for consideration.

Written feedback, informed by evidence, is welcomed by Friday 20 December 2019 via email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention David O'Neill.

Please do not hesitate to contact David if you have any questions about the draft report or the recommendations.

Optometry Clinical Committee

The public consultation period for the [Optometry Clinical Committee](#) draft report closed on 12 April 2019.

The Committee is currently considering the feedback provided. A post consultation report is scheduled to be presented to the MBS Taskforce in late 2019 for consideration.

For further information on the Optometry report, please contact Steve Dunlop on email MBSReviews@health.gov.au.

Oral and Maxillofacial Services Category 4 Working Group

The review of changes to MBS items listed in Category 4: Oral and Maxillofacial Services (OMS) is currently underway. Draft recommendations will be considered by the MBS Review Taskforce in due course.

If you have any questions about the review of Category 4: OMS items please email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention David O'Neill.

Orthopaedics Clinical Committee

The amended [Orthopaedic Clinical Committee](#) report was presented to the Taskforce on 14 August 2019.

For further information on the progress of the Orthopaedics report please send an email to MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Ransome McLean.

Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery Clinical Committee

The [Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery Clinical Committee](#) reviewed 174 items and the draft report is now available on the [Department's website](#) for public comment.

Written feedback on the Clinical Committee's report, informed by evidence where applicable, is welcomed by Friday 20 December 2019 to email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Ransome McLean.

Paediatric Surgery Advisory Group

The [Paediatric Surgery Advisory Group](#) reviewed 90 MBS items and the draft report is now available on the [Department's website](#) for public comment.

Written feedback on the report, informed by evidence, is welcomed by Friday 20 December 2019 to email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention David O'Neill.

Pain Management Clinical Committee

The stakeholder consultation period for the [Pain Management Clinical Committee](#)'s draft report closed in April 2019. The Committee has considered the feedback received and is finalising the recommendations for Government consideration.

If you have any questions about the Pain Management report please email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention David O'Neill.

Participating Midwives Reference Group

The [Participating Midwives Reference Group](#) (PMRG) was established in June 2018 and considered 12 items. The draft report was released for public consultation in February 2019 and closed in June 2019. Following this consultation process the clinical committee's draft report was presented at the August 2019 Taskforce. After considering this report, and the others relating to primary care, the Taskforce decided

work should be undertaken to ensure consistency across all primary care and GPPCCC recommendations. This work is underway and is scheduled for completion prior to the end of 2019.

Written correspondence on the work of the PMRG may be sent via email MBSReviews@health.gov.au attention Steve Dunlop.

Pathology Clinical Committee

There were seven [Pathology](#) reports presented at the Taskforce August 2019 meeting for endorsement for Government consideration; Anatomical/Cytology Tests, Chemical Pathology (2nd Report), Chemical Pathology (3rd Report), Genetics, Haematology Tests, Immunology Tests, and Microbiology.

If you have any questions about the Pathology reports please email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Nathan Hyson.

Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Clinical Committee

The consultation period for the [Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Clinical Committee](#)'s draft report closed on 8 March 2019. There were 289 MBS items reviewed, resulting in draft recommendations which are currently being considered by government.

If you have any questions about the Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Clinical Committee report or feedback please email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention David O'Neill.

Principles and Rules Committee

The [Principles and Rules Committee](#) provided its first report to Government in 2016. Three of the report's five recommendations were implemented on 1 November 2017. The remaining two recommendations are currently being considered by Government.

The committee continues to meet on a regular basis to consider matters falling within the scope of the MBS Review which are strictly not clinical in nature and assist the MBS Review Taskforce with broader questions about the principles, objectives and boundaries shaping the MBS's conceptual approach.

If you have any questions about the Principles and Rules Committee report please email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention David O'Neill.

Psychiatry Clinical Committee

The [Psychiatry](#) draft report is now available on the [Department's website](#) for public comment.

Written feedback on the report, informed by evidence, is welcomed by Friday 20 December 2019 to email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Steve Dunlop.

Please do not hesitate to contact Steve if you have any questions about the Psychiatry report or recommendations.

Specialist and Consultant Physician Consultation Clinical Committee

The consultation period for the [Specialist and Consultant Physician Consultation Clinical Committee](#) (SCPCCC) draft report closed on 28 June 2019. The Committee is currently considering all feedback received through the consultation process.

Further information on the progress of the SCPCCC Report can be provided by contacting Steve Dunlop by email MBSReviews@health.gov.au.

Thoracic Surgery Clinical Committee

The consultation period for the [Thoracic Surgery Clinical Committee](#)'s (TSCC) draft report closed on 12 April 2019.

The committee is currently considering all feedback received through the consultation process, prior to finalising the committee's recommendations for Government.

If you have any questions about the TSCC report or feedback please email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention David O'Neill.

Urology Clinical Committee

The recommendations from the [Urology Clinical Committee](#) report has been provided to Government for consideration. An Implementation Liaison Group (ILG) has been established to support the effective implementation of these recommendations.

Please do not hesitate to contact MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Ransome McLean, if you have any questions about the report or recommendations.

Vascular Clinical Committee

The stakeholder consultation period for the [Vascular Clinical Committee](#)'s draft report closed in March 2019. The Committee has considered the feedback received and presented the recommendations for consideration at the August 2019 Taskforce meeting.

If you have any questions about the Vascular Clinical Committee report or feedback please email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Ransome McLean.

Wound Management Working Group

The [Wound Management Working Group](#) report is under development and will be released on the Department's website for public consultation later in 2019. Written correspondence to inform the Working Group's considerations is welcomed via email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Roland Balodis.

Please do not hesitate to contact Roland if you have any questions about the Working Group.

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