



# Round the Clock Medicare: Higher Medicare Rebates for After-Hours GP Services

## Higher Medicare rebates from 1 January 2005

On 1 January 2005, new Medicare items will be introduced for after-hours GP consultations.

The Medicare benefit for these items will be \$10 higher than the corresponding items used during non-after-hours periods.

From 1 January 2005, the existing emergency after-hours items will continue to apply, but the Medicare benefit for these items will also be increased by \$10.

## What are the new after-hours items?

GPs will be able to claim new after-hours items for most professional attendances (consultations) provided during an after-hours period, as defined below.

There will be 16 new after-hours items for vocationally registered GPs. The new items (5000 to 5067) correspond to most of the existing items in Group A1 of the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS).

Similarly, there will be 16 new after-hours items for other medical practitioners (non-vocationally registered GPs). The new items (5200 to 5267) correspond to most of the existing items in Group A2 of the MBS.

For each of the new after-hours items, the schedule fee will be \$10 higher than the corresponding items in Groups A1 and A2.

The 32 new after-hours items are set out in a separate document (attached). The corresponding existing items, are referred to, at the end of this fact sheet.

The new after-hours items can also be found at the Department's website:

<http://www.health.gov.au/pubs/mbs/index.htm>

The current explanatory notes to the Medicare Benefits Schedule (paragraphs A.5, A.6 and A.8 on pages 31-34 of the November 2004 MBS Book) will also apply to the new after-hours items where relevant.

The new after-hours items and updated explanatory notes will be included in the next Supplement to the MBS Book in May 2005.

## What are the conditions for claiming the new items?

The rules for the new after-hours items are the same as the corresponding items in Groups A1 and A2, except that the new after-hours items can only be claimed for services rendered during specified times.

For all of the new after-hours items, the service provided must be initiated either:

- On a public holiday;
- On a Sunday;
- Before 8am or after 1pm on a Saturday; or
- Before 8am or after 8pm on any other day.

If the service is initiated at a time other than during one of these periods, the new after-hours items cannot be claimed.

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## Are the new after-hours items restricted to services provided by after-hours Medical Deputising Services?

No. The new after-hours items can be claimed by any GP as long as the rules and criteria for the relevant item(s) are satisfied.

## What about the existing emergency after-hours MBS items?

The existing **emergency** after-hours items listed in Groups A1 and A2 of the MBS Book (1, 2, 97, 98, 601, 602, 697 and 698) will continue.

The emergency after-hours items can only be used for the first patient if more than one patient is seen on the one occasion. For the second and subsequent patients attended on the same occasion, the new after-hours items will now apply instead of the normal (non-after-hours) attendance items. (See also explanatory notes A.5 and A.10 on pages 31-34 of the MBS Book).

The schedule fee for each of these existing emergency after-hours items will be increased by \$10 as of 1 January 2005.

The existing emergency after-hours items for sports physician attendances (448 and 449) will also continue, but the schedule fee for these items will remain the same from 1 January 2005.

## Will the new 100% Medicare rebate also apply to the items described in this fact sheet? \*

Yes. From 1 January 2005, the Medicare rebate for the new after-hours items and the emergency after-hours items will be paid at 100% of the schedule fee.

\* For further information, see the separate fact sheet on 100% Medicare rebate for GP services.

## Will the existing bulk billing incentives still apply?

Yes. The bulk billing incentive items (10990 and 10991) which apply to bulk billed services provided to Commonwealth concession card holders and children under 16 years of age, can be claimed in conjunction with the new after-hours items and the existing emergency after-hours items.

From 1 January 2005, a new bulk billing incentive item (10992) will be introduced enabling medical practitioners, not based in eligible areas but providing out-of-surgery after-hours services (eg. Medical Deputising Services and members of GP after-hours cooperatives), access to the higher bulk billing rebate (\$7.65). Item 10992 will apply when claimed in conjunction with some of the new after-hours items and some of the existing emergency after-hours items. \*\*

\*\* For further information, see the separate fact sheet on Access to the higher rebate (\$7.65) bulk billing incentive for medical practitioners providing after-hours services in eligible areas.

## Example of how the new after-hours items will work

### Example:

*Louise holds a Commonwealth concession card and attends her GP in inner Brisbane at 9pm on Friday night at the GP's surgery. The attendance is for a standard consultation provided by a vocationally registered GP and is bulk-billed.*

*The GP is entitled to claim:*

<i>Item 5020</i>	<i>\$40.85</i>	<i>+</i>
<i>Item 10990</i>	<i>\$5.10</i>	<i>=</i>
<i>Total Medicare benefit of</i>	<i>\$45.95</i>	

## Further information

For further information, visit the Health Insurance Commission (HIC) website at [www.hic.gov.au/medicareinitiatives](http://www.hic.gov.au/medicareinitiatives) or call HIC on **132 150**.

## New After-Hours Items 5000-5067 for Vocationally Registered GPs

The new after-hours items for *vocationally-registered GPs* (and the corresponding existing items in Group A1) are set out below.

New after-hours MBS items (New Group A22)	Corresponding MBS items (Group A1)
5000	3
5003	4
5007	13
5010	20
5020	23
5023	24
5026	25
5028	35
5040	36
5043	37
5046	38
5049	43
5060	44
5063	47
5064	48
5067	51

There are no new after-hours items for consultations provided to patients who have been admitted to a hospital (i.e. there are no corresponding after-hours item for items 19, 33, 40 and 50 in Group A1).

## New After-Hours Items 5200-5267 for Non-Vocationally Registered GPs

The new after-hours items for *non-vocationally-registered GPs* (and the corresponding existing items in Group A2) are set out below.

New after-hours MBS items (New Group A23)	Corresponding MBS items (Group A2)
5200	52
5203	53
5207	54
5208	57
5220	58
5223	59
5227	60
5228	65
5240	81
5243	83
5247	84
5248	86
5260	92
5263	93
5265	95
5267	96

There are no new after-hours items for consultations provided to patients who have been admitted to a hospital (i.e. there are no corresponding after-hours item for items 87, 89, 90 and 91 in Group A2).