



The Closing the Gap Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme Co-payment Program – Information for Prescribers and First Nations Health Practitioners

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, 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.

For the CTG PBS Co-payment to apply, the PBS prescription must be dispensed by an CTG PBS Co-payment 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)



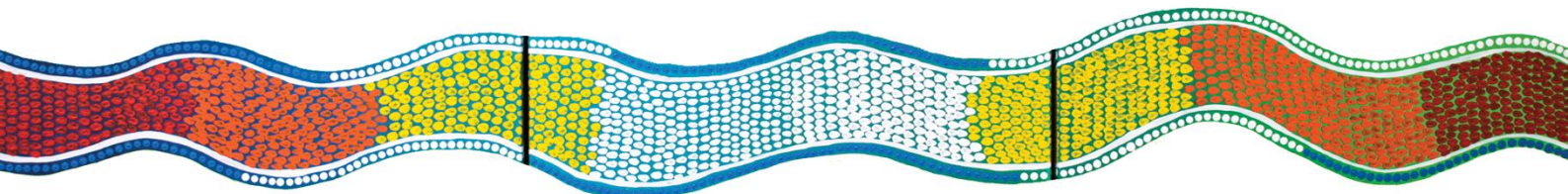
What PBS medicines are covered under the CTG PBS Co-payment Program?

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
- 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.



How do First Nations people become registered for the CTG PBS Co-payment 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.

Health professionals within a hospital setting, who meet the requirements of a CTG PBS Co-payment Program registering practitioner can assess and register eligible patients.

- First Nations people need to be assessed by a CTG PBS Co-payment Program registering 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 CTG PBS Co-payment Program registering practitioners or their delegates, can phone Services Australia on 132 290 to register the patient for the program.

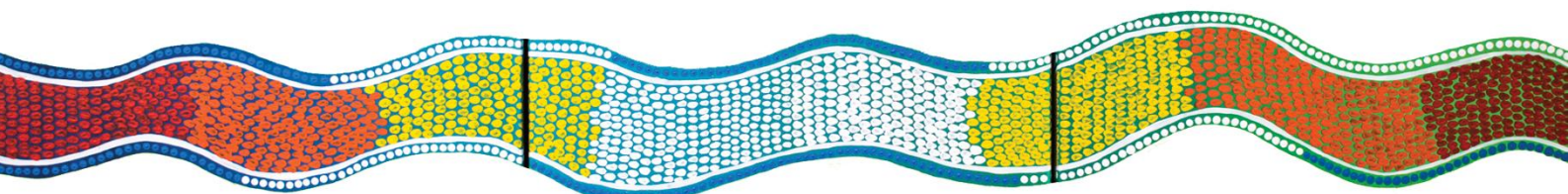
Note:

- 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 PBS Co-payment Program registering practitioner to see if they are eligible for registration.

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

Request the intended delegate 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 to, 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 practitioners, each one must approve the delegation separately.

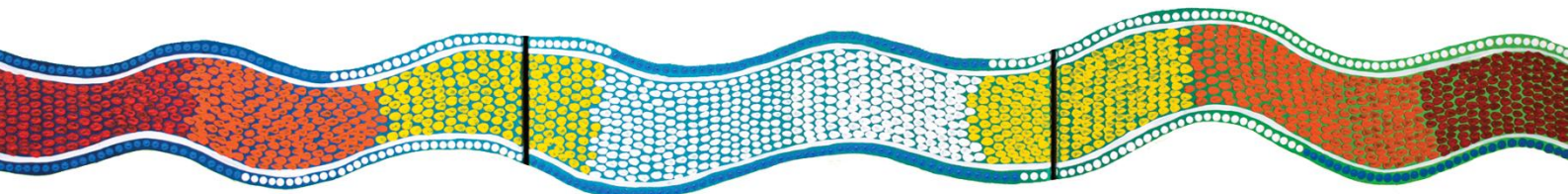
Delegates can:

- Register eligible patients for the CTG PBS Co-payment Program, at the direction of the provider following assessment.
- Check patient's CTG PBS Co-payment 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 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 Co-payment Program and that you have obtained patient consent to perform the search.
- Patient details will appear below, identifying the patients CTG PBS Co-payment 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 Co-payment Program

As a CTG PBS Co-payment Program registering practitioner, or as a delegate you can check a patient's program registration status in real time using one of these methods:

1. *Prescription Dispensing Software (PDS)*

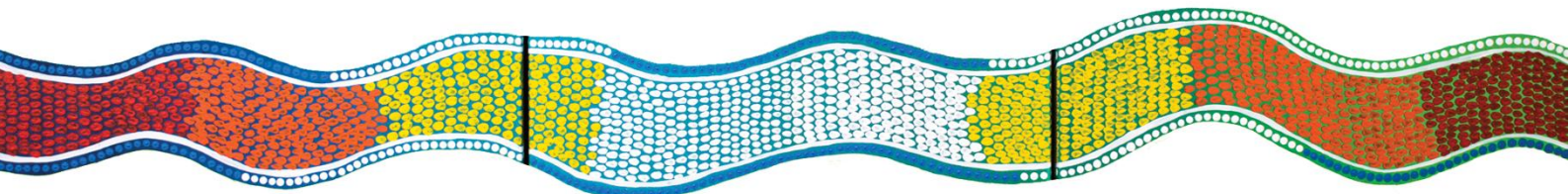
- When you process a PBS claim, your system will automatically check if the patient is registered.
- If the person is CTG registered, the system will apply the correct pricing.

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 PBS Co-payment 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 Co-payment Program can help eligible First Nations people get cheaper or free medicines.

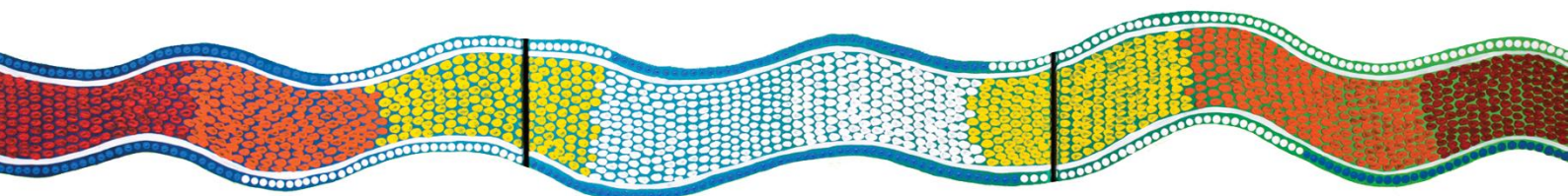
- [Closing the Gap PBS Co-Payment Program animation – CTG Explainer | Cheaper medicines | Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing](#)
- [Closing the Gap PBS Co-payment Program Closing the Gap PBS Co-payment Program Animation – CTG Explainer \[Youtube\]](#)
- [What is the Pharmaceutical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



General FAQs for PBS Prescribers, First Nations Health Practitioners and Health Services

1. What is the role of a PBS prescriber and health care service providers in the CTG PBS Co-payment Program?

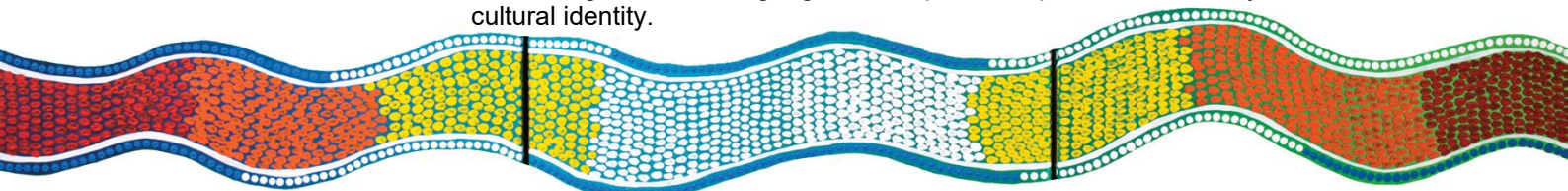
The role of PBS prescribers (including GPs, hospital doctors, nurse practitioners, First Nations health practitioners, etc.) in the CTG PBS Co-payment Program is central to ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients are aware of the CTG PBS Co-payment Program and provided the opportunity to be assessed to receive affordable access to PBS medicines.

2. What are the responsibilities as a PBS prescriber or First Nation Health practitioner under the CTG PBS Co-payment Program?

- Assess the clients' eligibility, using culturally safe and strengths-based conversations.
- Obtain consent to register: Before registration, CTG PBS Co-payment Program registering practitioners must discuss the program with the patient and obtain their informed consent. There is no standard consent process/form for the program.
- Register the patient, or delegate the registration to an active delegate:
 - Registration to the CTG PBS Co-payment Program can only occur using Health Professional Online Services (HPOS) via a PRODA account
 - Registration only needs to occur once and lasts a person's lifetime.
 - Registration follows the patient across all health settings and services.
 - Note: Registration and determination of eligibility is a clinician's responsibility, not an administrative process. An HPOS *delegate* can complete registration
- Ensure culturally safe care, monitor and support
 - Avoid assumptions and ensure patients understand the program's benefits.
 - Support patient autonomy and privacy.
 - Confirm registration status via HPOS before prescribing.
 - Assist with correcting registration errors, if required.
 - Encourage continuity of care and support ongoing medication usage conversations.

3. How do I obtain consent for the program?

- Have a culturally safe conversation
 - Explain the purpose of the CTG PBS Co-payment Program: to improve access to affordable PBS medicines, supporting patients with medication management and adherence, by reducing or eliminating out-of-pocket costs for PBS medicines for eligible first nations people.
 - Emphasise that participation is voluntary and based on self-identification.
 - Use strengths-based language that respects the patient's autonomy and cultural identity.



- Confirm eligibility: Your patient is eligible if they meet all the following:
 - They self-identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australian.
 - They are enrolled with Medicare.
 - They will have setbacks in the prevention or management of their health if they do not take the prescribed medicine.
 - They are unlikely to adhere to their treatment without the assistance of the program.
- Explain the registration
 - Registration is a one-time process, for life (unless the patient wishes to withdraw from the program)
 - It allows access to reduced or no-cost PBS medicines at time of dispensing.
 - It does not affect other entitlements or require re-registration if the patient changes clinics.
- Obtain and document consent in the patient record
 - Record the date, method (verbal/written) and summary of the discussion.
 - Include the CTG PBS Co-payment Program registering practitioners name and relevant notes.
 - Ensure the patient understands their information is protected, referring them to Services Australia's privacy information, if needed.

4. How do I write an eligible PBS prescription under the CTG PBS Co-payment Program?

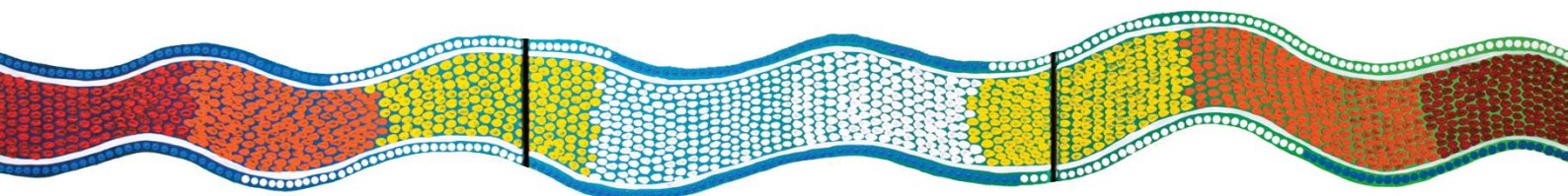
- Use the standard PBS prescription form or an approved computer-generated form
- If writing a prescription for a non-PBS or private prescription, consider alternative medicine available on the PBS (if appropriate)
- In the event there is no alternative medicine on the PBS, clearly strike out the 'PBS/RPBS' text and endorse as a 'Non-PBS'. Non-PBS items are NOT covered under the CTG PBS Co-payment Program, if you must prescribe a non-PBS item, advise the patient that additional costs may apply.
- As an option, annotate the prescription with 'CTG' supporting pharmacists to identify patients are registered to the CTG PBS Co-payment Program.

5. Can I delegate registration for the CTG PBS Co-payment Program to someone else?

Yes. Once a patient is assessed as eligible, an *HPOS delegate* can register them on HPOS. The delegate must:

- Have their own PRODA account.
- Be linked to the relevant practice's CTG PBS Co-payment Program registering practitioners HPOS account.

Note: Delegation supports workflow efficiency but does not replace the responsibility of determining eligibility.



6. What systems and/or policies should my clinic have in place to support CTG PBS Co-payment Program registration?

To support effective, consistent, and culturally safe CTG PBS Co-payment Program registration, your clinic should:

- Train CTG PBS co-payment Program registering practitioners in CTG eligibility and registration, for example by using the CTG eLearning module [link: PBSM08 - Closing the Gap (CTG) Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) Co-payment Program]
- Set up a routine registration workflow, such as checking CTG eligibility at reception or during Health Checks.
- Create clear procedures for identifying eligible patients and registering them through HPOS.
- Use delegation protocols so trained staff can help with registration tasks—while keeping eligibility decisions with clinicians.
- Support staff to use PRODA and HPOS confidently to register patients and check CTG status.
- Promote culturally safe conversations when talking about the program with patients.

7. How do I check a patient's registration status?

It is considered best practice to confirm registration status before prescribing to ensure the patient receives the CTG benefit at the time of dispensing.

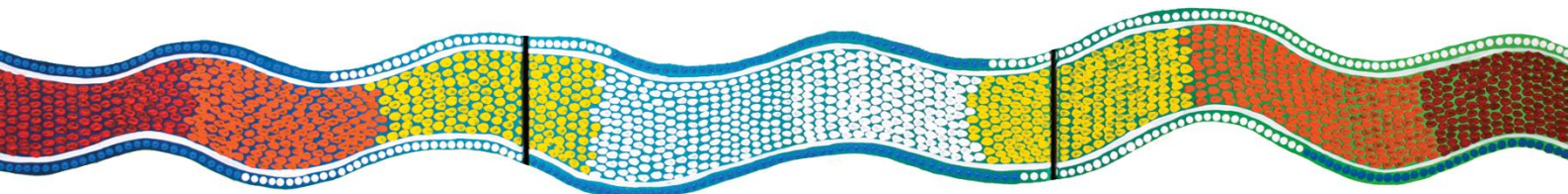
- Log in to HPOS using your PRODA account. Navigate to:
 - My Programs
 - Select Closing the Gap PBS Co-payment Register
 - Search for the patient using their Medicare details.
- Check the status:
 - Active = Patient is registered.
 - Inactive = Patient is not registered (you'll see a "Register" button if eligible).
- NOTE: Pharmacists can also check registration status in real time via their dispensing software or HPOS. In remote areas, health services can call Services Australia on 132 290 to confirm or register.

8. Can a CTG PBS Co-payment Program registering practitioner withdraw a patient from the program?

No, you cannot withdraw a patient from the CTG PBS Co-payment Program unless the registration was made in error (e.g. administrative mistake). Withdrawal must be patient-initiated. Patients must contact Services Australia directly via phone (132 290) or in person by visiting a Service Centre or access point.

If you believe the registration was incorrect (e.g. wrong patient, duplicate entry), you can call Services Australia on 132 290 to request a correction or withdrawal.

It is considered best practice to document the reason for withdrawal in the patient's clinical record and support the patient with information and assistance if needed, especially in remote or low-access areas.



9. Can patients get a refund or be reimbursed if they register for the CTG PBS 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.

10. Does a patient need a new prescription if the patient is registered for the CTG PBS 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.

11. 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 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.

12. What are the differences between the CTG PBS 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.

