



WINDMILL HILL MEDICAL

Dear valued patient,

Due to substantial increases in practice running costs and lack of government investment in increasing patient rebates, doctor management fees have increased. Therefore, and certainly not taken lightly, from 4th July 2022, a **bulk billed service will no longer be available** for certain patients and appointments. This means all patients will incur an out-of-pocket fee to have a booked consultation, whether that is face to face or via video or phone.

This is irrespective of age or concession card status.

Over the past few years, the cost of running a general practice has increased significantly whereas your Medicare rebates have virtually remained the same. When a doctor bulk bills you, they accept your Medicare rebate as their fee. Your current Medicare rebate is sitting at about 50% discount when compared to AMA recommended GP fees. Furthermore, successive governments over past 8-10 years have frozen your rebates. The only way for a practice to remain viable is to increase the number of patients seen within the same time. This results in poor quality care. Most patients choose their doctor for the time they take and the personal attention they give each patient. In order to continue doing this, doctors cannot rely on the Medicare rebates.

There will be no change for DVA card holders and children receiving immunisations by the nurse. There will continue to be no out of pocket fee for patients attending for the chronic disease management plans (GPMP and TCA's). These are reviewed every six months with the nurse, followed by a doctor's appointment. If you have a chronic disease and are seeing multiple practitioners and have never had a management plan, then please let us know, as this can provide you with a six-monthly appointment with your regular GP with no out-of-pocket charge.

Are you aware of the **Medicare Safety Net**?

Medicare has a safety net to help reduce out of pocket costs to patients for medical expenses. The main safety net relevant to General Practice is the extended Medicare Safety Net. All out of hospital medical costs that have a Medicare rebate that you pay a gap towards counts towards the thresholds. This includes gaps at the GP, medical specialists, surgeons, radiology and pathology.

The threshold applies as a family group as per Medicare.

The thresholds for 2022 are:

General	\$2249.80
Concessional	\$717.90 (<i>all concession card holders and families eligible for Family Tax Benefit A</i>)

Once the threshold is reached Medicare will reimburse you 80% of out-of-pocket costs*.

*For more information please see: <http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/medicare-safety-nets>

13 High St
Launceston TAS 7250
P 6776 0080
F 6776 0081

admin@windmillhillmedical.com

www.windmillhillmedical.com

PO Box 1193 Launceston TAS 7250

It is understandable that some patients will be unable to afford the gap fee. Please know this decision was not made lightly. General practices are privately owned and operated. There are many costs involved in order to continue providing the service that is currently in place.

We encourage you to write to your local and federal members for parliament so that they know the impact that this is having on the community.

Mrs Bridget Archer MP
Member for Bass
100 St John Street
Launceston TAS 7250
Phone: (03) 6334 7033
Bridget.Archer.MP@aph.gov.au

Mr Jeremy Rockliff MP
Premier of Tasmania
Minister for Health – Tasmania
Level 10, 15 Murray Street
HOBART, TAS 7000
Phone: (03) 6165 7650
jeremy.rockliff@dpac.tas.gov.au

The Hon Mark Butler MP
Minister for Health and Aging
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Parliament House Phone: (02) 6277 7220
Mark.Butler.MP@aph.gov.au

Thank you for your understanding and thank you for your support.
For a full list of current fees please discuss with reception staff.

Attached:

1. ASGP Why is my GP charging a fee now?
2. ASGP media release Medicare indexation 2022