

medicare

Mental Health Centres



Support for your patients: Medicare Mental Health Centres

Medicare Mental Health Centres provide free care for anyone who needs support with their mental health and feelings.

Medicare Mental Health Centres are welcoming, non-judgemental spaces where adults can access free mental health information, services and support.

Centres are designed to provide immediate help when people need it most, and to support families and carers as well. The Centres are part of the broader Medicare Mental Health network of services and are designed to complement existing care.

Medicare Mental Health Centres are open to everyone. Depending on their location and staff, Centres may be First Nations-led. Please note that cultural knowledge may vary between Centres. It can be helpful to keep this in mind and directly contact your nearest Centre when supporting patients with referrals.

Who can use Medicare Mental Health Centres

- Services are free and patients can simply walk in.
- Adults with moderate to severe mental health needs who need immediate, short- or medium-term care.
- People can also be connected to ongoing care if needed.

- Patients do not need:
 - a diagnosis
 - a referral
 - an appointment or a Mental Health Treatment Plan.

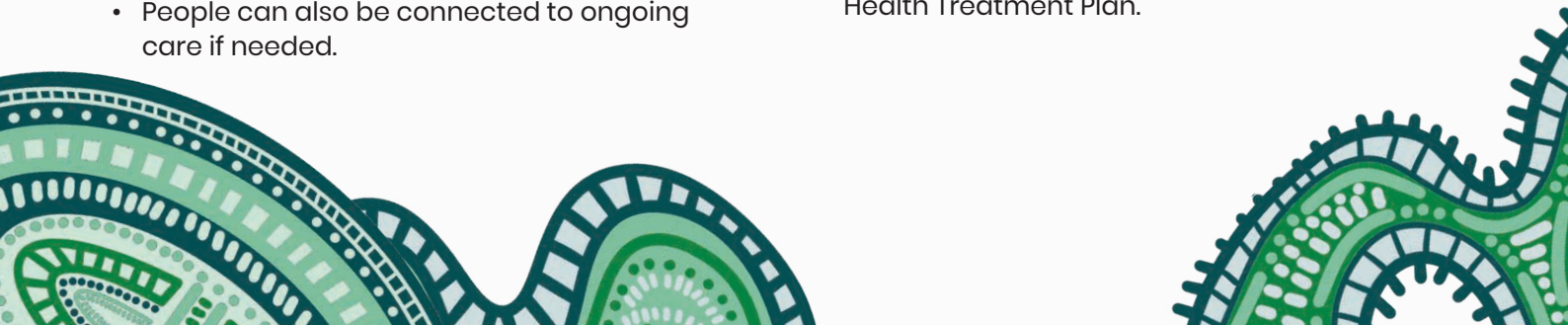
Any sessions or care received through a Centre do not count towards the total subsidised sessions allocated under a Mental Health Treatment Plan through the **Better Access** initiative.

Families, carers, friends and mob worried about a loved one can also visit a Medicare Mental Health Centre or call 1800 595 212 for advice and support.

How Medicare Mental Health Centres can support your patients

As health professionals, you play a vital role in supporting your patients to access the right level of mental health support for their needs. You may choose to recommend a Medicare Mental Health Centre if:

- your patient is in distress and needs to talk with someone quickly, without waiting for another appointment
- your patient would benefit from extra support alongside an existing Mental Health Treatment Plan.



Mental Health Centres

Centres are not intended to replace or duplicate local mental health services, clinics, Aboriginal Medical Services (AMSs) or Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs), but to complement them.

Where your patient agrees, Centre staff will share outcomes of care with you as their doctor or health care provider.

Your patient can access a Centre without a referral or appointment but if you prefer, you can contact your local Centre directly or call 1800 595 212 to book an appointment or to find out more information about local mental health supports.

What Medicare Mental Health Centres provide

Centres bring together a team of mental health professionals and peer workers, including:

- psychologists
- mental health nurses
- social workers
- alcohol and drug workers
- people with lived experience of mental health challenges.

When someone visits, staff take the time to listen and understand their situation. They may provide immediate support, an intake session, or book an assessment.

Centres also offer:

- holistic, evidence-based care in the short- and medium-term
- connection to other supports, including physical health, housing, employment and social services
- support for carers, families and communities
- a 'no wrong door' approach to guide people to the right care.

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Over time, Centres will expand to include free access to psychologists and psychiatrists in person or by telehealth.

What Medicare Mental Health Centres do not provide

- emergency or crisis services (call 000 if someone is at immediate risk of harm)
- pathology, radiology or pharmacy services
- long-term psychosocial or recreational support
- financial support
- bed-based or residential services
- child and youth-specific services (these are available through Medicare Mental Health Kids Hubs, headspace and other providers)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme disability services.

Finding a Centre

- Visit medicarementalhealth.gov.au/centres for your nearest Centre and opening hours.
- Some Centres offer extended hours, including weekends.
- More Centres will open over time, with a network of 91 to be established by mid-2029.

More information

To learn more about Medicare Mental Health, and find support that suits your patient:

- Visit medicarementalhealth.gov.au/centres
- Call **1800 595 212**, Monday to Friday, 8.30am-5.00pm

