

Email sent to HBF representative 6th November, 2014

Dear Leroy,

Since our meeting nearly two years ago, I haven't heard anything further about the HBF review into rebate levels for Clinical Psychology services.

As discussed at our meeting and in previous correspondence Medicare rebates for Clinical Psychology services are currently \$124.50 per session, Work Cover pays \$217.80 per 50 minute session and the current recommended fee by our main professional body (Australian Psychological Society) is \$235 per 50 minute session.

HBF has a rebate on top cover, of approximately \$70 a session, and HBF has not increased rebates to Clinical Psychology services for over fifteen years. Therefore HBF has not kept up with the fee structures in private practice and the needs of HBF members to be able to access these private services. This no doubt greatly reduces the incentive for people to take out HBF ancillary cover for Clinical Psychology services and the very low rebates from HBF adds to the many barriers people face in getting adequate mental health services.

Another point I have raised earlier, is that the total amount per year that HBF rebates for Clinical Psychology services is also about the same as for other allied health services, although the time required to spend with a patient in a Clinical Psychology consultation is significantly higher than for other services supported by HBF (50 minutes per therapy session, at least). Therefore fewer sessions can be accessed for mental health issues when compared with other medical or allied health based issues.

Since the Federal Government slashed the Medicare rebated sessions from 18 down to 10 a year ago, many people I, and my colleagues see in private practice have been suffering with not being able to afford to complete their therapy. They sincerely need HBF, as the main health insurer in WA, to be proactive in assisting people to get the proper mental health care they need. Given the recent and ongoing media coverage about mental health in Australia, I could only imagine that with better rebates, more people would consider HBF insurance as an attractive option.

Could you please let me know where the HBF review is at?

Thank you.

Best wishes,

Dr. Jillian Horton
Senior Clinical Psychologist
President of the Australian College of Advanced Postgraduate Psychologists