

Costs associated with care

In line with providing patients up-to-date information, and allowing them to make informed decisions, it is important patients are advised in advance of any potential out-of-pocket expenses for healthcare provided within the practice and for referred services.

Potential costs to consider include: brief, standard and longer consultations; additional costs for late or missed appointments; telephone and electronic communication; nursing consultations; home and other visits or care outside normal opening hours; and medicines, where the medicine is not subsidised, or where the brand name prescribed is more expensive than a generic version. It's important that patients are also made aware of any potential costs when they are being referred to other health care providers.

RACGP 4th Edition Standards

- 1.2.4** *Our practice informs patients about the potential for out-of-pocket expenses for health care provided within our practice and for referred services.*

Assessment methods

- Interviews with GPs and staff

Surveyors will ask GPs, clinical and administrative staff to explain how patients are informed of potential out-of-pocket expenses, including care provided at the practice and when patients are being referred.

Meeting the Standards

Practices must meet the overall criterion, as 1.2.4 does not have any indicators. Practices must have appropriate methods in place so that patients are aware, or advised, of any additional or potential costs, for services provided at the practice and when they are being referred. It isn't necessary for staff to know the fees of all allied health or specialists that patients might be referred to, but staff should recommend patients seek the actual costs themselves, or discuss the option of being referred to a public service if additional costs are a concern.

Best practice

Ideally, the practice's policies and procedures manual will include the process for informing patients about any potential out-of-pocket expenses.