Message from the Chair

Welcome to the sixth issue of the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) Review Newsletter.

It’s been a busy and exciting time for the MBS Review Taskforce. Since our last update we have made substantial progress, with six reports released for consultation in the fortnight.

The Taskforce is now seeking feedback from health professional and the Australian public on over 40 recommendations from the following reports:

- Renal Medicine
- Dermatology, Allergy & Immunology
- Spinal Surgery
- Diagnostic Imaging – Knee
- Diagnostic Imaging – Pulmonary Embolism & Deep Vein Thrombosis
- Urgent after-hours primary care services funded by the MBS

A further four reports are scheduled to be released in July with additional reports to be released in August. We hope this staggered release will give people with an interest in the Review sufficient time to consider and provide feedback on the draft recommendations. A full timeline of our 2017 consultation plan can be found on the Department of Health website.

Public consultation is an important step in the MBS Review process. It is an opportunity for health professionals and the Australian public to give us their feedback on the proposed recommendations for consideration by the Taskforce prior to final recommendations being provided to government. To date, your input has been critical in shaping the outcomes of the Review. I encourage you to take the time to provide your important feedback through the online survey.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the 440 plus clinicians, consumers and health system experts that have contributed to the reports to date. We have made great strides in recommending changes that will modernise the MBS, align it with contemporary clinical practice and evidence and, most importantly, improve patient outcomes.

Finally, I would also like to thank you for your patience. I acknowledge the process to date has taken longer than originally expected. The Taskforce is committed to providing robust, high quality recommendations to government and so have allowed our expert clinicians the time they need to complete items and issues in the depth they require and deserve.

Until out next update, please email the MBS Review Team if you have any questions.

Bruce Robinson
@profbrobinson
Consultation
In March 2017, Bruce Robinson gave an update and took questions on the MBS Review to over 55 representatives from colleges, associations and societies at AMA House, Canberra.

Bruce discussed research into the use of after-hours primary care MBS items and spoke about the multidisciplinary makeup of the Diagnostic Medicine Clinical Committee.
Consumers and the MBS Review

The Taskforce recognises the importance of applying a consumer lens to all its deliberations; this includes recognising the needs and perspectives of consumers in a range of life circumstances. To provide these perspectives, consumers are represented on most clinical committees and working groups.

In addition, a Consumer Panel was established in September 2016. In a recent meeting on 29 March 2017, the Consumer Panel reaffirmed their role in supporting the MBS Review. The Consumer Panel resolved that their role will be to:

- Support consumer representatives on clinical committees and working groups
- Facilitate communications with peak consumer and community groups
- Support consumers and the community in commenting on clinical committee reports to ensure current and future consultations are accessible and written in plain language
- Ensure consumer perspectives are represented on all Taskforce deliberations.

The Taskforce is excited to continue working with consumer representatives and the Consumer Panel to ensure any recommendations made by the Taskforce are clearly communicated and reflect consumer interests.

Presentations and attendance at events and conferences

The Taskforce, and chairs of clinical committees, attend events and conferences throughout the year to provide updates and report on the progress of the MBS Review. Below is a summary of events that have been attended in the first part of 2017.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Taskforce member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23 March 2017</td>
<td>Otolaryngology Head &amp; Neck Surgery Including Otorhinolaryngology Neck &amp; Head Nurses Group 21st National Conference</td>
<td>Dr Matthew McConnell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 April 2017</td>
<td>SSA2017 - Spine Society of Australia 28th Annual Scientific Meeting</td>
<td>Dr Megan Keaney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 April 2017</td>
<td>Australian Pain Society</td>
<td>Dr Lee Gruner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 April 2017</td>
<td>Australian and New Zealand Society of Nuclear Medicine</td>
<td>Dr Lee Gruner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 April 2017</td>
<td>A World of Rural Health Conference – 14th National Health Conference</td>
<td>Professor Tim Usherwood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 May 2017</td>
<td>Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists</td>
<td>Dr Michael Coglin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 May 2017</td>
<td>Royal Australasian College of Surgeons Annual Scientific Meeting</td>
<td>Professor Bruce Robinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12–16 May 2017</td>
<td>Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists – Annual Scientific Meeting</td>
<td>Dr Jo Sutherland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Committee update
In addition to the clinical committees currently consulting on recommendations, the following committees are also in progress.

General Practice and Primary Care
The General Practice and Primary Care Clinical Committee will continue throughout 2017 and will focus on MBS consultations, chronic disease management, health assessments and medication management review items.

Gynaecology
All working groups have concluded their meetings. The Gynaecology Clinical Committee will continue to meet for part of 2017 while it finalises its report for consideration by the Taskforce.

Anaesthetics
The Anaesthesia Clinical Committee has considered over 500 MBS items in its review, and is currently working to finalise its report and recommendations for the Taskforce’s consideration.

Orthopaedics
The Orthopaedics Working Groups have concluded their meetings. The Orthopaedics Clinical Committee is currently finalising their report for the Taskforce’s consideration.

Diagnostic Medicine
All members of Diagnostic Medicine Clinical Committee have now been appointed. The Committee has begun deliberations and are making progress on developing recommendations for consideration by the Taskforce.

At this stage, there are still 16 committees to be established. The Taskforce will establish additional committees during 2017 and 2018. To keep up-to-date, make sure to regularly check the MBS Review section of the Department of Health website.

To unsubscribe from receiving this newsletter, please email MBSReviews@health.gov.au