



The Australasian Association of Nuclear Medicine Specialists (AANMS) represents nuclear medicine and molecular imaging in Australia and New Zealand. The organisation has been representing the profession since 1969.

The purpose of the AANMS is to:

- Promote and advance the clinical practice of the medical speciality
- Initiate, guide and evaluate training programs in Nuclear Medicine
- Support and promote the provision of high quality Nuclear Medicine
- Support and promote high quality research in Nuclear Medicine
- Advise and consult with appropriate authorities on all matters pertaining Nuclear Medicine
- Represent the interests of Nuclear Medicine in Australia and New Zealand

Background

The focus of this submission from AANMS is on indexation for nuclear medicine and particularly the economic cost of the lack of indexation. AANMS engaged Synergies Economic Consulting to develop the case for the Federal Government to restore indexation for Nuclear Medicine. The report *Economic cost of the lack of indexation for nuclear medicine* is provided in full as a part of this submission.

The lack of indexation of Medical Benefits Schedule (MBS) fees for nuclear medicine services since 1998 means that the MBS is no longer fulfilling one of its core objectives of helping to meet part of the increased costs associated with the supply of nuclear medicine imaging services. After more than 20 years, indexation to cover the inflationary component of increased healthcare costs associated with salaries and wages, practice, and procedural costs is necessary to achieve the objectives of the MBS.

The current policy freeze on indexation for nuclear medicine services means the burden of cost inflation for these set of services has been shifted onto patients and providers, a situation that continues to worsen with time, with would ultimately lead cessation of this necessary component of medical care for the Australians. The indexation of MBS items relating to nuclear medicine services would lead to mitigation of these adverse consequences, protecting the economic benefits derived from the provision of nuclear medicine services to patients and the healthcare system.

Recommendations

The report developed by Synergies Economic Consulting for AANMS does not outline the costs of indexation. This is a piece of work which requires the resources of Government to undertake, as has been done for the application of indexation for other areas of the MBS. The report demonstrates the case for the need for indexation including the impact it is having on patients and the nuclear medicine profession. It establishes the basis for how indexations should be applied.

The AANMS recommends that the 2021-22 Federal Budget commit resources through the Department of Health to undertake the work to determine the levels of indexation required and the timeframe for this to be applied, with this work to begin implementation in the 2022-23 Federal Budget.