

**Health Insurance (1991-1992 General Medical Services Table) Regulations
(Amendment) 1992 No. 70**

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

STATUTORY RULES 1992 No. 70

Issued by the authority of the Minister for Health, Housing and Community Services

Health Insurance Act 1973

Health Insurance (1991-1992 General Medical Services Table) Regulations (Amendment)

Section 133 of the Health Insurance Act 1973 (the Act) provides that the Governor-General may make regulations for the purposes of the Act.

Section 4 of the Act provides, among other things, that the regulations may prescribe a table of medical services (other than pathology services) in accordance with the form of table set out in Schedule 1 and that, upon commencement of a regulation prescribing a table of medical services, the prescribed table has effect as if it were set out in Schedule 1 in place of the table in that Schedule. The Health Insurance (General Medical Services Table) Regulations prescribe such a table.

Section 9 of the Act provides that Medicare benefits shall be calculated by reference to 'the fees for general medical services set out in the table of general medical services (the table) in Schedule 1 to the Act.

The amendments alter the table of general medical services and its rules for interpretation as set out in the 1991-1992 Regulations.

As part of the ongoing review of items in the general medical services table to ensure that they reflect current medical practice, the Medicare Benefits Consultative Committee (MBCC) undertook a review of gynaecological, endovascular and image guided interventional services. Agreement to changes resulting from these reviews has been reached with the Royal Australian College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Royal Australasian College of Radiologists, the Vascular Surgery Section of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and the Australian Medical Association. The changes involve revision of item descriptions and the inclusion or deletion of new or obsolete items.

Gynaecological services have been amended to achieve a general tightening of item descriptions and new items introduced to cover recently developed operative procedures which are less invasive than existing open operative procedures.

The descriptions of items relating to endovascular and image guided interventional services have been amended to specifically describe current medical practice.

Comprehensive changes to orthopaedic and oral and maxillofacial surgery items in the table were implemented from 1 December 1991. However, due to an oversight, a number of items were omitted. These services have attracted benefits under Section 3C of the Act pending their inclusion in the table at this time. The fees for a number of services have been adjusted to maintain relativities between the various specialty groups.

Other minor amendments have been made to item descriptions to more accurately reflect modern medical practice.