



Australian Government

Department of Health

# Important updates for Prescribers

## Closing the Gap Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme Co-payment Program Changes

Since the changes to the CTG PBS Co-payment Program were introduced on 1 July 2021, it has emerged that some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were previously receiving benefits via the Program are not actually registered for the Program through Services Australia.

The Department, together with Services Australia, has implemented a grace period from 12 July 2021 to **30 September 2021**. The grace period will prevent CTG annotated prescriptions being rejected at the time of dispensing if the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person is not formally registered in the new centralised database.

During the grace period, if a CTG annotated prescription is presented by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person and they are not correctly registered, the pharmacist will receive a warning message through their dispensing system, however the CTG prescription will still be able to be dispensed.

In this situation the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person will need to be registered correctly for the Program by any PBS prescriber or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner registered with Medicare as a provider by 30 September 2021.

### Please note:

- PBS prescribers or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners can confirm if Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are registered for the Program via HPOS prior to issuing a PBS prescription to be covered under the Program. If they are not, the system will indicate that the person is “inactive”.
- From 1 October 2021, if Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons are not correctly registered for the Program, their PBS prescriptions will not have the relevant reduced PBS co-payment applied when being dispensed.
- Services Australia has established e-learning modules to help prescribers to:
  - set up an account in PRODA for HPOS: [PRODAM03 How to register for an individual account \(medicareaust.com\)](#)
  - register eligible patients for the CTG PBS Co-payment Program CTG PBS Co-payment Program: [PBSM08\\_1 - How to register a patient for Closing the Gap \(CTG\) PBS Co-payment \(medicareaust.com\)](#)

## Digital image prescriptions

- The supply of medicines from a digital image under the interim measure called the *National Health (COVID-19 Supply of Pharmaceutical Benefits) Special Arrangement 2020* (the Special Arrangement) will cease on 30 September 2021.
- The Special Arrangement was developed as part of the COVID-19 National Health Plan while electronic prescribing capability was being implemented.
- Electronic prescribing allows patients to receive their prescriptions electronically via email, SMS or mobile app, which they can send to their pharmacy to dispense their medicines. Electronic prescribing is now widely available nationally and will continue to support telehealth arrangements for the long term.
- The Department will work with all stakeholders to ensure electronic prescriptions are widely supported.