



# CLOSING THE GAP ON INDIGENOUS HEALTH OUTCOMES

## Information about the Indigenous Health Incentive and PBS Co-payment Measure

The Australian Government has introduced two new programs to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians better manage their health, especially chronic diseases. The Practice Incentives Program (PIP) Indigenous Health Incentive is a program for your doctor or clinic to help you manage your chronic disease/s and to make sure you get access to the care you need. The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) Co-payment Measure will give you access to cheaper medicines. You normally have to pay some or all of the cost of PBS medicines and this is called a co-payment. The PBS Co-payment Measure will reduce this co-payment for eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

### What is chronic disease?

A chronic disease is an ongoing illness you have had—or are likely to have—for at least six months. Some chronic diseases include:

- asthma
- cancer
- heart disease
- diabetes
- arthritis
- stroke.

### Can I be part of the PIP Indigenous Health Incentive?

You can be part of the PIP Indigenous Health Incentive if you:

- are of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin
- are aged 15 years and over
- have chronic disease/s and
- have a current Medicare card.

### Can I join the PBS Co-payment Measure?

You can join the PBS Co-payment Measure if you:

- are of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin, and
- have an existing chronic disease or chronic disease risk factor.



### **How will the PBS Co-payment Measure help me?**

If you are a general patient—which means you do not have a Centrelink or Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) concession card—you will only pay the concessional co-payment amount (currently under \$6 for each medicine). If you have a Centrelink or DVA concession card, or if you or your family has reached the PBS Safety Net threshold, then you will not have to pay anything at all. For more information about the PBS Safety Net, talk to your pharmacist.

### **What if I don't have a current Medicare card?**

If your Medicare card is not current, or you don't have one, talk to your health worker, visit your local Medicare office or call the Medicare Australia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Access and Employment line on **1800 556 955\***.

### **How can I be part of these programs?**

You will need to fill out a patient consent form and give it to your doctor or practice staff member. The form is available from your doctor or clinic.

### **Can I be part of one program but not the other?**

Yes. Your doctor will give you a consent form that has a tick-box option for each program. Tick the box next to the program you want to be a part of.

### **Why do I need to sign the consent form?**

To be a part of the PIP Indigenous Health Incentive and/or the PBS Co-payment Measure, your doctor or clinic needs your agreement in writing. That way we know you understand and agree to be part of the program/s.

### **What happens to information about me?**

The personal details you provide on the consent form—such as your name and date of birth—may be disclosed to the Department of Health and Ageing, other relevant agencies or as authorised or required by law.

### **Do I only need to sign the consent form once?**

Your doctor or clinic will ask you to fill out a consent form once a year if you still want to be part of the PIP Indigenous Health Incentive. This is to make sure the doctor or clinic on your original consent form still provides most of your health services. You only need to sign up once for the PBS Co-payment Measure.

### **Is signing up for the PIP Indigenous Health Incentive and the PBS Co-payment Measure the same as Medicare Australia's Voluntary Indigenous Identifier?**

No. The PIP Indigenous Health Incentive and the PBS Co-payment Measure are not linked in any way to Medicare Australia's Voluntary Indigenous Identifier.

### **What if I want to stop being in the PIP Indigenous Health Incentive or the PBS Co-payment Measure?**

You can choose not to be part of the PIP Indigenous Health Incentive or the PBS Co-payment Measure at any time. You just need to ask your doctor or clinic to give you a withdrawal of patient consent form to fill out.

### **What if I change my doctor or clinic?**

If you change your usual doctor or clinic, you should let them know if you are already participating in the PIP Indigenous Health Incentive and/or the PBS Co-payment Measure. This is so you can continue to get help to manage your chronic disease and access to cheaper medicines. If the new doctor or clinic becomes your usual care provider, you may be able to sign up for the Indigenous Health Incentive at that practice the following year. If you can, try to go to the same doctor or clinic to help make sure you are being cared for by people who know you and have complete information about your health needs.

### **What if I see a different doctor at my clinic?**

You can see any doctor within your usual clinic.

### **What are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Checks?**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Checks must be done by your usual doctor or clinic and they will ask you about your health, do a physical examination, organise any tests you need and write up a health plan for you.

### **Why should I get an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Check?**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders get more chronic diseases and get them a lot earlier than non-Indigenous Australians. A regular health check will help to identify these diseases and treat them earlier.

### **How do I get an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Check?**

You can have a health check done at your usual doctor or clinic, who may be able to bulk bill the health check for you. For more information ask your doctor, nurse or Aboriginal Health worker.

### **For more information**

For more information about the PIP Indigenous Health Incentive and the PBS Co-payment Measure:

- talk to your doctor or clinic
- call the Medicare Australia PIP team on **1800 222 032\*** between 8.30 am and 5.00 pm Monday to Friday (ACST) or call the Medicare Australia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Access and Employment line on **1800 556 955\***
- go to: **[www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/pip](http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/pip)**
- email: **[pip@medicareaustralia.gov.au](mailto:pip@medicareaustralia.gov.au)**
- write: **Practice Incentives Program  
GPO Box 2572  
Adelaide SA 5001**

For information on Closing The Gap go to **[www.health.gov.au/tackling-chronic-disease](http://www.health.gov.au/tackling-chronic-disease)**

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