Messages about Medicare

No ID—no problem with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolment and amendment form—use the form for new enrolments, new or extra cards or to change name and address details.

Medicare cards are needed for seeing a doctor, getting medicine, having pathology tests, x-rays and going to hospital—it can mean it's free or cheaper for the patient.

The PBS Safety Net is there for people and families who need a lot of prescription medicine—patients can talk to their chemist about keeping a list for them.

Enrolling babies in Medicare also means they are on the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register—this keeps track of the child's immunisations.

Encourage your patients to always carry their Medicare card with them—this helps when medical help or medicine are needed quickly.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander access line—1800 556 955**
Medicare enrolment

Australians who live permanently in Australia are generally eligible to enrol in Medicare.

- Your patients must be enrolled with Medicare before your health service can be paid a Medicare benefit.
- When your patients are travelling, they will need their Medicare card in case they need to see a doctor or get medicine.
- Everyone will need to show their Medicare card when they are getting prescription medicine from a pharmacy.
- A child’s Medicare enrolment sets up their immunisation record. Having no immunisation record can affect Centrelink payments.

Medicare cards

1. Card number
2. Issue number (this number increases by one each time a card is replaced)
3. Patient identifier number
4. Patient’s first given name
5. Initial of second given name
6. Surname
7. Effective ‘valid to’ date (the month and year the card will expire)

Messages about Medicare cards

- Expired cards cannot be used to bulk bill so health services might miss out on funding.
- Medicare cards expire every seven years, or when the patient’s details change.
- It is important that Medicare has current address details to post new Medicare cards to.
- Your patients can change their contact details by using the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolment and amendment form or, by calling the access line.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander access line—1800 556 955**
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolment and amendment form

What can the form be used for?

- To enrol with Medicare for the first time.
- Change of name and/or address.
- To order a duplicate card.
- To order a replacement card (lost, stolen, damaged or expired).
- To add a newborn baby to an existing Medicare card.

Identification requirements

Identification needs to be provided to enrol in Medicare. One of the following pieces of identification can be shown, or the proof of identity section (section 8 on the back of the form) will need to be filled out:

- current passport
- birth certificate or birth extract
- photographic driver's licence
- Australian armed services papers

If a person does not have any of the forms of identification listed, the proof of identity section can be filled out by an approved referee.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Identifier

An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander question has been included on Medicare enrolment forms. Answering this question is voluntary.

- The Indigenous identifier will be used to improve government health programs and outcomes for Indigenous people.
- The Indigenous information may be given to the Department of Health and Ageing, the Department of Human Services, Centrelink, the Department of Veterans’ Affairs and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.
- If at any time a customer no longer wishes to be identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, they can have the information removed from their Medicare records by calling the access line.

Enrolment—questions and answers

What can I do if a patient comes to the AMS without a Medicare card?

- If the patient is enrolled with Medicare, call the access line and give the patient's details to see if a card number can be found.
- If a patient needs to enrol with Medicare, they need to fill out the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolment form, and send it to the Indigenous Access team with a certified copy of one of the approved forms or identification, and/or the completed proof of identity section.
- A certified copy of identification or a completed proof of identity section is required for each person enrolling with Medicare.

Who can be an authorised referee for the proof of identity section?

- An approved referee can include: community elders, school principals, Centrelink officers, Council chairperson, medical or health service managers/nurses, Ministers of religion and/or welfare organisation workers.

How can the referee authorise the proof of identity

- The referee needs to know the person for six months or confirm who they are by using records—for example, school records.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander access line—1800 556 955**

** Call charges apply from mobile or pay phones only