



# INFORMATION SHEET



## Medicare Benefit Schemes: The Enhanced Primary Care Plan, The Mental Health Care Plan and the new Helping Children with Autism Program.

### Enhanced Primary Care Plan

- **5 sessions with an Allied Health Professional**, (see below for a list of which professionals are Allied Health Professionals), as well as,
- **\$4250 worth of dental treatment** if the doctor writing the referral feels that the chronic condition (autism spectrum disorder) is causing the dental problems. (Problems such as teeth grinding, eating non edible items, refusing to brush teeth etc could be attributed to the child's Autism Spectrum Disorder.) The total payment is available across two consecutive years.

People with Autism are automatically eligible for the EPC because an Autism Spectrum Disorder is a Chronic Condition.

The EPC can be written by your G.P and people with autism are eligible for 5 sessions every calendar year. Once the initial plan has been made, they will not need GPs to write new plans each year, but GPs may review the plan.

<u>Allied Health Professionals.</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Psychologists</li><li>• Occupational Therapists</li><li>• Speech Pathologists</li><li>• Social Workers</li><li>• Dieticians</li><li>• Asthma Educators</li><li>• Audiologists</li><li>• Orthotists or Prosthetics</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dental Therapists</li><li>• Pharmacists</li><li>• Dentists</li><li>• Podiatrists</li><li>• Physiotherapists</li><li>• Diabetes Educators</li><li>• Exercise Physiologists</li><li>• Aboriginal Health Workers</li><li>• Optometrists</li></ul>

[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-medicare-health\\_pro-gp-pdf-allied-cnt.htm](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-medicare-health_pro-gp-pdf-allied-cnt.htm)

## **Mental Health Care Plan**

- **12 sessions of individual therapy with a Psychologist, Occupational Therapist or Social Worker.**  
An additional six sessions may be available in exceptional circumstances
- **12 Group Sessions of Therapy with a psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Social Worker or Psychiatrist.**
- **Rebates for assessment and treatment by a Psychiatrist.**

The Mental Health Care Plan is an option available for anybody (individuals with an ASD, parents, siblings, carers...) who feels that their overall wellbeing and mental health is affected. Mental illness is common; around 1 in 5 Australians will experience a mental illness at some stage in their lives. Your Mental Health can be affected by a number of things; Physical problems such as chemical imbalances in the brain and infections, as well as non physical problems such as exposure to trauma, family environments, cumulative stress and difficult life events. We know that having a child with autism can be hard. Any members of the family who are feeling sad, confused, depressed or anxious about the person in the family who has an autism spectrum disorder should see their G.P. to discuss other professionals who may be able to support them, such as social workers, counsellors.

People who have autism spectrum disorders can also have mental health difficulties. They may be anxious about the environments around them; they may be depressed because they are having difficulty forming relationships with other people. There are many reasons why they would be eligible to access the Mental Health Care Plan, and they should be encouraged to seek support from the appropriate professionals.

Group sessions can be used for Social skills groups, play therapy groups, anxiety groups; any group that is run by the above listed professionals and is working towards building the confidence, self esteem and ability of the person with an autism spectrum disorder.

People are eligible for 12 sessions under the Mental Health Care Plan every calendar year. You can get a referral from your G.P. or Paediatrician. Make sure you book a long consultation with your doctor to allow you and your doctor enough time to prepare a GP Mental Health Care Plan and discuss your treatment options. After the initial plan has been written, you do not need a new plan each year, but the doctor may review the plan. The doctor may also refer you for 6 sessions initially then review the plan.

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

## **Helping Children with Autism - New as of July 1<sup>st</sup> 2008.**

- **4 Appointments for Private Diagnosis referred by a Paediatrician for use with a Child Psychiatrist, Psychologist, Speech Therapist, Occupational Therapist.** This is called the *'Helping Children with Autism Increased Access To Diagnosis'*
- **20 Sessions of Speech, Occupational Therapy or Psychology.** This is called the *'Helping Children With Autism Treatment Plan'*

Families have the option of using the Medicare rebate system to help pay for private assessments. The family's paediatrician can diagnose the child with autism, in collaboration with a private speech therapist, an occupational therapist and a psychologist. The rebate allows a total of four sessions with these professionals. (Together not each)

With a diagnosis of a Pervasive Developmental Disorder, the child will be eligible for **20 sessions** shared between a speech therapist, an occupational therapist or a psychologist. Your paediatrician will develop a treatment plan for your child with you.

These rebates can only be used once in the child's life time, and must be written by the child's 13<sup>th</sup> birthday, and used by the child's 15<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

[www.fahcsia.gov.au/autism](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/autism)

- **With all referrals, it is important to see somebody who has knowledge and understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorders. Please call Autism Victoria for contact details of professionals**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Q. Can I use all these at the same time?**

A. Yes!

### **Q. Can I use the 20 Sessions more than once?**

A. Your child will receive this plan once in his/her life time.

### **Q. Does the referral need to be written by my Paediatrician?**

A. The Helping Children with Autism referrals need to be written by your paediatrician, the EPC and MHCP can be written by your G.P.

**Q. Are these sessions free of cost?**

A. No – you will receive a rebate from Medicare – this rebate does not cover the total cost of the service. Please check with Medicare the amount you will receive.

**Q. Can the Allied Health Professional that is seeing my child for the 20 sessions also be my professional of choice for the HCWA initiative?**

A. If the therapist is on the FAHCSIA approved panel you may use this therapist. If the therapist is not on the approved panel you will need to source a service provider that is approved by FAHCSIA.

Quick Reference Table			
	Enhanced Primary Care Plan	Mental Health Care Plan	Helping Children with Autism Treatment Plan
<b>Total Number of Sessions</b>	5 + Dental	12 Ind. + 12 Group	20
<b>When Must I Use It By?</b>	Each Calendar Year	Each Calendar Year	Childs 15 <sup>th</sup> Birthday
<b>Speech Therapy</b>	✓	✗	✓
<b>Psychology</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Occupational Therapy</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Social Worker</b>	✓	✓	✗
<b>Group Sessions</b>	✗	✓	✗
<b>G.P.s write the referral</b>	✓	✓	✗
<b>Paediatricians write the referral?</b>	✗	✓	✓
<b>Adults Eligible</b>	✓	✓	✗