



Treatment from a psychologist under the Medicare Better Access initiative in 2012

Information for clients about recent changes to the allowable number of treatment sessions

The Australian Government has recently announced several changes to the allowable number of treatment sessions a person can receive from a psychologist each year under the Better Access program and claim a Medicare rebate. This information sheet is to help you understand the current arrangements for the sessions you are eligible for in 2012 and the circumstances that apply.

How many sessions of treatment can I have?

The standard maximum number of treatment sessions from a psychologist that you can receive within any given year (1 January – 31 December) is 10 individual sessions.

To be eligible for the Medicare rebate, your doctor is required to complete a detailed mental health assessment before deciding to refer you to receive treatment from a psychologist for up to six sessions.

Your referring doctor needs to review your progress after the first group of treatment sessions, and can refer you for further sessions if this is required. However, you are only eligible for a Medicare rebate for 10 sessions each year.

You can also receive a maximum of 10 group therapy sessions within any given year in addition to the individual sessions. Your referring doctor and the psychologist need to assess you as appropriate for group treatment.

Additional treatment under 'exceptional circumstances' from 1 March to 31 December 2012

If you have already received the standard 10 individual sessions within 2012, you may be eligible for an additional six sessions of treatment under 'exceptional circumstances'.

If your referring doctor believes there are 'exceptional circumstances' associated with your need for treatment, a new referral can be made for up to six additional psychological treatment sessions. This brings the maximum total number of allowable sessions in 2012 to 16 sessions.

These additional sessions can only be received between 1 March 2012 and 31 December 2012.

If you have already received some treatment during January and February of 2012, the sessions you have received will be counted towards the total number of allowable sessions for 2012.

After you have reached the maximum number of allowable sessions for 2012 (16 sessions) you will not be eligible for any further Medicare rebates for treatment you receive from a psychologist until the new calendar year.

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