

Ryan Park
Minister for Health

Courtney Houssos
Minister for Finance

David Harris
Minister for Veterans



Media Release

Minns Labor Government strengthens Bulk-Billing Support Initiative to cover veterans

Friday, 22 November 2024

The Minns Labor Government has passed legislation to extend the payroll tax rebate for GPs available under the \$189 million Bulk-Billing Support Initiative to services billed to veterans with a Gold, White or Orange DVA card.

This means that clinics which specialise in the treatment of veterans are more likely to be able to access the rebate. It will keep their costs down and allow them to continue to offer important primary care services to veterans.

The Bulk-Billing Support Initiative was introduced in the 2024-25 NSW Budget to protect bulk-billing for people needing a GP and reduce the strain on our emergency departments.

Under the initiative, the NSW Government waived \$104m of historical payroll tax liabilities, which began accruing for contractor GPs under the previous Liberal-National Government. It also established an ongoing payroll tax rebate for GP clinics in metropolitan Sydney which bulk-bill at least 80% of their patient services (70% outside of metropolitan Sydney).

The expansion of the Bulk-Billing Support Initiative means that services billed to veterans will count towards the threshold needed to benefit from the payroll tax rebate. It will apply retrospectively to 4 September 2024, when the initiative commenced.

The NSW Government consulted extensively with peak bodies, clinics and agents throughout the design and implementation process of the initiative.

This included legislating a 12-month pause on payroll tax audits for GP practices in September 2023 to allow time for engagement with the sector, and the establishment of a Revenue NSW-led working group to create a practice note to assist clinics, their accountants and legal advisors.

While the issue of veterans' services was never raised during the consultation, the Minns Labor Government has responded quickly to strengthen the initiative following consultation with RSL NSW.

Recent Medicare data showed that an additional 1.8 million GP visits in NSW were bulk-billed in the year to October 2024. This resulted in a 1.3-point increase of the overall bulk-billing rate in NSW to 81.9%, the highest in Australia.

Extending the Bulk-Billing Support Initiative and will boost its effectiveness to provide cost-of-living support for patients and certainty for GPs and clinics.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Ryan Park:

“We know how difficult it can be to access a GP, and when people can’t afford one, they often end up in the emergency department, placing more pressure on our busy hospitals.

“By making GPs more affordable, we can save our busy EDs for emergencies.

“I am so pleased that we are expanding this crucial initiative to veterans.”

Quotes attributable to Minister for Finance Courtney Houssos:

“Having already legislated the removal of historical payroll tax liabilities, these changes will further strengthen the Bulk-Billing Support Initiative.

“This will reduce cost pressures on clinics which are providing important medical care to our service men and women and give veterans greater access to affordable healthcare.

“The Bulk-Billing Support Initiative is the first time the state government has made a strategic investment to support bulk-billing, highlighting the Minns Labor Government’s commitment to relieving cost-of-living pressures.”

Quotes attributable to Minister for Veterans David Harris:

“The Bulk-Billing Support Initiative is a win-win that makes medical care more affordable and accessible for our brave service men and women while easing cost-pressures on our medical care providers.

“In a time when people are really doing it tough making ends meet, I am proud to be part of a Minns Labor Government committed to helping those that serve our nation.”

MEDIA:

Daryl Tan | Minister Park | 0422 028 222

Liam Getreu | Minister Houssos | 0413 374 401

Matt Porter | Minister Harris | 0407 239 578