

Media Release

1 August 2022



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High Claims confirm PHI value for Australians young and old

Private Healthcare Australia's [Annual High Claims Report](#) confirms the value of private health insurance, with health funds paying out 382,400 hospital claims exceeding \$10,000 in 2021.

This was an increase in the number of hospital high claims during 2021 of 6.7% (an additional 24,025 hospital high claims), with total hospital benefits paid for these claims exceeding \$7.8 billion (a 6.3% increase from 2020 and a 3% increase from pre-pandemic 2019).

PHA Chief Executive Dr Rachel David said the report demonstrated that PHI provides value to both young and older Australians, particularly in the current pandemic environment.

"The COVID-19 pandemic and long-term lockdowns have hit younger people extremely hard, as seen by the increase in mental health claims among this cohort. Similarly, claims for COVID-19 treatment continue to rise and while the average age is 65, more than 10% of COVID-related hospitalisations were for members under 30," she said.

Claims exceeding \$10,000 for mental health treatment among Australians under 30 have increased dramatically since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2021 compared to pre-pandemic 2019:

- High claims for mental health treatment for members under 30 have increased by 953 claims to 7,925 claims (13.7% increase), up \$19.06M to \$161.68M (13.4% increase)
- High claims for mental health treatment for members aged 20 to 30 have increased by 529 claims to 6,270 claims (9.2% increase), up \$10.5M to \$128.2M (8.9% increase)
- For these young high claimants, the average length of stay in hospital for a mental health treatment episode of care was around 26 days
- 74% of mental health treatment under 30s high claimants are females (a 4 percentage points increase from 2019)
- *Severe depressive episode without psychotic symptoms (not postnatal-related)* was the top hospitalisation reason for under 30s high claimants for mental health treatment in hospitals (17% of under 30s high claims for mental health treatment in hospitals).

Claims for COVID-19 treatment during 2021 have also increased significantly and continue to do so.



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Since the start of the pandemic, there have been 4,751 COVID-19 confirmed hospitalisations funded by private health insurance (220 in 2020; 825 in 2021; 3,706 in 2022, to date). The average member age with confirmed COVID-19 hospitalisation funded by private health insurance is 65 years old, however 11% of hospitalisations were for members under 30.

- 912 (1 in 5 or 19%) were high claims where total fund benefit payments exceeded \$10,000.
- 358 (8%) were cases where the members' hospitalisation was prolonged due to contracting COVID-19 while in hospital.

The highest benefit paid for COVID-19 confirmed hospitalisation in 2021 was \$159,198. The average length of stay in hospital for the management of private patients with confirmed COVID-19 infection is 10 days.

The report is available at <https://www.privatehealthcareaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/PHA-Annual-High-Claims-2022-Report-FINAL.pdf>

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Private Healthcare Australia is the peak representative body for Australia's private health insurance industry. PHA represents 23 Australian health funds with a combined membership of over 13 million Australians, or 97% of the sector on membership.

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