



**THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP**  
**Minister for Health and Ageing**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Medicare Red Tape Slashed**

Patients and doctors are set to benefit from the Rudd Government's moves to streamline and simplify the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS).

15 measures to simplify the schedule, remove red tape and encourage preventative care will be in place by 1 May 2010.

This is part of the Government's work to put primary care at the frontline of our health system and ensure that we encourage GPs to deliver quality preventative health.

The Government's action addresses doctor's concerns that the current MBS is overly complex, encourages 'six-minute medicine' and fails to encourage preventative care, particularly for those with chronic illnesses.

Patients will benefit from longer consultations that will pay a higher fee of \$66.45 and will be better supported to manage their chronic conditions or to stay healthy.

The extra costs associated with higher rebates will be offset by the savings in the simplification process, making the reforms cost neutral.

Clearer Medicare item descriptors will give GPs greater confidence and greater reward to spend more time with patients to deal with multiple health problems and provide valuable preventative care.

Item numbers will be reduced by merging similar items, with the number of items in the relevant parts of the schedule reduced from 85 to 33 – a total reduction of 52 items. The explanatory notes will be made clearer and cut in length by more than 40 per cent. After hours items will be simpler and made more attractive for doctors to use.

The much needed review of Medicare items was announced last December. Before taking action the Government consulted extensively with consumers, doctors and other health care providers to develop specific reforms that would deliver results for patients and benefit GPs.

These important reforms are part of the Rudd Government's broad agenda to shape an improved, patient centred, health system.

They will help Australians stay healthier for longer, better support and reward our valuable GPs and take the pressure off our acute care services.

**For all media inquiries please contact the Minister's Office on 02 6277 7220**