



Fact Sheet: Better access to psychologists through Medicare

What is the Medicare rebate?

In 2006, the Australian Government introduced Medicare items for psychological treatment by registered psychologists. This service provides considerable assistance to people living with mental health problems, allowing them greater access to psychologists and providing more affordable mental healthcare. Medicare rebates are also available for consultations with specialist Clinical Psychologists, who are experts in the assessment and treatment of mental disorders. Groupworx Psychology Director Stefanie Schwartz is an endorsed Clinical Psychologist with Medicare.

Can I go directly to a psychologist to receive treatment through Medicare?

You must be referred by your GP, your psychiatrist or paediatrician. Your GP will need to complete a detailed mental health assessment and prepare a Mental Health Care Plan before referring you to a psychologist. You should book a longer session with your GP to enable time for this. Mental Health Care Plan templates and GroupWorx referral form are available online at www.groupworx.com.au

How many group therapy sessions with a Clinical Psychologist am I entitled to?

Eligible patients can generally receive up to 10 group therapy services in a calendar year where such services are available and seen as appropriate by your referring doctor and the psychologist. This is in addition to any individual therapy you may be receiving.

How do I pay?

At Groupworx, the settlement of the account is your responsibility. You may claim a rebate by lodging a claim through Medicare. You need to pay the full amount prior to the first group session and use your detailed receipt to claim a Medicare rebate.



How much do I get back from Medicare?

For one individualised initial assessment session and 6 group therapy sessions the GroupWorx cost is \$590. The Medicare rebate available is \$335.55.

Does the Medicare Safety Net apply to my out-of-pocket expenses under this initiative?

Yes. You are responsible for paying any charges in excess of the Medicare rebate for items under this initiative. However, these out-of-pocket expenses will count towards both the original and the extended Medicare safety nets. Once you or your family reach the relevant threshold in the calendar year, Medicare benefits will increase to 100% of the schedule fee under the original safety net, and 80% of your total out-of-pocket expenses for out-of-hospital services under the extended Medicare safety net. The Medicare safety nets are designed to protect high users of health services from large out-of-pocket expenses.

What about my private health insurance?

You cannot use your private health insurance ancillary cover to top up the Medicare rebates for these services. You need to decide if you will use Medicare or your private health insurance ancillary cover to pay for psychological services you receive. You can either access rebates from Medicare by following the claiming process or claim where available on your insurer's ancillary benefit.

Thank you to The Australian Psychological Society: www.psychology.org.au and Medicare at the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing: www.health.gov.au for information on this Fact Sheet.

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