



Information Sheet

Closing the Gap on Indigenous Health Outcomes

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) Co-payment Measure

What is the PBS Co-payment Measure?

The Australian Government has introduced a new program to help many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians better manage their health, especially chronic diseases. The PBS Co-payment Measure will give you access to cheaper medicines. You normally have to pay some or all of the cost of PBS medicines, and this is called a co-payment. The PBS Co-payment Measure will reduce this co-payment for eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

What is chronic disease?

A chronic disease is an ongoing illness you have had, or are likely to have, for at least six months. Some chronic diseases include:

- asthma;
- cancer;
- heart disease;
- diabetes;
- arthritis; and
- stroke.

Can I join the PBS Co-payment Measure?

You may be eligible to join the PBS Co-payment Measure if you:

- are of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin; and
- have an existing chronic disease or are at risk of chronic disease.

Talk to your doctor for more information and to find out if you meet the full eligibility criteria.

How will the PBS Co-payment Measure help me?

If you are eligible to participate and give your consent, most medicines will be cheaper for you to help you better manage or prevent illness. If you are a general patient – which means you do not have a Centrelink or Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA)

concession card - you will only pay the concessional co-payment amount (currently under \$6 for each medicine). If you have a Centrelink or DVA concession card, or if you or your family has reached the PBS Safety Net threshold, then you will not have to pay a co-payment. You may still need to pay mandatory premiums for a small number of medicines. For more information about the PBS Safety Net, talk to your pharmacist.

What if I don't have a current Medicare card?

If your Medicare card is not current, or you don't have one, talk to your health worker, visit your local Medicare office or call the Medicare Australia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Access and Employment line on **1800 556 955***.

How can I be part of this program?

You will need to fill out a patient consent form and give it to your doctor or clinic staff member. The form is available from your doctor or clinic. You should also consider doing this for your children under your care.

Why do I need to sign the consent form?

To be part of the PBS Co-payment Measure, your doctor or clinic needs your agreement in writing. That way we know you understand and agree to be part of the program.

What happens to information about me?

The personal details you provide on the consent form – such as your name and date of birth – may be disclosed to the Department of Health and Ageing, other relevant agencies or as authorised or required by law. This is so that those administering the Measure can better manage the program.

How often will I need to sign the consent form?

You only need to sign up once for the PBS Co-payment Measure.

Is signing up for the PBS Co-payment Measure the same as Medicare Australia's Voluntary Indigenous Identifier?

No. The PBS Co-payment Measure is not linked in any way to Medicare Australia's Voluntary Indigenous Identifier. For more information about the Voluntary Indigenous Identifier, please call the Medicare Australia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Access line on **1800 556 955***.

What if I want to stop being in the PBS Co-payment Measure?

You can choose not to be part of the PBS Co-payment Measure at any time. You just need to ask your doctor or clinic staff member to give you a withdrawal of patient consent form to fill out.

What if I change my doctor or clinic?

If you change your usual doctor or clinic, you do not need to do anything. If the new doctor or clinic becomes your usual care provider, discuss the arrangements you had with your previous health care provider. If you can, try to go to the same doctor or clinic to help make sure you are being cared for by people who know you and have complete information about your health needs.

What if I see a different doctor at my clinic?

You can see any doctor within your usual clinic.

What are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Checks?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Checks must be done by your usual doctor or clinic and involve asking you about your health, doing the physical examination, organising any tests you need and writing up a health plan for you.

Why should I get an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Check?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people get more chronic disease and get them a lot earlier than non-Indigenous Australians. A regular health check will help to identify these diseases and treat them earlier.

How do I get an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Check?

You can have a health check done at your usual doctor or clinic, who may be able to bulk bill the health check for you. For more information ask your doctor, nurse or Aboriginal Health Worker.

For more information

For more information about the PBS Co-payment Measure:

- talk to your doctor or clinic
- call the PBS Co-payment Measure team on 02 6289 2409* between 8.30 am and 5.00 pm EST, Monday to Friday
- go to: www.health.gov.au/tackling-chronic-disease
- email: pbs-indigenous@health.gov.au
- write: PBS Co-payment Measure
Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing
Mail Drop Point 901
GPO Box 9848
Canberra ACT 2601

* Call charges may apply from mobile and pay phones only.