

GP MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT PLANS – MEDICARE CHANGES AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Budget Measure Description

The 2009 -10 Budget included the following changes to the Better Access initiative in relation to the development of Mental Health Treatment Plans for people with a diagnosed mental disorder:

1. changing the name of the “GP Mental Health Care Plan” to “GP Mental Health Treatment Plan” to better reflect what it is intended to do (from 1 July 2009);
2. requiring that GPs document a diagnosis of a mental disorder in the Plan (from 1 July 2009); and
3. introducing a new Medicare item for GPs who have not completed Mental Health Skills training (from 1 January 2010).

Components 1 and 2 were implemented from 1 July 2009.

New MBS Item – 1 January 2010

From 1 January 2010, a new schedule fee Medicare item of \$125.95 will be introduced for GPs who have not undertaken accredited Mental Health Skills Training.

Those GPs who have undertaken the training accredited by the General Practice Mental Health Standards Collaboration (GPMHSC) since the commencement of the Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care program on 1 July 2001 will continue to be able to access the current schedule fee of \$156.85 for developing a Mental Health Treatment Plan under MBS item 2710.

Those GPs who have not completed the training will still be able to refer patients to allied mental health professionals in line with current arrangements. However, they will access the lower schedule fee for doing so.

The GPMHSC already accredits Mental Health Skills Training for GPs. The GPMHSC staff working within the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners will be responsible for maintaining records and advising Medicare Australia of those GPs who have undertaken the training and are therefore eligible for the higher Medicare schedule fee when developing Mental Health Treatment Plans.

What is accredited training?

Mental Health Skills Training was originally called “Level 1 Training” when training requirements were specified for GP’s under the Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care initiative. The training is interactive and focuses on assessment and the planning and review cycle of common mental health conditions. Current programs cover development of Mental Health Treatment Plans in the context of new requirements

Mental Health Skills Training requires a minimum of 6 continuous hours training in a GPMHSC accredited course. It can be done face to face in a day, or completed online in modules. There are a number of existing courses accredited by the GPMHSC.

Who is accredited?

Any GP who has completed a GPMHSC accredited Mental Health Skills Training course since 1 July 2001, including courses previously known as Level 1 Mental Health Skills Training.

If attendance at a course was registered with the GPMHSC additional training is not required to qualify for the higher rebate. However, Mental Health Skills Training is strongly encouraged as part of continuing professional development (CPD).

Anyone who is not sure if his or her training has been recorded should contact the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (SA/NT) Quality Assurance and CPD Unit on (08) 8267 8339 or at sant.qacpd@racgp.org.au.

What training is available?

During 2009 and 2010 a number of Divisions of General Practice will be conducting "Young Minds" training with support from *beyondblue*. This training is MHST accredited and covers assessment and treatment of mental disorders in young people.

Local Divisions will advise if they are conducting this training and any other MHST accredited programs.

Information is also available at:

<http://www.racgp.org.au/gpmhsc/findtraining>

(RACGP has 3 online courses which are free to members)

Young Minds training can be accessed online at:

www.ebmcbt.com

An online course is available from PriMed:

http://medical.primed.com.au/products/MES2040/MES2040_brochure.cfm