



# Introduction to the Australian health system and Medicare Australia

## The Australian health system

The Australian health system is widely regarded as being world-class, in terms of both its effectiveness and efficiency. The system is a mix of public and private sector health service providers including:

- the Australian government—responsible for developing national policies, regulation and funding
- state, territory and local governments—responsible for the delivery and management of public health services and maintaining relationships with most health care providers
- private practitioners—including general practitioners, specialists and consultant physicians
- profit and non-profit organisations and voluntary agencies.

You can find more information on Australia's health system from the Department of Health and Ageing's website **[www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)**

## What is Medicare Australia?

Medicare Australia is an Australian government agency within the Human Services Portfolio. The Portfolio consists of the Department of Human Services – including the Child Support Agency and CRS Australia – Medicare Australia, Centrelink and Hearing Australia.

The Human Services Portfolio is about people and the services they may need at different stages of their lives. The primary role of the Portfolio is to improve the development and delivery of government social and health related services to the Australian public.

Medicare Australia delivers Australia's universal health programs. These health programs include:

- Medicare—Australia's universal health care program
- Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
- Australian Government 30% Private Health Insurance Rebate
- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register
- Australian Organ Donor Register
- Special Assistance Schemes (including Bali 2005 Special Assistance, London Assist, Tsunami Healthcare Assistance Scheme and Balimed)
- Family Assistance Office in partnership with other Australian government agencies
- claims processing and payments for the Department of Veterans' Affairs (including the Repatriation

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme), the Office of Hearing Services and the Department of Western Australia.

Medicare Australia works in partnership with the Department of Health and Ageing to achieve the Australian Government's health policy objectives. Our activities are conducted within the government policy framework set by the Department of Health and Ageing, Department of Veterans' Affairs, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and relevant legislation.

You can find more information on Medicare Australia at our website **[www.medicareaustralia.gov.au](http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au)**

## **Medicare Australia's translated information kits**

We have translated information available for the following programs.

- Medicare
- Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register
- Australian Organ Donor Register
- Medicare Teen Dental Plan
- External breast prostheses reimbursement program
- National Bowel Cancer Screening Program

We also have information on:

- Medicare electronic claiming

- Family Assistance Office
- taking or sending PBS medication overseas
- taking medicine safely
- Lifetime Health cover (Department of Health and Ageing).

You can get all of these fact sheets from our website **[www.medicareaustralia.gov.au](http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au)** or at any Medicare office.

## **Medicare Australia's Online Services**

Medicare Australia's Online Services make it easier for you to view, update and request information and services from Medicare Australia.

To use our Online Services you need to register and get a password. To register for Online Services go to **[www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/online](http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/online)** or your nearest Medicare office and make sure you have your Medicare card handy.

Once registered for Online Services you can:

- lodge some Medicare claims online
- request a replacement or duplicate Medicare card
- register and update your bank account details
- view and update your personal details
- view your Medicare claims history
- view your Medicare Safety Net balance

- view your Medicare benefit tax statement
- view your child's immunisation history statement
- view your Organ Donor registration details.

## Need help understanding our information?

### For people who speak English as a second language

If you need information in your own language please ask a Medicare officer or call the **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450\***. You will then need to give them our phone number. This is an Australian community service where you can ask for an interpreter in your language to help with your enquiry. When you are asking a question about our services we will pay for the interpreter from TIS.

### For people who are hearing or speech impaired

If you have a hearing or speech impairment you can call our **Telephone Typewriter (TTY) service on 1800 552 152\*\***. To call our TTY phone number you will need to use a TTY phone.

## For more information

Online **[www.medicareaustralia.gov.au](http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au)**

Email **[medicare@medicareaustralia.gov.au](mailto:medicare@medicareaustralia.gov.au)**

Write **Medicare Australia**  
**GPO Box 9822**  
in your capital city

Call **132 011\***

TTY **1800 552 152\*\*** (Hearing and speech impaired)

TIS **131 450\*** (Translating and Interpreting service)

\* Call charges apply.

\*\* Call charges apply from mobile and pay phones only.