



Health Care Homes Program Cessation – FAQs for enrolled patients

7 May 2021

What is the Health Care Homes (HCH) program?

Health Care Homes (HCH) is a trial program through which general practices or Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) provide a 'home base' for the management of an eligible patient's chronic condition/s. The HCH program delivers coordinated, team-based care around the needs and goals of the patient.

When is the HCH trial program ceasing?

The HCH program is ceasing on 30 June 2021 as planned. The trial program commenced in October 2017 and was extended in November 2019 until 30 June 2021.

Why is the HCH Program ceasing?

HCH is a trial program with a planned end date of 30 June 2021. A government-commissioned evaluation of the program is being undertaken by a consortium led by Health Policy Analysis. The evaluation, under way since the trial's commencement and due for completion in the first half of 2022, has provided close to four years of valuable data and insights into patient-centred, team-based care for people with chronic or complex conditions. The evaluation will document the lessons learned to inform potential future primary care reforms.

Will I notice any difference in my care?

You will continue to have access to your regular care provider and care team following the conclusion of the program. You are encouraged to discuss your ongoing care with your doctor and care team.

My GP was bulk billing my consultations. Will this continue, or will I need to pay for each consultation?

You will be able to receive care for your chronic condition/s under the normal Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) arrangements. This includes the MBS Chronic Disease Management and Telehealth items. It will be at the discretion of individual providers whether they continue to bulk bill. You are encouraged to discuss your ongoing care with your doctor and care team.

Can I continue to contact my practice via telehealth or do I need to attend in person?

Your practice or ACCHS can continue to provide enhanced access to care by utilising telehealth from 1 July 2021. Your practice will be able to provide more information on the care options it will continue to offer.

Will I still have access to Medicare-funded allied health services through my HCH Shared Care Plan?

Following cessation of the Health Care Homes Program, you will still be eligible to access MBS-funded allied health services. As long as the referral made through your Shared Care Plan remains valid, you will be eligible for the same services as non-health care home patients which would otherwise be triggered by a Chronic Disease Management Plan, including individual and group allied health services.

Is the Community Pharmacy in Health Care Homes Trial ceasing too? What will this mean for my medication management?

The Community Pharmacy in Health Care Homes Trial Program will also cease on 30 June 2021. If you were registered in the Community Pharmacy in Health Care Homes trial, you can still access medication management services via your registered pharmacy. You should contact them about continuing medication management services once the program ceases.

Is there anything I need to do as a patient who has been part of the HCH trial?

You will need to discuss with your practice any changes they may make to how you access your care once the program ceases.

Who can patients talk to if they have further questions?

For questions related to your care, please speak directly with your provider. For more general questions around the program and its cessation, please contact healthcarehomes@health.gov.au.

A fact sheet for patients on the HCH program cessation and what this means for patients can be found on the Department's website at <https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-care-homes>.