

The Hon. Greg Hunt MP  
Australian Government Minister for Health  
PO Box 6022  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

14 July 2020

Dear Minister Hunt

**RE: Temporary Medicare Benefits Schedule item numbers need to be available to all providers of specialist sexual and reproductive healthcare**

Temporary Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) item numbers issued during the COVID-19 pandemic have enabled people in Australia telehealth access to a range of sexual and reproductive health services. Many of these services, such as testing for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) treatment and medical abortion via telehealth, are delivered by doctors who provide specialist sexual and reproductive health services.

Telehealth reforms [announced on 10 July](#) will roll back temporary MBS item numbers to General Practitioners (GPs) only from 20 July. To be eligible for MBS item numbers, most patients will need to have had a consultation with that GP or practice at least once in the past year. This decision will hinder sexual and reproductive healthcare access in Australia because some patients' own GPs:

- Work in clinics that do not always offer specialist sexual and reproductive health services
- Have not completed the additional training required to provide specific sexual and reproductive health services
- Conscientiously object to providing sexual and reproductive health services
- Experience a range of challenges in providing accessible services due to a range of access, equity and agency issues.

We ask that you urgently reinstate temporary MBS item numbers to enable access to sexual and reproductive healthcare. In planning future telehealth reforms we ask that you consult with specialist providers in sexual and reproductive health, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, migrant and refugee health, disability health, LGBTIQ+ health, sex worker health, women's health, men's health, violence and suicide prevention. This will enable us to increase health access, equity and agency for all people in Australia.

Sincerely,

Jamal Hakim, Managing Director, Marie Stopes Australia

Alexis Apostolellis, CEO, Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine (ASHM)

Claire Vissenga, CEO, Family Planning Victoria  
Emma Iwinska, CEO, Women's Health Queensland  
Hayley Foster, CEO, Women's Safety NSW  
Marilyn Beaumont OAM, Chair, Australian Women's Health Network  
Dr Helen Calabretto, Director - Clinical and Counselling Services, SHINE SA  
Delia Donovan, Acting CEO, Domestic Violence NSW  
Kirsty Garrett, CEO, Doctors on Demand Pty Ltd  
Debra Barnes, CEO, Sexual Health Quarters (SHQ)  
Dianne Hill, CEO, Women's Health Victoria  
Daile Kelleher, Manager, Children by Choice Association  
Adjunct Prof Ann Brassil, CEO, Family Planning NSW  
Associate Professor Jane Tomnay, Director, Centre for Excellence in Rural Sexual Health,  
University of Melbourne  
Professor Angela Taft, MPH PhD, La Trobe University  
Dr Judith Dean, University of Queensland and Co Chair, Australasian Sexual Health  
Alliance  
Dr Nicholas Medland, Kirby Institute University of New South Wales and Co Chair,  
Australasian Sexual Health Alliance  
Denele Crozier, CEO, Women's Health NSW  
Tina Dixson, Acting Program Manager, Australian Women Against Violence Alliance  
(AWAVA)  
Professor Angela Dawson, Public Health Association of Australia  
Belinda Halliday, Co-Chair, Embolden SA  
Lisa Torney, National Chairperson, Society of Australian Sexologists  
Professor Suzanne Fraser, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society  
Christine Janet Greenall, Family Planning Welfare Association of NT Inc  
Carrie Fowlie, Chief Executive Officer, Hepatitis Australia  
Shannon Woodward, President, Australasian Sexual Health and HIV Nurses Association  
Adjunct A/Professor Darryl O'Donnell, Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations  
Rebecca Reynolds, CEO, Queensland Council for LGBTI Health  
Heidi La Paglia, Project Officer, Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA)  
Nicolas Parkhill, CEO, ACON  
Genevieve Dally, Executive Director, Northern Territory AIDS and Hepatitis Council  
Dr Susan McSweeney, Clinic 66

Ms Sue Salthouse, Didactic Enterprises  
Dr Fiona Bisshop, Holdsworth House Medical Brisbane  
Janice Nugent, Fertility Control Clinic  
Arlyn William Owens, Kirketon Road Centre (SESLHD) & Intensive Love  
Dr Heather McNamee, Headspace Cairns  
Emeritus Professor Peter Aggleton, PhD, FASSA, Centre for Social Research in Health, UNSW Sydney  
Dr Jacki Mein, Wuchopperen Health Service Ltd  
Dr Skye Hueneke, Anglesea Medical  
Gemma Crawford, President, Australian Health Promotion Association  
Associate Professor Sharyn Burns, Relationships and Sexuality Education Program, Collaboration for Evidence, Research and Impact, School of Public Health, Curtin University  
Dr Roanna Lobo, Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Applied Research and Evaluation Network, Curtin University  
Melanie Walker, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Injecting & Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL)  
Alison Verhoeven, Chief Executive, Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association  
Dr Katelin Haynes, CEO, Hepatitis Queensland  
Stacey Ross, CEO, The Centre for Women & Co.  
Helen Dalley-Fisher, Senior Manager, Equality Rights Alliance  
Felicite Black, Womens Health and Family Services  
Dr Penny Wood, Alexander Heights Family Practice  
Teddy Cook, Vice President, Australian Professional Association for Trans Health (AusPATH)  
Brigid Coombe, South Australian Abortion Action Coalition  
Amanda Kelly, CEO, Women's Health Goulburn North East  
Jessica Elsworth, Health Promotion Officer, Women's Health in the South East  
Lynette Denning, Operations Coordinator, Wide Bay Women's Health Centre, Hervey Bay  
Jo Flanagan, CEO, Women's Health Tasmania  
Sharen Page, economic Security4Women  
Dr Catherine Insley, East Sydney Doctors  
Ruth Dearnley, CEO, Birth for Humankind  
Dr Siobhan Bourke, Siobhan Bourke Sexual Health Consulting  
Emma Davidson, Convenor, Women's Electoral Lobby Australia  
Kristine Olaris, CEO, Women's Health East

Brent Bell, CEO HepatitisWA

Tim Bavinton, Executive Director, Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT (SHFPACT)

Ms Jennifer Ejlak OAM, Reproductive Choice Australia

Bonney Corbin, Chair, Violence Prevention Australia

*The following Medical Doctors:*

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Dr William Liley, FRACGP, FACRRM

Dr Kathleen McNamee, MBBS, FRACGP, GradDipEpiBio, MEpi

Dr Karen Freilich, MBBS, BMedSc, DRANZCOG

Dr Johanna Sabogal, MD, FRACGP

Dr Kamala Emanuel, BMed

Dr Karen Osborne, BSc (Hons), MBBS, MRCGP, DRCOG, DFRSH, FRACGP

Dr Samantha Johnson, MBBS, BSc, FPAA National Certificate in Reproductive & Sexual Health for Doctors

Dr Hayley Glasson, MBBS (Hons) DRANZCOG, DCH, FRACGP

Dr Tara Aston, MBBS, FRACGP, ProfDipDermosc

Dr Colinette Margerison, MBChB, FRACGP

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Dr Kathryn Irwin, MBBS DRANZCOG  
Dr Nicholas Medland, MBBS BA Hons FACHSHM PhD  
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Dr Meredith Moodie, BA, MPubHist, MBBS  
Dr Tim Kirchler, MBBS, DCH, FRACGP  
Dr Danae Kent, Sexual Health Physician, FRACGP  
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Dr Fiona Bisshop, MBBS FRACGP President - AusPATH  
Dr Ian Anderson, MBBS, MPP (Health Policy), ACRRM Reg (Advanced Skill in Sexual Health)  
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Dr Lynnette Wray, MBBS(Hons1) MM (VenSci) FACHSHM  
Dr Jenny Leung, MBBS, M Health Science (Sexual Health)  
Dr Jacki Mein, FACSHM FAFPHM MAE FRACGP AFRACMA OAM  
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Dr Penny Wong, FRACGP  
Dr Annie Preston-Thomas, MBChB, MPH, FRACGP, FAFPHM

Dr Ella Barclay, MBBS FRACGP  
Dr Atari Metcalf, BSc, MD  
Dr Jane MacLeod, MBBS FRACGP  
Dr Bernadette Hess, M.B., B.s.  
Dr Victoria Edwards, MBBS FRACGP  
Dr Penny Wood, FRACGP, MBBS, BSc(hons)  
Dr Joshua Kontrobarsky, MBBS, Bmedsc  
Dr Clea Anagnostopoulou, BSc; BMed  
Dr Lucy Donovan, MBBS FRACGP  
Dr Nicholas Silberstein, GP  
Dr Nicole Filar, MBBS DTMH FRACGP  
Dr Ahmad Syahir Mohd Soffi, MBBS (Hons) DTM&H  
Dr Katherine Ilbery, FRACGP  
Dr Catherine Insley, MBBS FRACGP  
Dr Fabiola Martin, MD, MDRes, FaCHSH, FRCP, FHE  
Dr Jill Bestic, MBBS. DTMH  
Dr Melissa Kelly, BN BMed MPH&TM FRACP FACHSHM  
Dr Michelle Guttman-Jones, GP  
Dr Victoria Featherston, MBBS, FRACGP, DCH  
Dr Clare Holberton, MBBS, MSc Infectious Disease  
Dr Melissa Brown, MBBS, FRACGP  
Dr Genevieve Coney, MBBS FRACGP  
Dr Hilary Bower, MBBS FRACGP  
Dr. Vanessa Siu, GP

*The following Nurses and Midwives:*

Finn Mercury RN/RM  
Genevieve Lean, Registered Nurse Educator  
Christina Inness, Nurse Practitioner  
Ms Fern Pombert, RN  
Sue Opie, Sexual Health Nurse  
Mrs Chloe Kearns, RN2  
Ms Edwina Anne Jachimowicz, RN/RM

Annie Braendler Phillips, RN/M  
Kylie Sutton, RN/RM  
Associate Professor Jane Tomnay, RN, MHSc. PhD  
Dr Judith Dean, RN, Midwife, BN, MPHTM, PhD, Centaur Fellow  
Linda Hunt, RN  
Brigid Coombe, RN MNsc  
Dr Judith Gonda, B.A.Sc, Nurse Educator, PhD  
Sandra Tidswell, Sexual Health Nurse  
Sarah Harwood, Nurse Educator and SRH Nurse  
Rhonda Newton, RN RM CNE  
Sarah Hill, RN/RM  
Emma Knowland, Sexual Health RN MN  
Kyna Reddan, RN GradCert(SH)  
Kitty Smith, MSN, RN  
Dr Carl Heslop, RN, MPH, PhD, MAHPA  
Anna-Lucia Kenrick, Nurse Educator  
Vince Smetana, RN  
Jude Armishaw, CNC  
Ms Sue Andrews, RN  
Joanne Leamh, Sexual Health Nurse  
Jacqueline Bunt, RN/RM  
Cara Taheny, RN  
Arlyn William Owens, Registered Nurse & Psychosexual Therapist  
Liz Griffin, RN, BSN  
Melinda Hassall, RN MPH  
Catherine Bevan; RN Graduate Diploma Community Health Nursing MACN  
Bronte Simpson, RN  
Jacqualine McLellan, Nurse Practitioner  
Ruth Casey, Nurse Practitioner  
Elena McLeish, Public Health Nurse  
Mr Adam Spinks, Nurse Practitioner  
Donna Maria Feiersinger, RN  
Monica Vitale, RN/MN/NE/NP

Elizabeth Hanna, RN MN(Women's health) MN(Sexual & Reproductive Health)

Jennifer Macleod RN

Lucy Williamson, Clinical Nurse Specialist in Sexual Health

Lauren Coelli, Sexual Health CNC

Cat Brown, Registered Nurse

Vijeta Venkataraman, RN

Ms Julie Gabriel, RN

Eleanor McHardie, RN

Fiona McKenna RN

Julianne Billing, RN RM MHA

Hilary Freeman RN/RM MHSc(Sexual Health)

Emma Perkins, RN

Lisa Harrison, Reproductive and Sexual Health Nurse Practitioner

Mr Rohan Anderson, Sexual Health and HIV nurse

Jodi Mauro, Reproductive & Sexual Health RN

Cara Taheny, RN

Hilary Freeman, RN/RM MHSc(Sexual Health)

Sherelle Luretigh, Sexual Health Nurse

Ms Megan Taylor, Nurse Practitioner

Faye Salcedo, RN

Sara Bell, RN, BSc (Hons), MPH

Fiona Crawley, RN

Ms Molly McCulloch, RN

Georgina Berry, Registered Nurse

Ms Aleksandra Filipowicz, RM

Stephanie Robertson, RN

Miss Tanisha Tognolini, RN

Alice Park, RN

Miranda Togni, RN

Felicite Black, RN, BA, MBA, GAICD

Julie Byrne-King, RN

Nic Rush, RN

Lisa Bradfield, Nurse Educator



Anne-Marie Cairns RN  
Ms Kate Mason, Clinical Midwife Specialist  
Garry Kuchel, Clinical Nurse Consultant  
Mrs Anita Leonard, RM  
Laura Mathias, RM  
Paul Esplin, CNC  
Arielle Frankel, RM  
Lilian Barson-Frost, RN/RM  
Sharon Houwen, RN, RM  
Aly Alway, Women's Health Maningrida  
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Fiona Gerrard, RN  
Colette Cashman, MPH, BsC, RN  
Erika Dalton, RN; Master of Health Studies (Women's Health)

*The following organisations (alphabetical order):*

ACON  
Alexander Heights Family Practice  
Anglesea Medical  
Australasian Sexual Health Alliance  
Australasian Sexual Health and HIV Nurses Association  
Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine (ASHM)  
Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations  
Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association  
Australian Health Promotion Association  
Australian Injecting & Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL)  
Australian Nursing and Midwifery Organisation  
Australian Professional Association for Trans Health (AusPATH)  
Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society  
Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA)  
Australian Women's Health Network  
Birth for Humankind  
Centre for Excellence in Rural Sexual Health, University of Melbourne

Centre for Social Research in Health, UNSW Sydney  
The Centre for Women & Co.  
Children by Choice Association  
Clinic 66  
Didactic Enterprises  
Doctors on Demand Pty Ltd  
Domestic Violence NSW  
East Sydney Doctors  
Economic Security4Women  
Embolden SA  
Equality Rights Alliance  
Family Planning NSW  
Family Planning Victoria  
Family Planning Welfare Association of NT Inc  
Fertility Control Clinic  
Hespath Cairns  
Hepatitis Australia  
Hepatitis Queensland  
HepatitisWA  
Holdsworth House Medical Brisbane  
Human Rights Law Centre  
Illawarra Women's Health Centre  
Intensive Love  
Kirketon Road Centre (SESLHD)  
La Trobe University  
Marie Stopes Australia  
M Clinic WA  
Meridian  
New South Wales Health Murrumbidgee Local Health District  
Northern Territory AIDS and Hepatitis Council  
Public Health Association of Australia  
Queensland Council for LGBTI Health  
Queensland Sexual Health Society

Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Applied Research and Evaluation Network, Curtin University

Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT (SHFPACT)

Sexual Health Quarters (SHQ)

Siobhan Bourke Sexual Health Consulting

South Australian Abortion Action Coalition

Relationships and Sexuality Education Program, Collaboration for Evidence, Research and Impact, School of Public Health, Curtin University

Reproductive Choice Australia

SHINE SA

Society of Australian Sexologists

True Relationships & Reproductive Health

University of Queensland

Violence Prevention Australia

Wide Bay Women's Health Centre, Hervey Bay

Women's Electoral Lobby Australia

Women's Health and Family Services

Women's Health East

Women's Health Goulburn North East

Women's Health Grampians

Women's Health in the South East

Women's Health NSW

Women's Health Queensland

Women's Health Tasmania

Women's Health Victoria

Women's Health West

Women's Safety NSW

Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA)

Wuchopperen Health Service Ltd

Your Community Health