

**Health Insurance (1991-1992 General Medical Services Table) Regulations
(Amendment) 1992 No. 191**

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

STATUTORY RULES 1992 No. 191

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 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 service, 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 of the Act.

The Regulations amended the Health Insurance (General Medical Services Table) Regulations by altering the table of general medical services and the rules of interpretation of the table, substituting three new optometrical items in the table for the existing optometrical item 10901. This amendment made rule 8 in the existing rules of interpretation redundant and consequently it is omitted.

Discussions were held between the Department of Health, Housing and Community Services, the Royal Australian College of Ophthalmologists (RACO) and the Australian Optometrical Association (AOA) because of concerns held by RACO that Rule 8 which related to item 10901 allowed optometrists to treat medical conditions. Item 10901 had been introduced into the table effective from 1 December 1991. Both RACO and the AOA have agreed to the changes.

The new items further improve monitoring by the Health Insurance Commission of the incidence of optometrists claiming a comprehensive consultation within 24 months of a previous initial or comprehensive consultation, so that any abuse can be detected.

The Regulations are to commence on 1 July 1992.