



# FACT SHEET

# CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

## NATIONAL HEALTH PLAN

### Primary Care Package – Practice Incentive Payments

Temporary increases to incentive payments for general practices will increase support for bulk billed services and ensure patients keep access to essential face-to-face care.

#### Why is this important?

It is essential GP practices remain open and continue to provide vital primary care services to Australians during a very challenging time. The recent expansion of Medicare telehealth services will not replace important care that require face-to-face visits with GPs. Increased practice incentive payments will support practices to maintain these critical services, and ensure patients can continue to receive the quality care.

In addition, increased payments to GPs will encourage them to bulk bill consultations, reducing the financial pressure on Australians during this difficult time.

These measures will apply until 30 September 2020, to respond to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Should the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPCC) recommend extensions, these will be considered by the Government.

#### Who benefits?

GP Practices that open for face-to-face services for a minimum of four hours a day (or for part time practices for an average of 50% of their normal practice opening hours) will have their next two Practice Incentive Program Quality Improvement (PIPQI) payments doubled. These payments will be made on 1 May 2020 and 1 August 2020.

Currently all services provided using the new temporary MBS telehealth items must be bulk billed.

Bulk billing incentives have been doubled to GPs for telehealth services provided to concessional patients and those under the age of 16. They have also been doubled for face-to-face services to these patients where the GP chooses to bulk bill (increasing from \$6.40 to \$12.80 per service in major cities, and from \$9.65 to \$19.30 per service everywhere else).

All patients will benefit from GPs services being supported to remain open and provide care that cannot be provided by telehealth.