



Medicare Mental Health Centres

As part of the Australian Government's \$360 million plan to expand the range of free mental health services, 61 walk-in Medicare Mental Health Centres are being established across Australia, building on the existing Head to Health network.

The centres, formerly known as Head to Health centres, will have their clinical capability upgraded to ensure that every centre can provide free access to a psychologist and psychiatrist. These changes will better align these services with other trusted, clinical services provided by the Australian Government.

About the change

- All Head to Health adult mental health centres across Australia have been renamed Medicare Mental Health Centres.
- Existing Head to Health adult mental health centres will have signage updated by the end of 2024.
- The new name will not impact the services currently available at Head to Health centres.
- The name change to Medicare Mental Health Centres aligns these services with other trusted, clinical services funded by the Australian Government.
- A Medicare card is not required to access the centres.
- Medicare Mental Health Centres will continue to provide access to free mental health care for anyone living in Australia.
- Other Head to Health services including the Head to Health Phone Service (1800 595 212), Head to Health website and Head to Health Kids Hubs will remain unchanged.

Medicare Mental Health Centre services

- Medicare Mental Health Centres will provide free, quality mental health care that is easy to get when you need it.
- Medicare Mental Health Centres will be for everyone, even if you've never asked for mental health help before.
- You won't need an appointment, referral or Medicare card to visit a Medicare Mental Health Centre. Anyone living in Australia will be able to walk in and talk to someone for mental health support.
- Medicare Mental Health Centre teams will include highly qualified mental health professionals and peer workers. They will work with you to provide the right mental health support for your needs.

The changes

- Over time, you will notice signage and the look of communication materials change to reflect the new Medicare Mental Health Centre name.

- The Australian Government will work closely with service providers to make sure the change goes smoothly and doesn't disrupt mental health care.
- The Australian Government will provide additional funding to enhance Medicare Mental Health Centre services. This will make sure that people with more complex needs receive the care they need from a range of mental health professionals, including psychologists and psychiatrists.

When the change will happen

- Current Head to Health centres will be rebranded to Medicare Mental Health Centres by the end of 2024.

More information

- More information about Medicare Mental Health Centres will be available soon on health.gov.au.
- In the meantime, to find your closest centre or mental health care service:
 - visit headtohealth.gov.au
 - or call Head to Health on 1800 595 212, between 8:30am to 5pm weekdays.
- In an emergency, call triple zero (000) or go to the closest emergency department.

Frequently asked questions

Why are Head to Health centres being renamed?

The change to Medicare Mental Health Centres better aligns these services with other trusted, clinical services provided by the Australian Government.

The network of adult mental health centres will make it easier for people living in Australia to get mental health care close to home.

When will the change take place?

Current Head to Health centres will be rebranded to Medicare Mental Health Centres by the end of 2024.

A Medicare Mental Health Centres website will be launched soon. In the meantime, updates will be provided through headtohealth.gov.au.

Will the change affect existing services?

Only the centre name is changing. There will no changes to the free, comprehensive and compassionate service provided through existing Head to Health adult mental health centres.

There will be no change to other Head to Health branded services, including the:

- national Head to Health Phone Service (1800 595 212)
- Head to Health website (headtohealth.gov.au)
- network of Head to Health Kids Hubs being established across Australia.

How will Medicare Mental Health Centres be different from other mental health support services?

Medicare Mental Health Centres will provide free, quality mental health care for adults that is easy to access when you need it.

You don't need an appointment, referral or Medicare card. Anyone living in Australia will be able to walk in and talk to someone for mental health support.

Medicare Mental Health Centres will offer immediate, short and medium-term care, and help connect you to the most appropriate services for your ongoing needs. This may be support offered from one or more services, depending on what's best for you.

Staff will talk with you about your concerns and goals to identify the support you need. This may involve receiving mental health care through a Medicare Mental Health Centre. Alternatively, staff may connect you with other services and supports available in your local area.

Who will be able to access Medicare Mental Health Centres?

Medicare Mental Health Centres will provide mental health support for adults living in Australia. The centre team will help young people find the best support in your local area. This may be through another age-appropriate service, such as headspace or Head to Health Kids.

You won't need an appointment, referral or Medicare card to access services.

How will I be able to access a Medicare Mental Health Centre?

You will be able to walk into a Medicare Mental Health Centre for free mental health support.

When you arrive, a trained professional will take the time to talk to you and understand your immediate needs. They may also make an appointment for you to visit again.

For your nearest centre and other mental health support in your area:

- visit headtohealth.gov.au
- call Head to Health on 1800 595 212 (between 8:30am to 5pm weekdays).

Will I need to make an appointment to visit a Medicare Mental Health Centre?

You won't need an appointment, referral or Medicare card to access Medicare Mental Health Centre services.

Anyone living in Australia will be able to walk in and talk to someone for mental health support.

If you prefer to make an appointment, you can do this by calling 1800 595 212 (between 8:30am to 5pm weekdays).

What type of support will I be able to receive from a Medicare Mental Health Centre?

Medicare Mental Health Centres will provide free, immediate, short and medium-term care. The centres will help connect you to the most appropriate services for your ongoing needs. This may be support offered from one or more services, depending on what's best for you.

When you arrive at a Medicare Mental Health Centre, a trained professional will talk to you to understand your immediate needs.

Will Medicare Mental Health Centre services be free?

Yes, all Medicare Mental Health Centres services will be free.

If we think you will benefit from the support of another provider, we will work with you to find an appropriate service in your area. This may include other free or low-cost services.

Other services located in the same building as a Medicare Mental Health Centre may incur a fee. You will be advised of any fees prior to any service.

Will I need a Medicare card to access a Medicare Mental Health Centre?

No. You won't need a Medicare card to access Medicare Mental Health Centre services.

Is there a limit on how many services I will be able to access, or for how long I can use them?

Medicare Mental Health Centres will offer immediate, short and medium-term care, and will help connect you to the most appropriate services for your ongoing needs.

Staff will talk with you about your concerns and goals to identify the support you need. This may involve receiving mental health care through a Medicare Mental Health Centre or connecting you to other services and supports available in your area.

Medicare Mental Health Centres are not intended to duplicate existing services or provide long-term care. If you need long-term care, the Medicare Mental Health Centre will help you find and connect to the support you need.

I already have a private psychologist or mental health clinician. Can I still access Medicare Mental Health Centres?

Please let our team know if you are already seeing a psychologist or another relevant mental health professional. This information will help us find the services and support you need in addition to your current care.

Do I have to go to my GP, or another health provider, to get a referral or mental health treatment plan before seeking Medicare Mental Health Centre services?

You won't need a referral, appointment, or Medicare card to access Medicare Mental Health Centres' free services.

If we think a mental health treatment plan would be helpful, then we can discuss it with your GP, with your consent.

You or your referring provider can call Head to Health on 1800 595 212 for advice and a referral to the most appropriate service. This may be a referral into a Medicare Mental Health Centre, or another suitable service.

Will the treatment I receive at a Medicare Mental Health Centre count towards my 10 sessions under my mental health treatment plan?

No. Treatment provided through Medicare Mental Health Centres is separate to your mental health treatment plan available under the Medicare Benefits Schedule.

If you have a mental health treatment plan, we will make sure the care you receive works well with your current care plan.

Will health advice and plans developed for me be shared with my GP or my other health care providers?

We can share all or parts of any advice and plans with your GP or other health care providers, but only with your consent.

We will encourage you to discuss our advice and support with your GP or other health care providers. If you prefer not to have this information shared with your current health providers that is fine as well.