

Budget 2023 – what does it mean for your healthcare?



It will be easier to see a general practitioner

The Government has tripled the bulk billing incentive for older Australians, which means if your GP chooses to bulk bill you, they will receive much more than they currently do.

The tripled bulk-billing incentive and rebate rise, combined, mean the reimbursement for a pensioner or child in metropolitan areas increases by at least 34%. This is the largest ever increase in Medicare rebates, and the change will apply to about 11.6 million children, concession cardholders and pensioners. It will still be up to the doctor if they wish to bulk bill you, but the very large increase in incentives will make it much more attractive to bulk bill.



Getting common medicines will be cheaper

You will now be able to get 60 days' worth of medicines on a prescription rather than 30 days for some common medications. This will reduce the cost to consumers. This is a controversial measure, with the Pharmacy Guild (who represent people who own pharmacies) campaigning against the measure. Private health insurers are not concerned, and we join the Australian Medical Association, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Consumers Health Forum, academics and others supporting the change.

Supply of medicines should not be an issue – if you take one pill a day you will get 365 pills on six prescriptions rather than 365 pills on twelve prescriptions. It will be cheaper, and much more convenient with fewer visits to the chemist. This is good news for cost and convenience, as well as safety as you are much less likely to run out of pills if you only need to get them half as often.



You will be able to get immunised against shingles

Shingles is a horrible disease which affects older people or people with immune system problems, and can be prevented with a vaccine called Shingrix. This vaccine will now be added permanently to the National Immunisation Register. Talk to your GP about eligibility.



You can get screened for lung cancer

A new National Lung Cancer Screening Program will provide screening to eligible current and former smokers, saving thousands of lives through early diagnosis and treatment. If you smoke, or used to, talk to your GP about getting screened – it may save your life.



You will be able to build a stronger relationship with your GP

Patients can enrol with a general practice registered with MyMedicare, to get better continuity of care and easier access to telehealth consultations. MyMedicare will provide patients and their care team access to additional funding packages, tailored to their health needs. We will be encouraging all of our members to enrol with their trusted GP if they have one – there are great benefits in building a stronger patient-GP relationship. We expect that the additional services available through MyMedicare will grow over time, and be more targeted to what you need.



What will change with my private health insurance?

Nothing. This Budget was squarely about improving Medicare, particularly general practice. That's good news for private health insurance, as good general practice care means you are less likely to need to go to hospital. This Budget was about the fundamentals of our health system, which will provide more opportunities for health insurers to provide better services into the future.

