



Changes to the Better Access to Mental Health Care initiative Information for clients

The Federal Government announced funding cuts to the Better Access initiative in the 2011 Budget in order to allocate money to other mental health programs. The changes involve a cut in the number of allowable sessions of treatment that a person can receive from a psychologist each year under the Better Access initiative. This change was applicable from 1 November 2011.

Under the previous arrangements, people could access a maximum of 18 sessions of treatment from a psychologist each year and receive Medicare rebates. This treatment was available in two lots of six sessions following a review of progress by the referring doctor, with a further six sessions available under exceptional circumstances.

New arrangements from 1 November 2011

From 1 November 2011, eligible people can receive:

- A maximum of 10 individual services in a calendar year. Your referring doctor will assess your progress after the first six sessions.
- A maximum of 10 group therapy services in a calendar year where such services are available and seen as appropriate by your referring doctor and the psychologist.

Arrangements for people who were seeing a psychologist through the Better Access initiative prior to 1 November 2011

You will be able to receive the previous annual allowance of up to 12 individual sessions and/or up to 12 group sessions, plus six additional individual sessions under exceptional circumstances, if you receive these psychological services **before 1 November 2011**.

From 1 November 2011, if you have already had 10 or more individual sessions and/or 10 or more group sessions with your psychologist in 2011 you will not be eligible for any further psychological services this year.

In 2012, you may use any remaining sessions you have been referred for and may need another referral if your psychologist and referring doctor consider that you require additional psychological treatment. From 1 January 2012 you will be eligible for a maximum of 10 individual sessions and/or 10 group sessions in the 2012 calendar year.