

## Fee Changes at Kalamunda February 2023

### The Value of Quality Healthcare

Our fees allow us to provide our patients with highly skilled staff that deliver an accessible, affordable and quality service. We see the value in promoting preventative medicine to you, and not just providing a reactive service where you may feel rushed, and the doctor feels rushed.

### Why Can't You Bulk Bill Everyone?

Unfortunately, the Medicare rebate, your rebate, only covers a small portion of the costs of providing high-quality healthcare. Community General Practice is not subsidised by State or Federal Governments, unlike the hospital system. We are a locally owned small business, like many other General practices.

Successive Federal Governments have frozen your Medicare rebate or only lifted it marginally and we are receiving a lower rebate when 'bulk billing' a patient. The costs of running our practice have continuously increased in that time, and we can no longer absorb this cost if our practice is to keep its doors open and provide the quality care we pride ourselves on.

We encourage you to voice your concerns to your Federal Member of Parliament (listed below), as the Federal Government dictates the level of your Medicare rebates. The recent changes have effectively resulted in the value of a GP consult being diminished, when in fact more funding should be placed in Primary care.

Mr Matthew Hughes MLA  
Hon. Lorna Harper MLC

Kalamunda  
Midland

(08) 9293 4747  
(08) 9274 8484

### Gradual introduction of fees for Pensioners, Concession Card Holders & children

For bulk-billed patients, the amount paid by Medicare is significantly less than the true cost to deliver the service. Federal Governments have not funded General Practice and primary health care to the levels required for us to continue to deliver quality health care.

To maintain our standards, we have made the difficult decision to gradually introduce discounted fees which will apply to pensioners, concession card holders and children. This will occur **for some Doctors** from February 2023 at Kalamunda and may be rolled out to other sites in the future.

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) has worked out the true costs of running a quality general practice. Each year, it provides updated recommendations on the fees doctors should charge. Our fees are **less** than the AMA's recommendations.

Medicare rules dictate that you will be required to pay the fee in full, and we will then claim the Medicare rebate, on your behalf. The Medicare rebate will be paid back to your bank account within 24 hours, leaving you out of pocket for the difference.

If you are experiencing severe financial hardship, you should have those discussions with your doctor during the consultation. The reception staff are not able to make decisions on behalf of the doctor.

We will continue to accept the Medicare rebate ('Bulk billing') for Chronic Disease Management Plans, Health Assessments and nurse clinics for immunisations etc, so there will not be an out-of-pocket expense for those items. These processes are vital for anyone with a chronic disease so please discuss with your doctor.

DVA Department of Veterans Affairs GOLD cards will continue to be bulk billed.