

24 September 1969.

CLINICAL SERVICES LETTER NO. 88
TO MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

Dear Doctor,

INCREASED GENERAL MEDICAL SERVICES BENEFIT

1. General medical services provided on and after 1 October 1969 to beneficiaries and pensioners and *their dependant wives and children* in receipt of the benefits or pensions specified below, will qualify for a medical benefit not exceeding \$1.50 for an attendance during normal hours, and in the case of night, Sunday or public holiday services, a benefit not exceeding \$2.

The following are eligible:

(a) *Social security benefits*:

- (i) Superannuation, age, widows, invalids, miners and orphans.
- (ii) Sickness, emergency and unemployment.

(b) *War pensions*: War veterans allowances, economic pensions, wives and war orphans pensions.

NOTE—War pensioners not in receipt of an economic pension, and Family Benefits do not qualify for the higher medical benefit.

2. *Establishing eligibility for higher benefit*—Arrangements are being made by the Social Security Department to issue eligibility certificates to all beneficiaries and pensioners entitled to the higher rate. As, however, some 380,000 certificates are involved, issue is not expected to be complete until about mid-November. In the interim, it will be necessary for patients to produce their benefit order books or other evidence that they are in receipt of a Social Security benefit and eligible for the increased G.M.S. benefit. The order books and other evidence for identifying eligibility are:

- (a) Social security order book (blue print)—for age, invalids, widows, orphans and miners benefits.
- (b) Superannuation benefit order book (brown print)—for universal superannuitants.
- (c) War pensions order book (red print)—for war veterans allowances, economic, wives, and orphans war pensions.
- (d) Benefit advice note—for sickness, emergency and unemployment benefits.

NOTE—As (d) are shorter-term benefits the advice note should be sighted to ensure that the benefit is current at the time of presentation.

3. *War pensions order books*—Some difficulty may arise with war pensions order books, until eligible pensioners have been issued with eligibility certificates. They will be among the first for issue by the Social Security Department. The order books of pensioners in receipt of a war veterans allowance bear the letters "W.V.A." on the top left hand corner of the order book cover. There is not, however, any feature to distinguish between pensioners in receipt of a disability pension (which does not qualify for the higher G.M.S.) and those receiving an economic pension (which qualifies). If doubt arises about eligibility, the patient should be referred to the nearest Social Security office.

4. *Benefit number*—This number is printed on the cover of each order book or quoted in the social security advice note. The number consists of a numerical district indicator separated by a bar from the actual benefit number, e.g., 4/2896 or 14/3479. *This number must be quoted in full in claiming the G.M.S. benefit.*

The usual sample check will include claims for this higher G.M.S. rate and in order to verify these with the Social Security Department, it is essential to have the benefit number.

5. *Direct claiming: G.M.S. schedule system*—Providing the benefit number is listed alongside the patient's name in the G.M.S. 2 schedule, the higher rate of benefit will be payable. The letter "P" may be used in the code column. Otherwise, the claiming procedure is the same as for other patients.

6. *Refund system*—It will be necessary for patients claiming under the refund system to quote the benefit number. For this purpose, special application slips (G.M.S. 21) for attachment to the G.M.S. 1 claim form will be supplied by district health offices to doctors using the refund system. The issue of these slips, along with the G.M.S. 1 claim form and the receipt, will assist in ensuring that patients are made aware of their entitlement. Your co-operation in this will be greatly appreciated.

7. Should you desire further information on particular aspects of this higher benefit and the procedure in submitting claims, the medical officer of health for your district will be pleased to assist.

Yours faithfully,

A. W. S. Thompson.

(A. W. S. Thompson)
Director, Division of Clinical Services.