



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing

Professor Helena Teede
President
Endocrine Society of Australia
145 Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Professor Teede

Removal of gender specific language from the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS)

I write regarding amendments the department made from 1 July 2013 to 1 July 2014 to a range of MBS items to remove gender specific language. The department has learned recently that some practitioners may not be aware of the changes and I would be grateful if your organisation could remind members of them. I have enclosed a brief summary of the amendments for your information.

As you would be aware, in 2013 the department undertook a review of the MBS with a view to removing gender specific wording in accordance with the *Australian Government Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex and Gender*, which have the overarching goal of ensuring that no person is denied access to necessary medical services as a result of their sex or gender. This includes but is not limited to transgender women, transgender men, people who do not identify as women or men, and people with intersex characteristics.

As part of the review, the department consulted with a range of stakeholder groups regarding the proposed amendments to the MBS. Nevertheless, it seems that some practitioners may be unaware of the changes. The National LGBTI Health Alliance has reported inconsistencies in some practitioners' knowledge of the changes and their effects on patients' access to services, particularly as they pertain to the 1 July 2014 amendments to pelvis ultrasound and mastectomy items.

The contact in the department for this matter is Michael Ryan, Director Regulatory Integrity Section, by email at Michael.Ryan@health.gov.au or phone on (02) 6289 9037.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Clare Poprawski'.

Clare Poprawski
A/g Assistant Secretary
Medical Specialist Services Branch

29 January 2015

Encl

Removal of gender specific language from the MBS

Service	MBS items	Change	Date of effect
Cervical screening	2497, 2598, 2600, 2603, 2606, 2610, 2613, 2616	The word 'woman' omitted, and substituted with 'person'	1 July 2013
Anaesthesia for procedures on external genitalia	20920	'male' omitted	1 July 2013
Circumcision	30653, 30656, 30659, 30660	'a male' omitted, and substituted with 'the penis, on a person'	1 July 2013
Sperm retrieval	37605, 37606	'in a man' omitted, and substituted with 'for'	1 July 2013
Anaesthesia for procedures on the skin or subcutaneous tissue of the perineum	20900	'(including biopsy of male genital system)' omitted.	1 January 2014
Anaesthesia for per vagina and vaginal procedures	20940	'labia' omitted	1 January 2014
Transfer of embryos or both ova and sperm to the uterus or fallopian tubes	13215	'female reproductive system' replaced with 'uterus or fallopian tubes'.	1 January 2014
Preparation of frozen or donated embryos or donated oocytes for transfer	13218	'female reproductive system' replaced with 'uterus or fallopian tubes'	1 January 2014
Ovarian cyst aspiration	35518	The word 'women' replaced with 'person'	1 January 2014
Examination of a lower tract	35614	'female' omitted	1 January 2014
Magnetic Resonance Imaging	63457, 63458, 63464, 63467	The word 'woman' replaced with 'person'	1 January 2014
Non-directive pregnancy support counselling	4001	The word 'woman' replaced with 'person'	1 January 2014
Pregnancy support counselling services	81000, 815005, 81010	The word 'woman' replaced with 'person'	1 March 2014
Breast, subcutaneous mastectomy	31519, 31524, 31525	Four MBS items for mastectomy (31518, 31521, 31524 and 31527) merged into three (31519, 31524, and 31525) as a result of removing the gender specific terminology in the item descriptors ('male' or 'female') and replacing them with gender neutral terminology. Defunct items 31518, 31521 and 31527 were deleted.	1 July 2014
Pelvis ultrasound	55065, 55067, 55068, 55069	Four new pelvis ultrasound items (55065, 55067, 55068, 55069) to substitute gender specific words for gender neutral terminology, where it would not change the clinical or eligibility intent of the item. As a result of these changes, eight defunct pelvis ultrasound items (55044, 55731, 55020, 55732, 55045, 55733, 55022, and 55734) were deleted.	1 July 2014