

New MBS items to support children with autism and other pervasive developmental disorders

Since 1 July 2008, new MBS items have been introduced for consultant paediatricians and psychiatrists and allied health providers to enable the diagnosis and treatment of children with pervasive developmental disorders (PDD) including autism.

GPs have a crucial role in enabling access to these new MBS items as they are responsible for determining whether or not to refer a child, with a suspected or actual PDD, to the consultant paediatrician or psychiatrist.

To refer a child, the GP provides a standard referral to the consultant ^ there is no particular form to be completed. In addition, as no new PDD MBS items have been introduced for GPs, a GP would bill for this service using an appropriate existing MBS item.

Following a referral from the GP, the consultant may then refer the child to a speech pathologist, psychologist and/or OT for the purpose of diagnosis and, if appropriate, creation of a treatment and management plan. This service, together with up to 4 allied health services in any combination can be claimed from Medicare.

The consultant is also responsible for referring the child to a speech pathologist, psychologist and/or OT for the provision of treatment services as outlined in the treatment and management plan. Up to 20 allied health services, in any combination, can be claimed from Medicare.

To access these new MBS services, the child must be diagnosed before their 13th birthday and must have received all their allied health services before their 15th birthday.

Further information about the new Medicare items is available on the Department of Health and Ageing website:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/mental-autism> >