

Better Access Initiative

What is the Initiative?

The Australian Government offers Medicare rebates for a range of mental health services delivered to adults and children, including under telehealth in regional areas. The rebate is available to people diagnosed with a mental disorder, such as depression and anxiety, and includes psychiatrists, psychologists, general practitioners and eligible social workers and occupational therapists.

Who administers this initiative?

Your doctor/general practitioner (GP), psychiatrist or paediatrician can refer you to an allied mental health service under the Better Access (BA) initiative or they may determine that community support options or other alternative treatments are relevant.

Requirements

Mental health practitioners who you are referred to must have a Medicare provider number for a rebate to be claimed. They must use this number on any invoice.

What is covered?

Up to 10 individual and 10 group allied mental health services per calendar year are rebated.

Any fees in excess of the Medicare rebate are your responsibility so find out the fee, the rebateable amount and any gap payments before your appointment.

Private health insurance may also cover some of this fee.

Contact

Call 132 011 for assistance or speak to your doctor about this.
Find out more about the initiative [here](#).

What to discuss with your doctor

You should book a longer session with your doctor to enable time to discuss your needs and for your doctor to document your plan.

Better Access Initiative

Questions that you may commonly be asked

Some questions that you may need to answer may be upsetting as they may mean revisiting difficult issues from the past. Take your time and take breaks if you need, and only record the amount of detail you are comfortable to provide.

Typical questions may include:

- relationship to the child
- family history: issues, age at placement, illnesses allergies and medications
- agencies and professionals involved with the child
- current observations of mood, emotional responses and overall presentation
- positive observations of your child eg physically talented, relaxes with music
- impact on other family members.

If the information you need to share is particularly sensitive, or if your child will be upset by hearing this information repeated, you may wish to summarise this information for your doctor in a pre printed document. This may help to streamline the questions a little.

References and links

[Australian Government](#) Better Access Initiative

[Australian Psychological Society](#) "Medicare rebates for psychological services"