



Medicare

Medicare is Australia's publicly funded universal health access insurance system. Medicare is funded primarily through the Medicare Levy, however this levy does not cover the full cost of Medicare. Some funding comes from general revenue. Australia has one of the most efficient health systems in the world. Australia invests around 9 per cent of Gross Domestic Product in health care. The US, one of the only industrialised countries not to provide universal health care, spends around 18 percent of its GDP on health care. Medicare is available to all Australian citizens. All Australians should be able to access health care when and where they need it.

It is the position of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation that:

1. Equitable access to health care is a fundamental right for every Australian.
2. Access to health care should be available to all residents of Australia at the time of need, regardless of capacity to pay including those seeking Australian residency.
3. Publicly funded universal health insurance is the most efficient and effective method for allocating health care resources affordably and equitably at the time of need.
4. Medicare should be expanded to cover basic dental procedures and other services provided by allied health practitioners.
5. All Nurse Practitioners and midwives with scheduled medicines endorsement should be able to access the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) to enable Medicare rebates for services and provide medicines from the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) at equivalent payment rates for same services by other health practitioners and in support of equitable access to health care.
6. All Nurse Practitioners and midwives with scheduled medicines endorsement should be able to access the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) for approved medicines within their scope of practice, to enable persons to whom they provide care to receive PBS subsidies for their prescriptions. Prescribing arrangements may vary across States and Territories. Nurse Practitioners must prescribe in accordance with all relevant government policies.
7. Medicare is supported as Australia's publicly funded universal health access insurance system.
8. Medicare rebates should be set at a reasonable level so as to ensure bulk billing occurs.

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