



# The Closing the Gap Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme Co-payment Program – Information for Community Pharmacies

## 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 medicine's 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 supplier.
- the concessional rate receives their prescribed PBS medicines for free, without having to pay a co-payment, from an approved supplier.

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

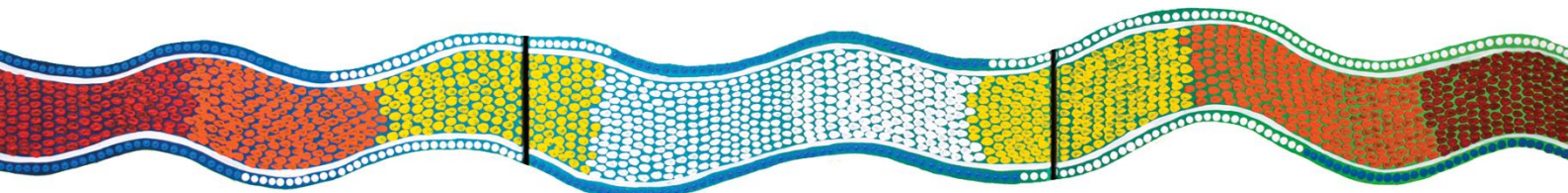
- Details of each of the above PBS arrangements and/or programs can be found on the PBS website at: [www.pbs.gov.au](http://www.pbs.gov.au)
- Over-the-counter and non-PBS medicines **are not eligible** under the CTG PBS co-payment program.

## How do First Nations people become registered for the program?

To register for the **Closing the Gap (CTG) PBS Co-payment Program**, eligible **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people** must be assessed and registered by a PBS prescriber or First Nations Health Practitioner (AHPRA registered) registered with Medicare as a provider, for the purpose of the program they are referred to as CTG PBS co-payment Program registering practitioners.

Pharmacists **cannot** register patients. However, if deemed appropriate pharmacists can become a delegate for a PBS prescriber or First Nations Health Practitioner (AHPRA registered), assisting with the administrative process of registration.

- First Nations people need to be assessed by their health practitioner as being eligible before program registration can be completed.
- 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.
- In remote areas with limited internet access, a PBS prescriber or First Nations Health Practitioner (AHPRA registered) or their delegates, can phone Services Australia on 132 290 to register the patient for the program.



## Note:

- 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.
- Registration is a one-time, for life process.
- Eligible First Nations people not registered for the program will need to talk to their CTG registering practitioner to see if they are eligible for registration.

## Assigning a delegate for the purpose of registering patients in HPOS:

### The intended delegate will need to:

1. Create a PRODA (Provider Digital Access) account if they don't have one.
2. Log into the HPOS online service
3. Go to 'My Providers'
4. Select 'Request Delegation'
5. Enter the RA number of the provider for whom you wish to act as delegate
6. Choose the services you want to access, Eg. Programs – CTG PBS Co-Payment Register

## Note:

- Once the delegate is registered, they must ensure they have established processes and understanding with the CTG PBS co-payment Program registering practitioner on their role in supporting CTG registration.
- Delegation is provider-specific: The delegate can only act on behalf of each individual CTG PBS co-payment Program registering practitioner who has approved the delegation request. If you need access for multiple CTG PBS co-payment Program registering practitioner, each one must approve the delegation separately.

## Delegates can:

- Register eligible patients for the CTG program, at the direction of the provider following assessment.
- Check patient's CTG PBS program registration status
- Delegates **cannot** make clinical decisions about eligibility or register patients without the delegates assessment.

## How to register patients to the CTG PBS co-payment program, as a delegate:

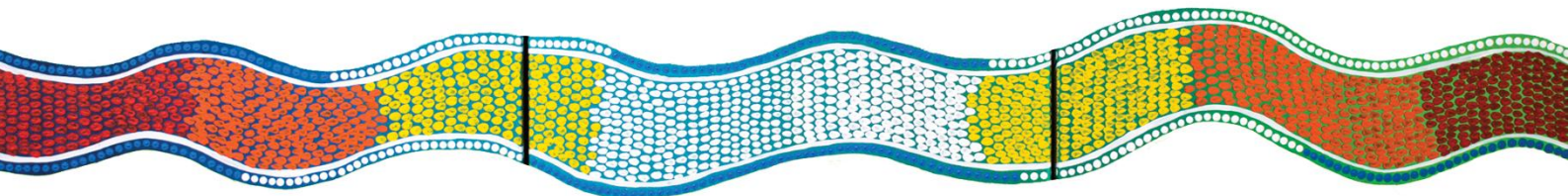
As a CTG PBS co-payment Program registering practitioner, or a delegate, you can register patients to the CTG PBS co-payment Program, following patient assessment, by following the below steps:

- Log into HPOS via your PRODA account.
- Select the 'My Programs' tile
- Select the 'CTG PBS Co-payment Register' tile
- Select the option to search by either 'Patient Name details' or 'Medicare Card details', enter in the required search criteria
- You must declare that you have advised the patient that their personal information will be collected by Services Australia to register them to the CTG PBS program and that you have obtained patient consent to perform the search.
- Patient details will appear below, identifying the patients CTG PBS Program registration status.
- If the patient is registered to the program, it will identify as 'Active', if the patient is not registered to the program, it will identify as 'Inactive'
- To register the patient, click the 'Register' button (below), a confirmation message for registration will appear. Select 'Save' to continue or 'Cancel' to cease progression.
- If successful, the registration status should identify as 'Active'

## How to check the registration status of a patient for the CTG PBS program

You can check a patient's program registration status in real time using one of these methods:

- 1. *Prescription Dispensing Software (PDS)*
  - When you process a PBS claim, your system will automatically check if the patient is registered.
  - If the person is CTG registered, the system will apply the correct pricing.
- 2. *Health Professional Online Services (HPOS)*
  - Log in to HPOS using your PRODA account.
  - Go to *My Programs > Closing the Gap PBS Co-payment Register*.
  - Search for the patient using their Medicare details or patient name details.
  - You'll see their registration status: active (registered) or inactive (not registered).
- 3. *Ask the patient*
  - Patients may know if they're registered. You can ask:  
*"Have you been registered for the CTG program before? I can check for you to make sure you get the right price."*



## 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.

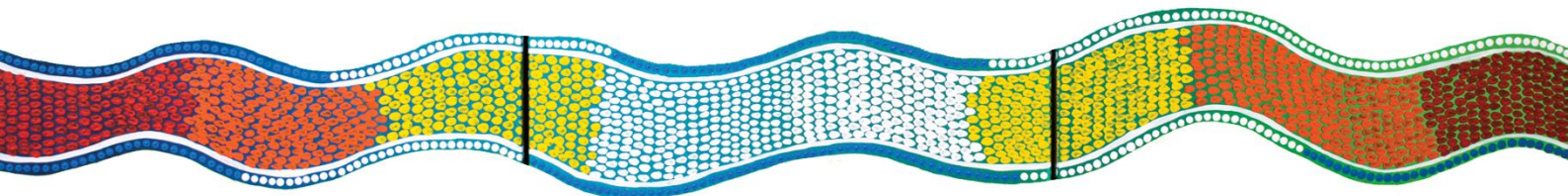
- [Closing the Gap PBS Co-Payment Program animation – CTG Explainer | Cheaper medicines | Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing](#)
- [Closing the Gap PBS co-payment Program Animation – CTG Explainer \[Youtube\]](#)
- [What is the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme \(PBS\) – Explainer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

Refer to the below Services Australia Health Professional Education Resources:

- [Health Professional Education Resources](#)
- [Provider Digital Access \(PRODA\) - Health Professional Education Resources](#)
- [Health Professional Online Services \(HPOS\) - Health Professional Education Resources](#)
- [Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme \(PBS\) - Health Professional Education Resources](#)

Refer to the below Services Australia Health Professional Education Training Module Resources:

- Training Module – [Overview of the CTG PBS co-payment Program](#)
- Training Module – [How to register a patient for CTG PBS co-payment program](#)



## General FAQs for Community Pharmacies

### 1. What to do if the patient is not registered to the PBS CTG co-payment program?

If they are not registered, and believe they are. You should contact the clinic, prescriber or the discharge team to understand the situation, eg. if the patient underwent assessment for the CTG PBS Program. Pharmacists cannot register patients if they are not a delegate or without the appropriate assessment.

If the patient was assessed, but not successfully registered within HPOS, seek the provider to complete registration before dispensing or if you are a delegate, offer to support the process in which you can assist with registration via HPOS.

If the patient has not been assessed for the program, inform the patient of the following:

- Patients need to be assessed and registered by a PBS prescriber or an AHP.
- Pharmacists cannot register patients, without a completed assessment or HPOS delegation arrangement.

Alternatively, the prescription can be dispensed at the standard PBS rate, without the CTG PBS program benefit applying.

### 2. What do I do if a script says 'CTG', but the patient isn't registered?

You should:

- Use HPOS or dispensing software to confirm, 'CTG' annotation on the prescription does not mean the patient is registered to the Program.
- If they are not registered, contact their health service or prescriber – referring to the above '2. What to do if the patient is not registered to the PBS CTG co-payment program'

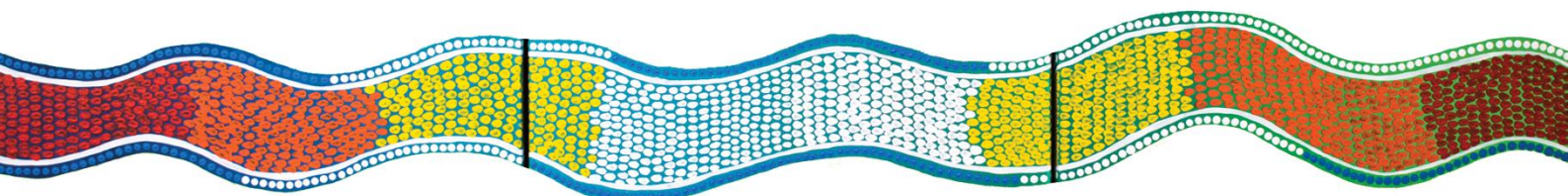
### 3. How to charge the correct price?

Your dispensing software should automatically apply the correct price if the CTG field is completed. Do not:

- Charge additional allowable patient charges
- Manually override the system
- Charge any additional costs

### 4. Are there different requirements in relation to the PBS Safety Net?

Your dispensing software should calculate this automatically. The same amount should be applied to the patient's safety net record, as it would for a standard PBS prescription.



5. **Can patients get a refund or be reimbursed if they register for the PBS CTG co-payment program, after paying for their medicines?**

No, patients cannot get a refund for medicines they've already paid for before registering for the program. CTG PBS benefits only apply at the time the medicine is dispensed if the patient is already registered.

6. **Does a patient need a new prescription if the patient is registered for the PBS CTG co-payment program after the prescription is written?**

No, the patient does not need a new prescription. CTG benefits apply based on the date the medicine is dispensed, not the date on the prescription. As long as the patient is registered at the time of dispensing, the appropriate CTG PBS benefits will apply.

7. **Does the prescription need to be marked with "CTG"?**

No, a prescription does not legally need to be marked with "CTG" for a patient to receive the Closing the Gap (CTG) PBS Co-payment Program benefits. While the annotation is not mandatory, it is helpful for pharmacists to identify the patient is intended to receive the CTG PBS benefit. Be sure to confirm the patient is registered (through HPOS of the pharmacy dispensing software system) to the program before dispensing the prescription.

8. **What are the differences between the PBS CTG co-payment program and state subsidy programs?**

The CTG PBS Co-payment Program is a national initiative designed specifically to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia. It reduces or removes the cost of PBS medicines for eligible patients. In contrast, state subsidy programs may vary by location and have different eligibility rules, funding structures, or medicine coverage.

9. **What about patients in very remote areas of Australia, with limited access to pharmacies?**

Additionally, RAAHS (Remote Area Aboriginal Health Services) program operates in remote areas and allows selected medicines (section 85 PBS medicines) to be supplied directly by health services without a PBS prescription. Understanding what initiatives are available helps you guide and support patients confidently and ensure they receive the right support.

