



Concession cards and bulk billing incentives

Quick reference guide for medical practices

This document should be used as a guide only. Medicare Australia recommends health professionals exercise their own skill and care with respect to its contents.

What is a concession card?

Centrelink and the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) issue several types of concession cards providing a range of benefits, including help with the cost of medicines.



Health Care Card



Pensioner Concession Card



Commonwealth Seniors Health Card



DVA White card



DVA Gold card

Why does the practice need to check the concession status of the patient?

The Australian Government provides additional incentive payments through the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) for medical practitioners to bulk bill Commonwealth concession cardholders and children under the age of 16 years.

Medical practitioners must make sure patients meet the bulk billing incentive criteria.

Medicare Australia audits practices' activities to make sure additional bulk billing payments are claimed correctly.

Who can claim bulk billing incentive payments?

All general practitioners (GPs), including vocationally and non-vocationally registered GPs, are eligible to claim the incentive payments. GPs working in Aboriginal Medical Services are also eligible to claim the incentive payments where the service is eligible to receive Medicare benefits.

Bulk billing incentives can only be claimed for unreferred services and only if the associated service is also bulk billed.

Medical practitioners including consultant physicians and specialists who provide services to referred patients are not eligible to claim the incentive payments in respect of those services.

Note: an unREFERRED service is a medical service provided to a person by, or on behalf of, a medical practitioner, being a service that has not been referred to that practitioner by another medical practitioner or person with referring rights. For more information see Explanatory Note M1.1 *Additional Bulk Billing Payment for General Medical Services* at the **MBS Online**.

Which concession cards attract the bulk billing benefit?

Commonwealth concession cards issued by Centrelink or DVA which attract the bulk billing benefit include:

- Pensioner Concession Cards
- Health Care Cards
- Commonwealth Seniors Health Cards.

Gold or White cards issued by DVA do not attract the additional bulk billing payment. However if a Gold or White cardholder also holds a recognised Commonwealth concession card and chooses to be treated under Medicare arrangements, that patient is eligible for the incentive payment.

Note:

- The incentives are not payable on items provided to in-patients of a hospital or day surgery.
- GPs registered under DVA's Local Medical Officers scheme can claim bulk billing incentive items for out-patient medical attendances and consultations when treating DVA Gold or White cardholders.

How can the practice check on the validity of a patient's concession card?

1. Sight the concession card.
2. Confirm the patient is the person named on the concession card.
3. Make sure the concession card is valid and has not expired.

Which claiming options will validate a patient's concession status?

Bulk bill claims lodged through Medicare Easyclaim are transmitted in real-time. Lodgement of a real-time Medicare Easyclaim bulk bill requires specific information to be entered while the patient is present, such as:

- the individual reference number on the Medicare card
- the provider number
- any item numbers
- the patient's consent to assign the benefit.

When the bulk bill claim is lodged, Medicare Australia will validate the patient's concession entitlement only if the patient's Medicare card is valid.

To check if a patient's Medicare card is valid

- call Medicare Australia **132 150***
- go to **Health Professionals Online Service (HPOS)**.

For more information

Call **132 150*** Medicare Provider Enquiry Line

Online **www.centrelink.gov.au** then **Individuals > Payments > Concession and Health Care Cards**

www.dva.gov.au then **Service providers > Doctors > LMOs > LMO schemes**

www.mbsonline.gov.au

Health Professional Online Service (HPOS)

Online information and education services are available at **www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/education**

* Call charges apply