

MEDIA RELEASE



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Changes to Medicare items good start on removing red tape

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) has welcomed the changes to simplify the Medical Benefits Schedule (MBS) that the Federal Government will introduce in May next year. However, the RDAA has warned the government that whilst welcome the changes will do little to attract doctors to rural practice. The Association continues to call on the government to introduce a rural rescue package to help attract and retain doctors in rural practice.

“The RDAA has been calling on the government for some time to simplify the MBS, reduce red tape and allow payment for more than one doctor who treats a patient in emergency circumstances” RDAA CEO, Steve Sant, said.

“The reduction in the number of items through merging of items and changes to item description will remove much of the problem around ensuring that correct items are claimed. Particularly welcome is the change that allows more than one doctor to claim payment when treating a patient at imminent danger of death.

“In addition to improving the MBS the Government must do more to support rural health services including the introduction of a rural rescue package. A rural rescue package would provide additional incentives to doctor in a direct relationship to how remote their practice is. The government in undertaking reform of the health system must address the ongoing health workforce issues in the bush and the poor health outcomes of people who live in the country.

“The changes to the MBS were done in consultation with the RDAA and other medical organisations, the RDAA looks forward to working with the government to put in place more significant improvements to the MBS in the new year.”

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