

Medicare, PBS changes

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From January 1, changes to Medicare rebates and [Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme](#) [1][Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme] The federal government program which subsidises medication costs in Australia. Anti-HIV drugs are part of a special part of the PBS called Section 100 (S100) which is used for expensive, highly specialised drugs. co-payments will have some people paying less to see their GP, but will also significantly increase prescription drug costs.

The Medicare changes, which were announced as part of the government's election platform last year, mean that Medicare will now pay 100 percent of the scheduled fee for GP consultations. For people seeing doctors who do not bulk bill, this will reduce the amount of out-of-pocket costs incurred when seeing a doctor, with the rebate for the most common (level B) consultation rising from \$26.22 to \$30.85. For bulk-billed patients, the increased rebate will be paid direct to the doctor.

While the increase in the Medicare rebate has been welcomed by consumer groups, the government has been criticised for failing to extend the 100 percent rebate to specialist consultations (for which the 85 percent rebate will remain). There has also been debate over whether the change will do anything to increase bulk-billing levels, or to prevent widespread fee rises by GPs, many of whom already charge \$48 or more for the level B consultation.

The second change to come in from the start of the year is the increase in PBS co-payments. The cost per prescription rises by 18–20 percent, with concession card holders paying \$4.60 (up from \$3.80), and non-concession patients paying a maximum of \$28.60 (up from \$23.70).

- [Medicare](#)
- [Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme](#)

Links:

[1] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/121>