

Checklist When Increasing Medical Fees

- Plan to introduce patient billing prior to your busiest period to maximise the effect on your practice revenue.
- Establish a policy within your practice on which patient categories will receive bulk billing i.e. children under 16 years of age, pensioners and/or concession card holders.
- Install claiming systems for processing patient Medicare claims electronically i.e. *Medicare Online* or *Medicare Easyclaim*. These systems ensure the patient receives their rebate promptly and automatically. Contact Medicare Australia eBusiness Service Centre on 1800 700 199 and select option 1 or email to ebusiness@humanservices.gov.au to receive advice on the best system for your practice.
- Establish policy about managing bad debt. This can be avoided if you have an electronic claiming system in place. You also may wish to contemplate a discount for up-front settlement.
- Ensure a notice to introduce 'patient billed' services is provided to your patients well in advance e.g. 3 months; please note this will vary depending on your practice flow.
- Implement your policy on patient billing and provide patients with information on why your practice has had to move away from bulk billing. An AMA template letter on Medicare rebates has been created to assist medical practitioners to explain the changes to practice fees to their patients and highlight the impact of the Government's decision i.e. inappropriate MBS indexation.
- Ensure a sign is placed visibly in your practice letting patients know the practice no longer bulk bills. If you have a policy on when bulk billing is provided, please advise accordingly.
- Where you issue an account, ensure you provide bank details and information on how payment can be made electronically.
- Ensure your staff are trained to handle patient enquires regarding your practice's change in bulk billing / patient billing.
- Plan to index your fees at the same time each year. The AMA Fees Calculator allows you to set your fee increases based on your individual cost experience. We recommend you also discuss annual fee increases with your accountant.