



## REDUCING UNNECESSARY BONE DENSITOMETRY TESTING

*The Australian Government is making changes to Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) funded bone densitometry testing following recommendations from the MBS Review Taskforce.*

### What are the changes?

The Government is amending items for bone densitometry tests when used as screening tests for osteoporosis in patients 70 years and over.

Clinical evidence suggests frequent bone density testing for most people aged 70 years and over is unnecessary. However, some practitioners are ordering frequent bone densitometry tests for this group of patients. To address this, the Government is more closely linking the item descriptor to the clinical evidence, which will ensure low risk patients aged 70 years and over only have tests once every two or five years, depending on their risk profile.

All patients aged 70 years and over will remain eligible for an initial screening test and the intervals for testing after that will be based on the results of this initial test.

Changes are also being made to clarify the rules around provider eligibility and ensure these testing services are only performed by suitably qualified practitioners.

The changes will commence on 1 November 2017.

### Why are these changes being made?

The changes were recommended by the MBS Review Taskforce following an extensive period of consultation.

The Taskforce is conducting a clinician-led review, which makes recommendations to the Government on how the MBS can be

modernised to improve patient safety, support equity of access and reduce waste.

### What does this mean for patients?

All patients aged 70 years and over will remain eligible for an initial screening test and the intervals for testing after that will be based on the results of this initial test.

These changes do not affect patients diagnosed with osteoporosis, as future testing will occur using other relevant bone densitometry items specifically for patients with osteoporosis.

Patients with other conditions that increase the risk of osteoporosis, including chronic liver disease, chronic renal disease and rheumatoid arthritis, will also not be affected by this change.

Further details on all the changes can be found on [www.mbsonline.gov.au](http://www.mbsonline.gov.au).