



Department of Health,  
P.O. Box 5013,  
Wellington.

15 December 1977.

## CLINICAL SERVICES LETTER No. 175\*

### To Medical Practitioners

#### A. INCREASES IN GENERAL MEDICAL SERVICES BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS, AND GMS TRAVEL ALLOWANCE

1. This letter confirms the announcement recently made by the Minister of Health and the New Zealand Medical Association on the Government's decision to increase General Medical Services (GMS) benefits for children and young persons and to increase the GMS travel allowance.

2. The rates applicable to GMS services on or after 1 January 1978 are as follows:

##### *Ordinary Patients (Rates unchanged)*

	\$
Consultations at surgery and visits during normal hours .....	1.25
Urgent consultations at night, weekends, and public holidays	3.00
Urgent visits at night, weekends, and public holidays .....	4.00

3. The GMS rates payable for special group patients have now been separated into two categories.

##### *Special Group Patients:*

- (1) Beneficiaries, pensioners and dependants, and "chronically ill".

##### *(Rates unchanged)*

	\$
Consultations at surgery during normal hours .....	3.00
Visits to patients during normal hours .....	4.00
Urgent consultations at night, weekends, and public holidays .....	6.00
Urgent visits at night, weekends, and public holidays .....	7.00

\*This letter should be read in conjunction with Clinical Services Letter No. 145, 19 November 1974.

(2) Children and young persons.

(Rates previously as for other special group patients)

	\$	Claim Code
Consultations at surgery during normal hours .....	4.75	CJ
Visits to patients during normal hours .....	6.00	VJ
		HJ
Urgent consultations at night, weekends, and public holidays .....	7.00	XCJ
Urgent visits at night, weekends, and public holidays .....	8.00	XVJ
		XHJ

NOTE—Claim code. It has been decided that it is no longer necessary to maintain two code letters to differentiate between dependent children under 16 years of age and those 16 years and over for whom family benefit is still payable. As from 1 January 1978, the code letter 'J' should be used for both categories of patient.

4. *Benefit Increase and Patient Entitlement*—These increases have been approved in agreement with the New Zealand Medical Association on the understanding that any benefit claimed is passed on in full to the patient, as is required under section 98 (4B) of the Social Security Act 1964. The Medical Association has also undertaken to recommend to the profession that any charges over and above the new benefit rates for services rendered to children and young persons should be "nominal or minimal". While the principle is accepted that a doctor is entitled to charge a total fee commensurate with the service provided, it is hoped that, in many cases, doctors will accept the increased benefits in full satisfaction.

5. *GMS Travel Allowance*—As from 1 January 1978, GMS Travel Allowance is increased from 8 cents per kilometre to 16 cents per kilometre. (12.5 cents per mile to 25 cents per mile.)

6. *Rural Practice Bonuses*—These are still payable at current rates, on GMS benefits and Travel Allowance, after 1 January 1978.

7. *Summary of Rates and Codings*—The codings used for claiming, together with the rates of GMS benefit now applicable, are tabulated separately for easy reference—see Appendix.

8. *Extended Time*—The rate for GMS extended time remains at 75 cents for each additional 15 minutes in excess of the first 30 minutes.

9. No changes are necessary in the method of claiming or in the forms required for this purpose.

## B. INCREASES IN SPECIALIST MEDICAL BENEFIT

10. From 1 January 1978, the rates of benefit for specialist medical services will be as follows:

Type of Service	Benefit before 1 Jan. 78	Benefit from 1 Jan. 78
	\$	\$
Initial referred consultation with physicians, paediatricians, psychiatrists, neurologists, and neurosurgeons—		
All patients .....	5.00	20.00
Initial referred consultations with above specialists for electrocardiogram only—		
Children and young persons for whom family benefit payable .....		10.00
All other patients .....		5.00
Initial referred consultations with all other specialists—		
Children and young persons for whom family benefit payable .....	3.50	10.00
All other patients .....	3.50	5.00
Subsequent "treatment" visits to all specialists—		
Children and young persons for whom family benefit payable .....	3.00	4.75
Beneficiaries, pensioners, and the "chronically ill" .....	3.00	3.00
Ordinary patients .....	1.25	1.25

11. The variation in benefit rates has been agreed in consultation with the New Zealand Medical Association. The estimated extra cost in a full year is \$1.5 million.

12. Specialists are being informed in rather more detail by a letter which is being despatched to them by local Medical Officers of Health.

NOTE: The advice of the local Medical Officer of Health will be available if any problems arise in relation to these increased benefit rates.

*D. A. Andrews*

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Director,

*A. G. Scott*

(A. G. Scott)  
Deputy Director,

Division of Clinical Services.

# MEDICAL BENEFITS PAYABLE FROM 1 JANUARY 1978 AND CODINGS

Code

Consultation at surgery.  
Visit to private hospital.

### Domiciliary visit.

Children and young persons for whom family benefit still payable.  
Beneficiary/Pensioner and dependant.

Night service 6 p.m. - 8 a.m. and Saturday, Sunday and public holidays.

## Extended time.

## Operation.

Telephone service.

\*Prefix other code letters where applicable, e.g., XC XV, XVZ.