



# The Closing the Gap Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme Co-payment Program – Frequently asked Questions

## What is the Closing the Gap (CTG) Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) Co-payment Program?

The CTG PBS Co-payment Program improves access to affordable prescribed PBS medicines for First Nations people who, in their doctor's opinion, would experience setbacks in the prevention or ongoing management of their health, if they did not take their prescribed PBS medicine and would be unlikely to adhere to their medicines regimen without assistance through the program.

The cost of medicines remains a significant barrier to access for First Nations people. Under the CTG PBS Co-payment Program, if a patient is registered for the CTG PBS Co-payment Program at the time eligible PBS medicines are dispensed, the co-payment reduction will apply. Therefore, eligible First Nations people who are registered on the CTG PBS Co-payment Register and who would normally pay:

- the full general PBS co-payment amount, pay the concessional rate when obtaining their prescribed PBS medicines from an approved CTG PBS Co-payment Program supplier.
- the concessional rate, receives their prescribed PBS medicines for free without having to pay a co-payment, from an approved CTG PBS Co-payment Program supplier.



## Who can dispense PBS medicines under the CTG PBS Co-payment Program?

For the CTG PBS co-payment to apply, the PBS prescription must be dispensed by an CTG Program supplier. CTG PBS Co-payment Program suppliers are:

- An approved community pharmacist  
*(approved under section 90 of the National Health Act 1953)*
- An approved medical practitioner  
*(approved under section 92 of the National Health Act 1953)*
- An approved private or public hospital authority  
*(approved under section 94 of the National Health Act 1953)*

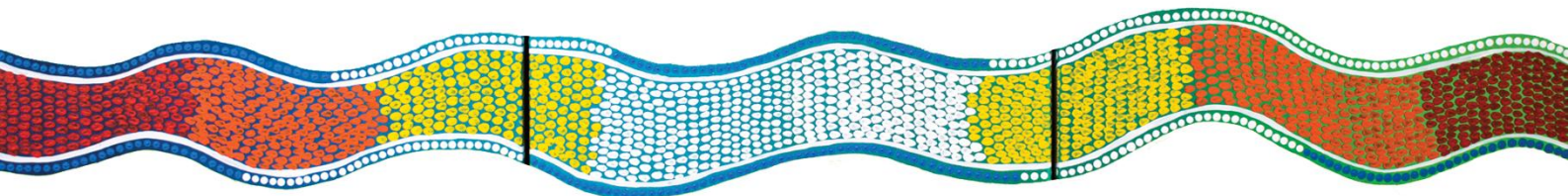
## What PBS medicines are covered under the CTG PBS Co-payment Program?

The CTG PBS Co-payment Program applies to PBS prescriptions for **ALL** medicines listed on the PBS. Eligible medicines included are:

- All Section 85 PBS medicines (General Schedule)
- All Section 100 PBS medicines (Section 100), including the Section 100 programs:
  - Highly Specialised Drugs Program (which includes Opioid Dependence Treatment , hepatitis B, and HIV antiretroviral medicines)
  - Efficient Funding of Chemotherapy Program
  - Botulinum Toxin Program
  - PBS Growth Hormone Program
  - In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) Program
- Approved 60-day PBS medicines
- Medicines supplied under Continued Dispensing arrangements

### NOTE:

- Details of each of the above PBS arrangements and/or programs can be found on the PBS website at: [www.pbs.gov.au](http://www.pbs.gov.au)
- Over-the-counter and non-PBS medicines **are not eligible** under the CTG PBS Co-payment Program.
- Where a brand premium applies to a PBS medicine covered under the CTG PBS Co-payment Program, eligible First Nations patients will need to pay the brand premium at the time of dispensing.



## What are the eligibility criteria for First Nations people to be registered for the CTG PBS Co-payment Program?

The CTG PBS Co-payment Program is available to First Nations people of any age, regardless of their location or health status.

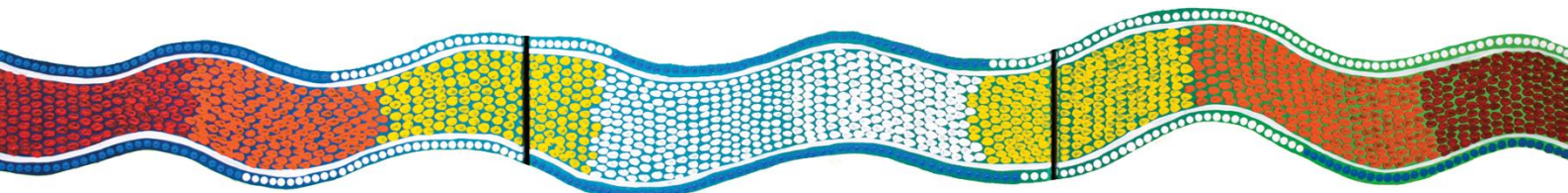
People eligible for registration are those who:

- identify themselves to their health practitioner as a First Nations person;
- in the opinion of their health practitioner, would experience setbacks in the prevention or ongoing management of their health if they did not adhere to a course of treatment;
- in the opinion of their health practitioner would be unlikely to adhere to the course of treatment without assistance from the program; and
- are enrolled with Medicare.

## How do First Nations people register for the CTG PBS Co-payment Program?

To register for the CTG PBS Co-payment Program, eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must be registered by a PBS prescriber or AHPRA registered First Nations Health Practitioner registered with Medicare as a provider.

- Eligible First Nations people of any age, in any location within Australia can be registered for the program regardless of their health status.
- Any PBS prescriber or AHPRA registered First Nations Health Practitioner registered with Medicare as a provider can register eligible First Nations people for the program.
- Registration of eligible First Nations people is completed via the Health Professional Online Services (HPOS) managed by Services Australia and covers patients even if they move to a different health clinic.
- First Nations people need to be assessed by their health practitioner as being eligible before program registration can be completed.
- Eligible First Nations people will need to be registered for the program before a reduced co-payment can be applied to any PBS prescription when being dispensed.
- Eligible First Nations people not registered for the program will need to talk to their CTG PBS Co-payment Program registering practitioner to see if they are eligible for registration.
- In remote areas with limited internet access, a health service or clinic can phone Services Australia on 132 290 to register the patient for the program.
- Registration is a one-time, for life process.



## What if First Nations people no longer want to be registered for the CTG PBS Co-payment Program?

Registered patients can phone Services Australia on 132 290 or go to a Service Centre or Access Point to advise they no longer wish to be registered for the program. CTG PBS Co-payment Program registering practitioners are unable to remove patients from the program, unless it is an administrative error.

## What if the patient is travelling?

The CTG PBS Co-payment Program is available anywhere in Australia. Patients registered to the program can receive the CTG PBS co-payment for their PBS prescription from any CTG Program supplier. Being registered to the program can help patients access prescribed PBS medicines, even when they're travelling.

## How much will First Nations people registered for the CTG PBS Co-payment Program pay for PBS medicines?

First Nations people who are registered for the program but do not have a valid Concession Card will pay the PBS concession rate for their prescribed PBS medicines.

If registered First Nations people have a valid Concession Card, they will receive their prescribed PBS medicines for free.

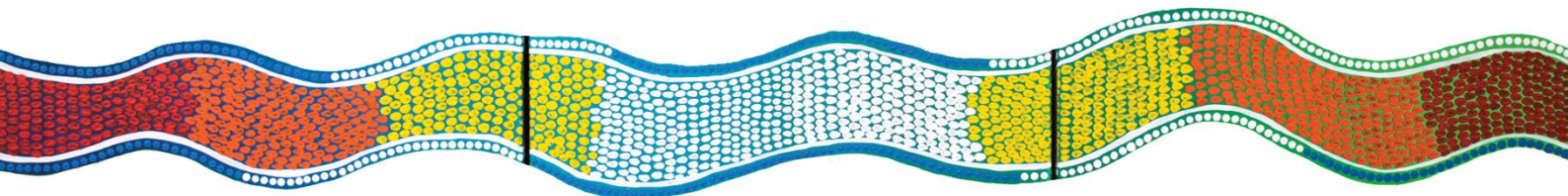
Note:

- Where a brand premium applies to the PBS medicine being supplied this will be payable by the patient in addition to any PBS co-payment at the time of dispensing.
- If the concession is not valid at the time of dispensing, you will be required to pay the standard concessional rate. If this occurs, contact Services Australia to ensure your concession is valid.

## How can First Nations people find out if they are registered for the CTG PBS Co-payment Program?

If a patient is unsure whether they are registered for the CTG PBS Co-payment Program, their health practitioner who has access to HPOS will be able to check their registration status for them via HPOS.

Alternatively, a pharmacist can check the patient's registration status within their dispensing software.



## What is the purpose of the “CTG” annotation on a PBS prescription?

PBS prescribers are no longer required to write or electronically print “CTG” on eligible PBS prescriptions for registered First Nations patients. However, should a PBS prescriber wish, annotation of a PBS prescription may help pharmacists recognise that a patient is registered for the CTG PBS Co-payment Program when dispensing that patient’s prescribed PBS medicines. This does not necessarily mean the patient is registered to the program.

The PBS Online claiming system will verify an eligible First Nations person’s registration status in real time. If the patient is registered, the ‘Closing the Gap’ field in the dispensing system will reflect this and will trigger the correct pricing.

## Are PBS prescriptions that are not “CTG” annotated covered under the program?

If an eligible First Nations person is registered for the program at the time their prescribed PBS medicines are dispensed, the co-payment reduction will apply to a prescription for their PBS medicines even if the prescription does not have a “CTG” annotation.

Although CTG annotation of PBS prescriptions is no longer required, continuation of this practice may assist approved CTG PBS Co-payment Program suppliers to be aware that a PBS prescription should be dispensed under the CTG PBS Co-payment Program.

## How can health services or clinics in remote areas without internet access register eligible First Nations people for the CTG PBS Co-payment Program?

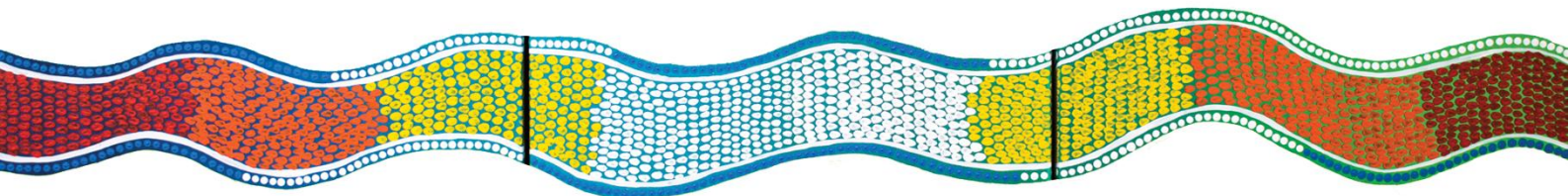
In remote areas with limited internet access, a CTG PBS Co-payment Program registering practitioner, including their HPOS delegates can phone Services Australia on 132 290 to register a patient for the program.

## Who can pharmacists direct dispensing software questions to?

Questions from pharmacists regarding their dispensing software should be directed to their respective software vendor.

## Where can pharmacists get help in relation to their PBS claims?

Pharmacists can obtain help in relation to PBS claims, including PBS claims under the CTG PBS Co-payment Program by phoning Services Australia on 132 290.



## Resources

Refer to the below Department of Health, Disability and Ageing videos on how Australia's medicines system works, and how CTG PBS can help eligible First Nations people get cheaper or free medicines.

- [Closing the Gap PBS Co-Payment Program animation – CTG Explainer | Cheaper medicines | Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing](#)
- [Closing the Gap PBS co-payment Program Animation – CTG Explainer \[Youtube\]](#)
- [What is the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme \(PBS\) – Explainer \[Youtube\]](#)
- [Closing the Gap PBS co-payment program animation – PBS Explainer \[Youtube\]](#)
- [Services Australia - Closing the Gap PBS co-payment program educational resources or health professions](#)

