Fact Sheet

Closing the Gap – PBS Co-Payment Measure

The Closing the Gap Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) co-payment measure is an Australian Government Department of Human Services assistance package aiming to increase access to PBS medicines for eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders living with, or at risk of, chronic disease.

The assistance measure operates in the form of lower or nil patient co-payment for PBS medicines.

Eligibility

The Closing the Gap (CTG) measure is intended to benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of any age who present with an existing chronic disease or are at risk of chronic disease and, in the opinion of the prescriber:

- would experience setbacks in the prevention or ongoing management of chronic disease if they did not take the prescribed medicine; and
- are unlikely to adhere to their medicines regimen without assistance through the CTG measure.

Eligible patients can be registered at either:

- general practices participating in the Indigenous Health Incentive under the Practice Incentives Program (PIP); or
- Indigenous Health Services (IHS) in urban and rural settings.

Annotation of prescriptions

When a patient is registered for the CTG measure and the prescriber grants the benefits of the CTG measure to the patient, the prescriber will annotate the patient’s prescription to indicate that it is to be dispensed with co-payment relief.

CTG prescriptions will either have an automated annotation or a manual annotation.

Under the CTG measure, general (non-concessional) patients presenting a CTG prescription should be charged the current concessional rate for each PBS item on that prescription. Concessional patients presenting a CTG prescription do not need to pay a patient co-payment for each PBS item on that prescription. However, mandatory charges—such as any applicable brand premiums—must still be paid by the patient.

If a patient presents as an eligible PBS co-payment patient but does not have an annotated prescription confirming their eligibility, the pharmacy will need to refer the patient back to their prescriber.

Who can annotate a CTG prescription?

The following prescribers are eligible to provide their patients with a CTG annotated script:

- Any medical practitioner working in a practice that is participating in the Indigenous Health Incentive under the PIP
- Any medical practitioner working in IHS in rural or urban settings

Any medical specialist in any practice location provided the patient is eligible under the CTG – PBS Co-payment Measure, and has been referred by a medical practitioner working in a practice that is participating in the Indigenous Health Incentive/PBS Co-Payment Measure under the PIP.
Pharmacies and rural dispensing practices

Processing annotated prescriptions

Prescribers who issue handwritten prescriptions to their patients must annotate the prescription with the letters ‘CTG’, their initials and signature.

When you receive a manually annotated prescription and are processing that prescription through your dispensing software you must ensure that the CTG code is entered correctly into your processing software (either manually or automatically). The correct code to use will depend on your dispensing software.

For example, using a correct CTG code of H, 00B or CTG00B will ensure the manual annotation is valid. Using an invalid code will result in an incorrect calculation of the payment due from the patient for their prescription.

Will this change the way I claim?

Yes, you must include the CTG annotation on the prescription in the Pharmacy Dispensing System (PDS) prescription record sent to Medicare Australia.

You will be reimbursed the cost of the medicine supplied, inclusive of the co-payment relief amount applicable, if the annotation is valid. If the prescription is a CTG under co-payment prescription, you will be reimbursed the price of the PBS item minus the applicable patient co-payment.

Helping you reconcile CTG prescriptions

Medicare Australia will provide additional information in your PBS reconciliation statement. CTG prescriptions will be clearly identified by the CTG annotation which will be included in the reconciliation statement information.

CTG prescriptions should be included in your claim as per current requirements. CTG under co-payment prescriptions (those prescriptions where a PBS subsidy is not applicable) are not required to be sent to Medicare Australia.

For more information

• CTG PBS Co-payment Measure
  Email: PBS-Indigenous@health.gov.au
  Telephone: 02 6289 2409
  Telephone: 132 290 (Claiming information)

• Rural Health West
  Fact Sheet – Practice Incentives Program

• Medicare Australia
  Practice Incentives Program
  Indigenous Health Incentive
  Website: www.medicareaustralia.gov.au

For more information on how Rural Health West can support your practice please contact:
  Telephone: 6389 4500
  Email: workforcesupport@ruralhealthwest.com.au

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The information in this fact sheet has been taken from the Australian Government Department of Human Services Medicare website www.medicareaustralia.gov.au. Whilst all care has been taken in preparing this information, please place queries directly with Medicare Australia as this information is subject to change without notice.