

CTG Scripts Information and FAQs for ACCHOs

As of 1 July 2021, The Closing the Gap (CTG) Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) Co-payment program operates under a new national online system. The change aims to expand and improve access to PBS medicines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The system for client CTG registration is managed by Services Australia, and is available online through a PRODA account to access HPOS (Health Professional Online Services). CTG registration is virtually real-time and no longer occurs through completing the PIP-Indigenous Health Incentive form.

The key changes

- Who can register eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:
 1. PBS prescriber (such as doctors, dentists, midwives, nurse practitioners etc.) registered with Medicare as a provider **OR**
 2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners.
- These above providers can delegate to another staff member to register the patient on their behalf.
- People can be registered for the program no matter where they live, and regardless of their chronic disease status.
- Registration can only occur through HPOS (Remote location call 132290 for connectivity issues).
- The Department of Health have stated that all clients who were identified as being registered as eligible for CTG have been migrated to the new system.
- Prescriptions no longer need to be annotated with 'CTG'.
- Until 30 September, clients who have previously received CTG scripts but are not currently registered on the database will not have their scripts rejected at the pharmacy.

What is not changing

- The program will continue to be for self-identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (of any age) only, and no other patient groups.
- People that are already registered for the program will continue to be registered. Current registration details have been transferred to the new database.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will still need to be assessed by their practitioner as being eligible for program registration.
- Section 94 Approved Private Hospital pharmacies can still dispense PBS prescriptions covered under the program.
- Section 94 Public Hospital pharmacies will still not be able to dispense PBS prescriptions covered under the program.
- The program will continue to apply to prescriptions for PBS General Schedule medicines only.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will still need to be registered for the program before a reduced co-payment will be applied to PBS prescriptions when being dispensed.

Government CTG script factsheets for:

- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers](#)
- [Community Pharmacies](#)
- [Hospital Pharmacies](#)
- [Prescribers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners, Peak Bodies](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions for all stakeholder groups](#)

Services Australia e-Learning:

- CTG eLearning module and registering a client simulation:
[medicareaustralia.gov.au/MODULES/PBS/PBSM08/index.html](https://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/MODULES/PBS/PBSM08/index.html)
- Health Professional Education Resources Gateway:
<http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/MISC/MISCP02/index.html>
- Simulation for Creating a Provider Digital Access (PRODA) account
http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/MODULES/PRODA/PRODAM01_1/index.html

To read more about CTG PBS Co-payment program visit Services Australia site at <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/organisations/health-professionals/services/medicare/closing-gap-pbs-co-payment-health-professionals>

A short-term CTG grace period in pharmacies

NACCHO has received reports from ACCHOs that some clients who have previously received CTG prescriptions are now unable to receive prescriptions at a CTG rate when presenting to the pharmacy because the new system does not have the clients as registered for CTG. In response to this, as an interim and urgent solution, Services Australia has updated the pharmacy claiming system so that the CTG code is changed from a “Rejection” to a “Warning” message for those people who have a CTG script but are not currently registered on the database. This means the pharmacist should supply medicines to clients who appear to be CTG-registered at the CTG rate until their [registration](#) in the new system can occur. The pharmacy should contact the client’s health service as soon as possible so that their registration can be reviewed and actioned as appropriate. The pharmacy system update started on **Monday 12 July 2021** and will run through **until 30 September 2021**.

Please contact us at pharmacy@naccho.org.au if you have any questions about these short-term arrangements.

CTG Script FAQs

Q. How do I register patients for the PBS Co-payment Measure CTG Medication Program?

A. Any PBS Prescriber or AHPRA registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner (ATSIHP) can register eligible patients. This needs to be via a PRODA account to access the Health Professional Online Services (HPOS), and to register a patient, the PRODA account must be linked to HPOS. The PBS prescriber and ATSIHP can also provide delegation through HPOS to another staff member that has their own PRODA account to register patients on their behalf.

Q. Can I register a patient for the CTG Medication Program without assessing the patient and providing informed consent about the PBS Co-payment Measure?

A. No, this has not changed, as informed consent must be provided to the patient about the program and its benefits and they must agree to be part of the program. This should be recorded on the patient's medical records as evidence that informed consent has been provided to the patient.

Q. Should I introduce a policy and procedure to outline the correct process to register patients for the CTG Medication program?

A. Yes, as this is a Government program and it is subject to auditing you should consider introducing a policy and procedure for your ACCHO so that the PBS prescribers, AHPRA registered ATSIHP and delegates understand the correct process that needs to be followed prior to registering a patient for the PBS Copayment Measure CTG Medication Program.

Q. What is the timeframe to have the patient registered after the patient has completed the consultation with the General Practitioner or Medical Practitioner?

A. As the new CTG database is now live, your organisation will need to have a clear process in place to register the patient prior to them leaving the clinic, so that the patient can access medications at the CTG rate when they attend the pharmacy. Feedback from ACCHOs has been that it can take up to 20 minutes for the registration to be live.

Q. What will happen if I leave the registration until later in the day or the next day?

A. Your patient will not be able to access their medication at the pharmacy at the CTG rate until you register the patient, this will then show the patient is active for the pharmacy to dispense the medication at the CTG rate.

Q. What are the steps for the PBS Prescriber and Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner to provide delegation to a staff member?

A. The steps to provide delegation are included in the following link:

<https://www.servicessaustralia.gov.au/organisations/health-professionals/services/medicare/hpos/how-manage-your-details-hpos/managing-delegations>



Q. What if a patient asks to be removed from the CTG Medication program?

A. The patient must either call Medicare 13 20 11 or the PBS line 13 22 90 or attend a Service Centre to remove themselves from the CTG Medication program. Your organisation is not able to remove them from the CTG Medication program database.

Q. What happens when a patient is registered for CTG by another health service but is ineligible (non-Indigenous) and is now receiving CTG scripts?

A. Services Australia has advised that these clients must unregister themselves from the Program. You can provide information in relation to reporting suspected fraud related to Health Programs here:

<https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/reporting-suspected-fraud>

Q. What if a pharmacy calls to say that the patient has attended and they are showing that they are not registered for the CTG Medication program?

A. You will need to conduct a search of the patient through your delegation, and if the PBS Copayment form has been completed prior to the 1 July 2021 and is either in paper form or scanned to the patient medical records you will be able to change the patient from inactive to active, and record this change as evidence on the patient's medical records e.g. *pharmacy contacted clinic to identify patient inactive for CTG live system, confirmed documentation has been completed, made the patient active.*

If you don't have the PBS Copayment form completed for this patient, the patient will need to be assessed for eligibility, provide them with informed consent about the program and its benefits and then register the patient or have a delegate register the patient for this program.

Q. I have made the patient active on the CTG live database, can the patient now go to the pharmacy to have their medication dispensed at the CTG rate?

A. Yes, once the patient is registered and you have made the patient active on the CTG live database the pharmacy can dispense the medication at the CTG rate.

Q. How do I know if the patient has already registered for the PBS Co-payment Measure CTG Medication program at another clinic, and do they need to register again with our clinic?

A. You can conduct a search through the HPOS CTG program portal to confirm that the patient is registered, and if they are already registered they will show as active, note this on the patient's medical records e.g. registered for CTG program by another clinic. The patient doesn't need to register again with your clinic, as it's a once-only registration, the prescriber can then write a prescription for the patient, so it can be dispensed at the CTG rate by the pharmacy. If the patient shows up as inactive this means that the patient isn't registered for the CTG PBS program, and the process to register the patient needs to occur.

Q. Why are patients now having to pay a fee for some asthma medications, where they didn't prior to 1 July 2021?

A. Zempreon- the only salbutamol inhaler generic brand under CTG as of 1st of July 2021 is in short supply, patients have to pay a \$5 brand price premium for Ventolin or Asmol brand inhalers at the pharmacy. This has created a lot of confusion with people incorrectly assuming it is an issue related to CTG prescription changes.

Q. What happens if a CTG prescription has been written prior to the patient being registered for this program?

A. The price of a prescription is determined by the date of dispensing, not the date of prescribing. Once a patient is registered any prescriptions dispensed after this time will be at the CTG rate. Prescriptions do not need to be rewritten.

Q. How do I work with pharmacies to ensure that our patients receive their medications at the CTG rate and not have to pay the full fee?

A. Discuss with your local pharmacies and request that they contact you and/or arrange for them to send a list of patients that have shown a rejection code of not being registered, so that you can contact the patient to recall them to attend the clinic so that informed consent can be provided or confirm that the PBS Co-payment Measure form has been completed prior to the 1 July 2021 and you will now change the patient to active.

Q. I'm the Authorised contact person for our organisation for the Practice Incentives Program (PIP) and I usually register the patients for PIP Indigenous Health Incentive Program and the PBS Copayment Measure CTG program together through HPOS, why can I only register the patient for the PIP Indigenous Health Incentive from 1 July 2021 through the Practice Incentives portal?

A. The process to register patients for the PIP Indigenous Health Incentive is now a separate process, and you will continue to register patients that are Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander, 15 and over with a chronic condition through HPOS PIP after the new form has been completed each calendar year. The PBS Copayment Measure CTG Medication Program is a once-only registration through the new CTG portal on HPOS.