



Medicare
Enhanced Primary Care
(EPC) Chronic Conditions
Dental Scheme



Medicare Enhanced Primary Care (EPC) Chronic Conditions Dental Scheme

This scheme provides for up to \$4250 (over two consecutive calendar years) of subsidised rebates for private dental treatment for people with a chronic health conditions (such as HIV). The scheme covers a comprehensive range of dental services including dental assessments, preventive services, extractions, fillings, restorative work and dentures.

The Commonwealth Government is intent on cancelling this Medicare Enhanced Primary Care (EPC) Chronic Conditions Dental Scheme - with the suggestion to transfer the funding to a future new and improved public dental scheme for all Australians. However, the scheme – as it currently stands - still remains open to new and existing people with a Chronic Condition (such as HIV), as its cancellation has fortunately been successfully blocked a number of times in the Senate.

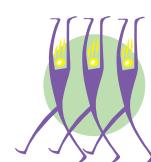
To be eligible, your doctor and dentist must affirm to Medicare that you have a chronic medical condition and complex care needs and that your oral health is impacting on, or likely to impact on, your general health. Existing and prospective patients are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this scheme whilst time still allows in this continuing current funding round. If you are an existing patient on this scheme, you may check your current entitlements by calling **Medicare on 132011**. You'll need to quote your Medicare Card number and you may need to see your GP for a new referral plan (if your existing plan is complete, yet you require further dental care). New patients should consult their EPC registered GP (doctor) in the first instance to make arrangements for an EPC care plan to be developed. Since Medicare does not provide a public list of EPC registered dentists, then it is important to ask your GP, or HIV and Sexual Health Clinic and Community Support Services, for a recommended EPC listed dentist. EPC listed dentists may not exist in all Queensland regions so it's important to ask about gaining access. Many dentists will have an existing **Medicare Provider Number**, and therefore do not need to re-register for providing dental care under this scheme's specific dental item numbers (i.e. 85011 to 87777 as detailed in the Medical Benefits Schedule Dental Service book). Asking a dentist if they are Provider Registered with Medicare, or with an associated scheme called the "TEEN (teenage) Dental Scheme", automatically tells you that they are registered to provide dental work under the Chronic Conditions Dental Scheme as well. However, some specialist dentists (e.g. dental and oral surgeons and radiologists) must register their speciality with Medicare in order to provide their services under this scheme. For further information see the following websites:

- 1) Medicare: <http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/provider/medicare/initiatives/teen-dental.jsp>
- 2) Commonwealth Department of Health & Ageing <http://www.health.gov.au/dental>

Note: this scheme is NOT associated with the public dental clinics, which specifically provide free emergency dental treatment to the general public, although some public dental clinic may under certain circumstances provide **special needs** dental care to people with HIV through a medical referral. However, these public clinics are NOT funded to provide the full range of dental treatments available through the EPC Chronic Conditions Dental Scheme. This scheme is for providing access to **enhanced and complex dental care needs** through **private** dental practitioners under a Medicare approved (dental) Care Plan.

Parliamentary Senators who have opposed the disbanding of the scheme have stated that any further attempts by the Commonwealth to disband this scheme will need to 'grandfather' those already registered - meaning that patients who enter onto the scheme prior to any future closure of the scheme should be granted an 'extension' period to allow completion of their existing dental care plan (over the allotted 2 year entitlement period). However, such assurances of 'grandfathering' are not guaranteed until known. Meantime, it may be useful to discuss timelines and completion dates of your dental work under this plan with your doctor and dentist, for a timely delivery of dental care that is appropriate to your specific and individual care needs.

...Follow the steps on following page for initiating your dental care plan under this scheme:



queensland
positive
people



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Make an appointment to see your GP (doctor). You might need a longer appointment so check with your doctor or clinic staff

Ask your GP to send your Care Plan to Medicare ASAP.

Check with Medicare that your information and referral has been processed by calling Medicare on 132 011.

Make the appointment with your nominated dentist under your EPC Care Plan.

SMILE with confidence.

Ask your doctor if you are eligible for the EPC program (most people with HIV are). If eligible, your doctor will prepare an EPC 'Care Plan' and a referral to a Dentist under the scheme. You can suggest a dentist yourself if you know one that is registered with the program.

Note: Your GP may be able to recommend a dentist that bulk bills (or is prepared to bulk bill in your case). Dentist are entitled to set their own item fees beyond the Medicare EPC item rebate allowance, so out-of-pocket additional charges may apply. You can ask for a quote on the entire work needed from the dentist and what out-of-pocket expenses you might incur (if any).

You cannot start EPC dental treatment until your Care Plan is processed by Medicare.

Once Medicare has processed your referral you can start treatment under the EPC scheme.

Take a copy of your Care Plan and your referral to your first dental appointment.

You have taken care of one of the most important health issues for people living with HIV.

Note: Some procedures are expensive and may not be covered by this program. Ask for a quote for the initial consultation, and how they need to be paid as some will ask for a fee up front. Your quote should include costs for assessment (X-Rays, history, examination and/or cleaning). You may need to have some work done at this first appointment (fillings etc.), but always check the costs before consenting. If the dentist does not bulk-bill entirely or in part, it is at this point you may also ask for a quote on the complete dental work needed under your entire Care Plan.

Further Information:

Commonwealth Department of Health and Aging
www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/Dental+Care+Services
Medicare:
<http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/provider/medicare/initiatives/teen-dental.jsp>

Additional Information:

Please contact Queensland Positive People (QPP) on [07] 3013 5555 or 1800 636 241, or contact your GP (doctor). If you have any concerns about dental care that you have received you should contact QPP. QP and other community based HIV support services may also be able to assist you in locating a dentist who is registered under the EPC Chronic Conditions Dental Scheme. Please also review the AFAO Oral Health Briefing Paper (dated Oct 2007) located on the QPP website and the Oral Health Fact Sheet. See the Health & Wellbeing section of our website.