



# Information for Community Pharmacies

## Closing the Gap Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme Co-payment Program Changes

Under the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement, the Australian Government committed to enhancing the Closing the Gap (CTG) Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) Co-Payment program.

From 1 July 2021, the following changes will come into effect:

- A new centralised patient registration database for the program, managed by Services Australia, will go live. Current registration details will be transferred to the new database.
- Any PBS prescriber or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner registered with Medicare as a provider can register eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for the program, via Health Professional Online Services (HPOS) if they are not already registered.
- PBS prescribers will no longer be legally required to write or electronically print 'CTG' on eligible PBS prescriptions for registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. However, annotation of a PBS prescription will help community pharmacists, when dispensing the medicines, know that the patient is registered for the program.
- If Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are registered for the program the PBS Online claiming system will verify this in real time. If the "Closing The Gap" field in the dispensing system has been completed, this will trigger the correct pricing and the claim will be processed. If that field has not been completed, a claim will be rejected and will need to be resubmitted.
- Pharmacists will be able to confirm if Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people are registered for the program via HPOS.
- New reason codes will be provided for PBS claiming which will also indicate to a pharmacist whether or not Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are registered for the program whilst dispensing a PBS General Schedule prescription.
- General Schedule PBS prescriptions issued by public hospital prescribers will now be eligible under the program when dispensed by a community pharmacy or Section 94 Approved Private Hospital Pharmacy.



**Please note:**

- The program will continue to apply to prescriptions for PBS General Schedule medicines only. PBS medicines supplied under a special supply arrangement established under Section 100 of the *National Health Act 1953*, e.g. Highly Specialised Drugs, are not covered under the program.
- Where brand premiums apply to a PBS medicine covered under this program, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will need to pay the brand premium at the time of dispensing.
- CTG claiming is based on date of dispense and not date of prescription. Existing PBS scripts / repeats can be claimed as CTG if dispensed after CTG registration.
- Questions regarding changes to the dispensing software you use will need to be directed to your respective Software Vendor.

