

## **Medicare payments and bulk billing**

I have a suggestion about how to make it easier for clients to fund health services (in this case psychology but this could be applied elsewhere). Many clients complain that before they can claim their rebate, they have to pay the full amount for the consultation. As a psychologist I am not allowed to merely bill them privately for the "gap" and have them bulk billed for the value of the rebate.

Many people have asked why I cannot do this. I understand that Medicare needs to know how many clients consultations are bulk billed, and that it would confuse their system if there was a mix of true bulk billing along with co-paid accounts.

However this could be easily solved if different item numbers were available to take account of this. For example currently if I bill a client \$140 for a item 80010 consultation where their rebate is \$119.80 they have to pay me the \$140 and then can claim their rebate through the Easyclaim system at my practice. But if I were to bill them for the gap only, and directly claim the rebate from Medicare it could be called item 80010# to advice Medicare that this was a co-paid account. The cost to the client is the same, the service provider is paid the same total and in the same time frame and the client is relieved of the need to have \$140 in their account for the duration of the transactions.