

Enhanced Primary Care (EPC) Package
New MBS Items
GP Education, Support and Community Linkages
Program

September 2001 Email Update Number 15

1. EPC Web Page

Click on to the title above as a shortcut to the EPC web page.



What's New on the EPC Web Page?
Recently Asked Q&As (August 01)
Enhanced Primary Care in Aged Care Homes
Domiciliary Medication Review – Guidelines
Tracked changes to the Medicare Benefits Schedule Explanatory Notes

2. National Profile

Nationally, there were 225,636 EPC services provided over this period. Of these services, approximately 73% consisted of health assessment items, 3% were for case conferencing items, and 24% comprised care-planning items. Since November 2000 2,229 care planning and case conferencing services have been provided to residents in aged care facilities.

The month by month uptake figures show a significant increase in the total number of EPC MBS services provided over the four months to June 2001, with 22,351 services provided in May and 25,763 in June 2001.

The increase in care planning services has been even more substantial, with 11,708 care planning services provided in June 2001, which is approximately 45% of the total EPC services provided in that month June.

Collette Murray Medicare Branch

3. Domiciliary Medication Management Review

DMMR will also be known as the Home Medicines Review. Guidelines have been sent to SBOs to be distributed to divisions as advanced notice. Collette Murray spoke about the new item at the EPC Network meeting on the 17th of August. The new MBS item 900 has been approved and will be included in the November 2001 Medicare Benefits Schedule. It is likely that the new item will be gazetted to be available from 1 October. For Guidelines See *What's New*

This Guidance is currently being finalised for design, printing and distribution. It is expected that initial copies of the Guidance will be distributed through Divisions of General Practice. The Guidance will also be a key resource for Medication Management Review Facilitators who will be employed in Divisions to support the operation of DMMR.

4. EPC Network

Welcome to Meg Bailey at Ballarat Division.

5. Changes to EPC in the November Schedule

There are changes to the explanatory notes for the EPC items for the November 2001 schedule. The only change to the items is to Item 722 where the item missed the reference to it being a discharge item in the current schedule. Changes to explanatory notes have also been made and have been sent as an edited version for you to be able to identify the changes. See *What's New*

6. Carers and the EPC MBS Items

The issue of carer involvement in the EPC MBS items was raised during the post-implementation review of the items in July 2000. The specific issue was whether a patient's informal or family carer should be able to count as one of the minimum three members of a multidisciplinary care planning or case conferencing team. There were different views on this matter and the Department undertook to consult with carer representatives.

A working group was established earlier this year with representatives of the Carers Association and the Department's Aged and Community Care, Health Services and Health Access and Financing Divisions. Following consideration by the working group and consultation with representatives of GP groups, amendments have been made to the EPC MBS explanatory notes to clarify the involvement of carers with the EPC items (see *What's New*, showing amendments in track changes mode).

The explanatory notes now describe informal or family carers (in similar terms to the Carer Information Kit) and give guidance on how they may be involved in the EPC MBS items. The working group has also discussed the content of guidance for GPs in providing EPC services for patients with carers. Such guidance could eg:

- Highlight the value of carer involvement in multidisciplinary care teams;
- Outline the benefits to GPs of including carers in the management of patients with chronic conditions and multidisciplinary care needs;
- provide GPs with information on how to involve carers in the EPC items; and
- Include case studies/scenarios.

The guidance may be included in a future supplement or revised edition of the RACGP EPC Guidelines and Standards. Any views or willingness to contribute to the development of such guidance would be welcomed.

7. Residential Aged Care Facilities

An article providing a brief overview of the Enhanced Primary Care MBS Items and focusing on the November 2000 changes affecting residents in residential aged care homes, will be published in the next edition of the Australian Nursing Homes and Extended Care Association's ANHECA News see *What's New*.

8. Translated Brochures

As you are aware, DH&AC recently had the Consumer and Allied Health Provider Brochures translated into the top eleven community languages. The translated brochures are available for down loading in PDF format from the EPC MBS Website. Samples of the brochures covering information on the EPC MBS items for both consumers and allied health professionals will be mailed out by the Department to ethnic and multicultural organisations publications shortly.

<http://www.health.gov.au/hsdd/primcare/enhancpr/epcbrochure.htm#translated>

Please let Graham know if you experience any difficulties in down loading a file.

