

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CHANGES TO REBATES FOR IVF

As you would be aware, the Federal Government has announced its intention to place caps on Safety Net Payments for Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) numbers for items relating to Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) services. The Federal Government has announced it intends to apply these caps from January 1st 2010. The proposed caps can be found on the MNS online website <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/mbsonline/publishing.nsf/Content/Medicare-Benefits-Schedule-MBS-1>. Another critical piece of the puzzle is still missing, which is what increase will apply to the rebates paid to you for affected MBS item numbers. The Government adjusts the MBS scheduled rebates each year from November 1st, so clarity on these issues is likely by then.

Until then, what does all this mean for you?

If you are having treatment in 2009, there is no change to current arrangements.

From 1st January 2010, the exact impact cannot be calculated. However, I am also aware from talking to many of you that you understand this, but still need to plan ahead with whatever information is available. I will continue to update this page therefore, when we have more information. In the meantime, my best estimate at this stage appears below:

At this stage, the proposed changes most likely mean that the out of pocket expenses you pay as a patient will increase. The extent of the increase is not clear. What is clear however, and I think it is critical to point this out, is that there will remain significant Federal Government funding of ART services. The overall percentage funded by the Federal Government will undoubtedly decrease, but I expect it is likely to remain at over 50% of the costs of a typical cycle. This is a diminishment of the present situation, but in world terms, is still a major ART support program.

So, the key points so far are:

- ⌚ No-one in current treatment is affected
- ⌚ The MBS schedule is adjusted on 1st November, but no details are known yet
- ⌚ The proposed Safety Net Caps for IVF will commence on 1st January 2010. See the link above for further details.
- ⌚ It is clear that the combined effect of the two changes above will increase out of pocket expenses for ART.
- ⌚ Federal Government subsidies for ART services will remain, but at a diminished level, possibly at just above 50% compared to levels over 80% at present.

If you have any questions in relation to treatment and the Medicare Safety Net please feel free to call Wesley Monash IVF Reception Staff on 07 3232 7088.