



Medicare Benefits Schedule – listing of photography with non-mydriatic retinal cameras

This measure will particularly help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are at risk of the chronic sight-threatening disease diabetic retinopathy. It lists two new items on the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) to cover the testing of the disease with a non-mydriatic retinal camera, which offers a quick, minimally-invasive way of taking images of a patient's eyes. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders will be eligible for the test once every year and non-Indigenous patients once every two years.

Why is this important?

- The service is for patients who would not regularly attend an optometrist or ophthalmologist for a comprehensive eye exam, often due to remoteness and/or socioeconomic barriers.
- Diabetic retinopathy occurs in 25–44 per cent of people with diabetes at any time in their lives. Ninety per cent of people with diabetes will have the disease after 25 years.
- It is estimated that each year 80 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and 24 per cent of non-Indigenous Australians with diabetes do not attend regular screening at the optometrist or ophthalmologist.

Who will benefit?

- The service is expected to benefit around 370,000 people and roughly a quarter of these will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, many of whom are living in rural and remote locations.
- The service will enable GPs to promptly provide this service at the point of consultation rather than referring at-risk patients to another health practitioner.
- General practitioners will receive additional income for providing this service.

How much will this cost?

This measure is ongoing and will cost \$33.8 million from 2016–17 to 2019–20, commencing 1 November 2016.