



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

Letter for Software Vendors to provide to prescribers and dispensers

Dear <client>

The Department of Health and Ageing has introduced a new IT system for the PBS to ensure its continued high levels of service into the future. This has been a task of immense complexity and has been undertaken to replace over forty existing data systems some of which have been in use for nearly twenty years.

The introduction of the new IT system means that PBS software updates by vendors will be rolled out over the two weeks, concluding by 14 December 2012.

The Department of Health and Ageing, would like to express its appreciation of the work being undertaken by the medical software community. All software vendors have worked to very tight timeframes to maintain their quality assurance and to roll out their PBS supporting software packages for December 2012. Implementing this major system upgrade will support the operation of the PBS for many years to come.

A number of changes to the Schedule come into effect on 1 December 2012 (e.g. where there are price changes or delisted brands). Full details of these updates will be published on www.pbs.gov.au in both downloadable and print ready versions.

While not all prescribers and pharmacies will have fully up to date software for 1 December, **the correct PBS prices will be available on www.pbs.gov.au** where a print version can be downloaded to enable correct dispensing scripts that were modified by the 1 December changes to the PBS Schedule.

The PBS Online Claiming system has been updated in accordance with the 1 December 2012 PBS Schedule. This means that claims for new items, new brands of existing items and price changes will be able to be claimed at the correct price.

Community pharmacies who have not had their dispensing software updated have been requested to hold off submitting their claims for payment until their software has been updated. It will be important that dispensing software is updated and claims for payment have been entered by 21 December 2012 to ensure that patients' 2012 safety net arrangements are not disrupted. This process will ensure that the reimbursed amount is correct at the time of claiming.

Some of the price changes will mean that certain items which were above the general patient co-payment now fall below this threshold. In these instances, **it is very important not to charge patients more than the maximum permitted price for PBS items** as this is required by law. If in doubt, please check for the correct price on www.pbs.gov.au. Under co-payment prescription data should be submitted when pharmacy dispensing software is upgraded with the 1 December 2012 changes. The dispensing date should be accurately reflected when the under co-payment data is submitted.

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The Government acknowledges efforts to of the software community, prescribers and pharmacists in implementing this major system upgrade which is essential as the legacy IT system was reaching capacity.

The Department of Health and Ageing and the Department of Human Services will continue working together with prescribers and dispensers to ensure any potential impact on patients, prescribers and pharmacists is minimised.

Information specific to prescribers

Until such time as the December PBS updates are rolled out, prescribers will need to familiarise themselves with the new, amended or deleted listings. Detail of the changes will be available at www.pbs.gov.au from 1 December 2012

The vast majority of items on the PBS have had no change; prescribers will be able to continue to use the October updated prescribing software to produce a computer generated script for these items.

However, when prescribing new or amended items, prescribers will need to use a prescription pad to hand write these items.

It will be important for prescribers to ensure that they prescribe in accordance with the 1 December 2012 PBS Schedule to ensure that there is no disruption to patient care/access and that dispensers are not placed at risk of inappropriately dispensing.

Information specific to dispensers

Community pharmacies, hospitals and dispensing doctors whose dispensing software has not been updated will need to familiarise themselves with the new, amended or deleted listings to ensure that medicines prescribed before dispensing are in accordance with the 1 December 2012 PBS Schedule. Details of all changes will be available at www.pbs.gov.au.

Information specific to Responsible Persons (PBS medicine suppliers)

The PBS Online Claiming system has been updated in accordance with the 1 December 2012 PBS Schedule. This means that claims for new items, new brands of existing items and price changes will be able to be claimed at the correct price.