Minister Welcomes Medicare Rebate for Aboriginal Health Workers

The Minister for Health, Peter Toyne, has welcomed the Federal Government’s decision to allow registered Aboriginal Health Workers to bulk-bill for immunisation and wound-management services when provided on behalf of a GP.

The two new items, developed in co-operation with the Federal and Territory Governments, will be added to the Medicare Benefits Schedule from 1 May 2006. Both items will receive a full Medicare rebate of $10.40.

“This announcement highlights the close working relationship the Territory government has with Canberra and also recognises the important role Aboriginal Health Workers play in providing effective health care,” Doctor Toyne said.

“This makes a funding stream more relevant to Aboriginal care and more accessible for Aboriginal people.

“This is an important step toward providing better services for people in remote areas and expands the delivery of health care to Aboriginal Territorians.

“We look forward to further commitments on Aboriginal health issues from the Federal Government and we’ll ensure that both governments continue to work together.”

There are about 300 AHWs registered in the Territory, which is the only jurisdiction in Australia where Aboriginal Health Workers are required to be registered by law.

The Federal Government estimates the two new rebate items will cost about $4.3 million dollars over the next five years.

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