



Australian Government
Department of Health

MBS Review

Update, November 2019

Established in 2015, the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) Review Taskforce (the Taskforce) is considering how the more than 5,700 items on the MBS can be better aligned with contemporary clinical evidence and practice, and improve health outcomes for patients. The Taskforce is also identifying whether there are any services that are obsolete, outdated or potentially unsafe.

Updates to the MBS as of 1 November 2019

Reforms to anaesthesia and colonoscopy MBS items and new eating disorder MBS items are in effect from today, 1 November 2019. These changes stem from recommendations made by the Taskforce, including consultation across the sector and discussion with peak groups and representatives.

In addition to these reforms, there are 12 new MBS telehealth items being introduced to address inequities in the provision of health care services. The new items will be available to general practitioners (GPs) and non-specialist medical practitioners and have the potential to deliver improved health outcomes to people living in rural and remote locations.

For more information on all of the 1 November MBS changes, please visit [MBS Online](#).

Stakeholder Forums

Since the last newsletter in September, the Department has supported a number of stakeholder forums and discussions, including:

- A forum for private health insurers and other key stakeholder groups in September 2019 in Melbourne. This forum offered a valuable opportunity for those involved in the administration and claiming of MBS items to understand the 1 November changes for anaesthetics, colonoscopy and for eating disorders. It was well attended, with more than 90 representatives attending this event. It is anticipated these updates will be regularly held in advance of implementation of changes resulting from the MBS Review.
- The Australian Medical Association Western Australia (AMA WA) invited the Department of Health and Taskforce Chair Professor Bruce Robinson to provide an update on the MBS Review in Perth. Sessions ran over two days in October, with separate sessions for GPs and Specialists. Dr Simon Torvaldsen, Chair of the AMA WA Council of General Practice and Chair of the Wound Management Working Group, introduced Professor Bruce Robinson at the GP breakfast session, which was well attended. The Department looks forward to future opportunities to engage with stakeholders on the progress of the Review. If you are interested in the Department coming to your region and presenting on the Review, please coordinate the request through your local peak.

Taskforce Meetings

There will be two Taskforce meetings before the year comes to an end. There will be a short teleconference later this month followed by a face-to-face meeting in December. The outcomes of previous Taskforce meetings are available on the [Department's website](#).



Photograph taken after the GP Breakfast Roundtable held in Perth, October 2019
Dr Bennie Ng (CEO WA AMA), Dr Andrew Miller (President WA AMA), Vashti Fox (Department of Health),
Professor Bruce Robinson (Chair of MBS Reviews Taskforce),
Andrew Simpson (Assistant Secretary, Medicare Reviews Unit, Department of Health)

This Newsletter forms part of regular, two-monthly updates on the progress of the MBS Review. This update has been provided by the Medicare Reviews Unit.

The September update is available on the [Department's website](#) and future updates will be made available shortly after distribution.

Please share with any colleagues who may be interested in the progress of the MBS Review.

To subscribe please email MBSReviews@health.gov.au.

Committee updates

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[Thoracic Surgery Clinical Committee](#)
[Urology Clinical Committee](#)
[Vascular Clinical Committee](#)
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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Reference Group

As advised in the last Newsletter in September 2019, the Taskforce is progressing work to review consistency and test evidence across the primary care recommendations from the Allied Health, Mental Health, [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health](#), Nurse Practitioner and Practising Midwives Reference Groups, and the General Practice and Primary Care Clinical Committee. This work is focused on the efforts of more than 90 clinicians, health professionals and consumers, and will allow the Taskforce to consider a consolidated vision of how the MBS can better support primary care services prior to finalising their recommendations to Government in late 2019.

Further information can be provided by contacting MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Steve Dunlop.

Allied Health Reference Group

As advised in the last Newsletter in September 2019, the Taskforce is progressing work to review consistency and test evidence across the primary care recommendations from the [Allied Health](#), Mental Health, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Nurse Practitioner and Practising Midwives Reference Groups, and the General Practice and Primary Care Clinical Committee. This work is focused on the efforts of more than 90 clinicians, health professionals and consumers, and will allow the Taskforce to consider a consolidated vision of how the MBS can better support primary care services prior to finalising their recommendations to Government in late 2019.

Further information can be provided by contacting MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Steve Dunlop.

Anaesthesia Clinical Committee

Changes to anaesthesia MBS items commenced on 1 November 2019. These changes reflect contemporary anaesthesia practice and are a product of the MBS Review Taskforce recommendations and consultation with stakeholders. Information on these changes can be found at [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

An Implementation Liaison Group (ILG) is in the process of being formed for the Blood Products Working Group (BPWG) with a meeting expected to be held later this month.

If you have any questions about the BPWG report or are interested in participating in the ILG, please email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention David O'Neill.

Cardiac Services Clinical Committee

The Implementation Liaison Group (ILG) for [Cardiac Services Clinical Committee](#) had its first meeting on 22 October 2019. The ILG will be assisting with the drafting of items for the first phase of changes to cardiac items.

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](#) (CDSWG) report is currently welcoming public feedback, informed by evidence on the draft report via email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention David O'Neill. Feedback will close on Friday 20 December 2019.

Colorectal Surgery Clinical Committee

Draft recommendations for the [Colorectal Surgery Clinical Committee](#)'s report were endorsed by Taskforce and are with Government for consideration.

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.

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

The Diagnostic Imaging Implementation Liaison Group (ILG) has provided valuable input and advice on the development of new and amended MBS items for the implementation of the Government endorsed recommendations of the [Diagnostic Imaging Clinical Committee](#) (DICC) report. The DICC final report is available on the [Department's website](#).

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. A Rapid Review of Vitamin D testing has since been undertaken by the University of Adelaide to help inform the Taskforce's considerations of the Vitamin D recommendations and help them to finalise their advice to Government.

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

Eating Disorders Working Group

New [Eating Disorders](#) MBS items are in effect from 1 November 2019. Information on these items can be found at [MBS Online](#).

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

Gastroenterology Clinical Committee

Recommendations from the [Gastroenterology Clinical Committee](#) were endorsed by the Taskforce and have been endorsed by Government. The eight new colonoscopy MBS items are effective from 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

As advised in the last Newsletter in September 2019, the Taskforce is progressing work to review consistency and test evidence across the primary care recommendations from the Allied Health, Mental Health, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Nurse Practitioner and Practising Midwives Reference Groups, and the [General Practice and Primary Care Clinical Committee](#). This work is focused on the efforts of more than 90 clinicians, health professionals and consumers, and will allow the Taskforce to consider a consolidated vision of how the MBS can better support primary care services prior to finalising their recommendations to Government in late 2019.

Further information can be provided by contacting 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](#). The Department will contact stakeholders about the recommendations later in 2019.

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

Gynaecology Clinical Committee

An Implementation Liaison Group (ILG) will be established for the [Gynaecology Clinical Committee](#) (GyCC) report in the coming months.

If you have any questions about the GyCC report please email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Mary Warner.

Intensive Care and Emergency Medicine Clinical Committee

The Implementation Liaison Group (ILG) has been established to support the effective implementation of the [Intensive Care and Emergency Medicine](#) (ICEM) Clinical Committee recommendations.

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

Mental Health Reference Group

As advised in the last Newsletter in September 2019, the Taskforce is progressing work to review consistency and test evidence across the primary care recommendations from the Allied Health, [Mental](#)

[Health](#), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Nurse Practitioner and Practicing Midwives Reference Groups, and the General Practice and Primary Care Clinical Committee. This work is focused on the efforts of more than 90 clinicians, health professionals and consumers, and will allow the Taskforce to consider a consolidated vision of how the MBS can better support primary care services prior to finalising their recommendations to Government in late 2019.

Further information can be provided by contacting MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Steve Dunlop.

Neurosurgery and Neurology Clinical Committee

An Implementation Liaison Group (ILG) for Neurosurgery and Neurology has been established to support the effective implementation of the Government endorsed recommendations of the [Neurosurgery and Neurology Clinical Committee](#). The first meeting of the ILG was held on 3 September 2019.

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

Nurse Practitioner Reference Group

As advised in the last Newsletter in September 2019, the Taskforce is progressing work to review consistency and test evidence across the primary care recommendations from the Allied Health, Mental Health, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, [Nurse Practitioner](#) and Practicing Midwives Reference Groups, and the General Practice and Primary Care Clinical Committee. This work is focused on the efforts of more than 90 clinicians, health professionals and consumers, and will allow the Taskforce to consider a consolidated vision of how the MBS can better support primary care services prior to finalising their recommendations to Government in late 2019.

Further information can be provided by contacting 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 Medical Oncology Implementation Liaison Group conducted its first meeting on 26 September 2019.

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

Optometry Clinical Committee

The [Optometry Clinical Committee](#) is finalising their post consultation report and preparing to present to the Taskforce later this year.

Further information can be provided by contacting MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Steve Dunlop.

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. Access to Category 4 was withdrawn from 1 November 2004. However, dental practitioners approved by the Minister for Health prior to that date continue to have access to Category 4 items.

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 endorsed by the Taskforce in August. The report was published on the MBS Review [website](#) last month and planning for the implementation of the Taskforce orthopaedic recommendations has commenced.

For further information on the progress of the Orthopaedics implementation, please send an email to MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Mary Warner.

Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery Clinical Committee

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

Written feedback on the Clinical Committee's draft 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](#) draft report is 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 [Pain Management Clinical Committee](#) (PMCC) has considered input from stakeholders on their draft report. The PMCC plan to present their final report to the Taskforce by the end of the year.

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

Participating Midwives Reference Group

As advised in the last Newsletter in September 2019, the Taskforce is progressing work to review consistency and test evidence across the primary care recommendations from the Allied Health, Mental Health, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Nurse Practitioner and [Participating Midwives](#), and the General Practice and Primary Care Clinical Committee. This work is focused on the efforts of more than 90 clinicians, health professionals and consumers, and will allow the Taskforce to consider a consolidated vision of how the MBS can better support primary care services prior to finalising their recommendations to Government in late 2019.

Further information can be provided by contacting MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Steve Dunlop.

Pathology Clinical Committee

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

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 [Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Clinical Committee](#)'s draft report was endorsed by the Taskforce in May 2019 and provided to Government. Recommendations are aimed at safeguarding Medicare against inappropriate use for cosmetic surgery and updating items to be consistent with modern best practice. An Implementation Liaison Group (ILG) is expected to be established in the coming months.

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

Principles and Rules Committee

The [Principles and Rules Committee](#) (PARC) continues to support the Taskforce through examination and provision of advice on the legislative and regulatory framework underpinning MBS operations. Intrinsic to all Committee deliberations is a set of guiding principles that includes recognition of the GP as a key component in the delivery of holistic, longitudinal patient-centred care in the community.

Any questions about the work of PARC should be directed to MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention David O'Neill.

Psychiatry Clinical Committee

The [Psychiatry](#) draft report is 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.

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 met in September to discuss stakeholder feedback and review the draft recommendations. It is now working to finalise its report and is planning to present to the Taskforce later this year.

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

Thoracic Surgery Clinical Committee

The [Thoracic Surgery Clinical Committee](#) (TSCC) will present its final report to the Taskforce later this year.

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 have been endorsed by Government for implementation on the MBS in 2020. The Implementation Liaison Group (ILG) has provided feedback to support the effective implementation of these recommended changes to urology services.

Please do not hesitate to contact MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Mary Warner, if you have any questions about the coming changes.

Vascular Clinical Committee

The Taskforce has established a time-limited Vascular Working Group (VWG) to consider recommendations for the digital subtraction angiography (DSA) items. The VWG met on 19 September 2019. The Department is facilitating a targeted stakeholder consultation on VWG recommendations. The consultation period is from 14 October 2019 to 1 November 2019.

The VWG will consider stakeholder feedback prior to presenting the final report from the [Vascular Clinical Committee](#) to the Taskforce for endorsement for Government consideration later this year.

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

Wound Management Working Group

The [Wound Management Working Group](#) draft report is currently on track to be considered by the Taskforce later this year.

The Taskforce and Working Group continue to collaborate with members of the Australian Health Research Alliance (AHRA) Wound Care Initiative to inform and align wound management priorities where appropriate. Members of the AHRA Wound Care Initiative attended the Taskforce's Wound Management Stakeholder Roundtable in August 2019. Subsequently, the Chair of the Working Group, Dr Simon Torvaldsen, attended and presented on the Working Group's considerations at the AHRA Wound Care Workshop in September 2019.

Written correspondence to inform the Working Group's considerations is welcomed via email MBSReviews@health.gov.au, attention Roland Balodis.

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