

CAPS

Continence Aids Payment Scheme

From 1 July 2010, the Australian Government will introduce the Continence Aids Payment Scheme (CAPS), replacing the existing Continence Aids Assistance Scheme (CAAS). Under the new scheme, eligible clients will receive an annual payment of up to \$489.95 (plus indexation). Medicare Australia will deliver the payment directly into the client's nominated bank account, or the account of their authorised legal representative.

Existing clients of the CAAS will have the opportunity to transfer to the new scheme without the need to reapply. Medicare Australia will be writing to all clients in the coming months to obtain the necessary information to enable the payment to be made under the new scheme for e.g. bank account details. Current CAAS clients will be provided with a Medicare Australia phone number to contact if they have questions regarding their transfer to CAPS

The current provider of products under the CAAS, (Intouch) will continue to administer the scheme in its current form until 30 June 2010.

The eligibility criteria for CAPS will remain the same as it is now.

The CAPS will assist eligible people who have permanent and severe incontinence to meet some of the costs of their continence products.

The CAPS will provide clients with greater flexibility and choice about where and when people purchase their continence products. Clients will be able to

make arrangements to order their products through a single continence product provider, multiple providers or they may choose to shop locally. Clients may choose to continue purchasing their continence products through the current supplier, Intouch.

It is expected that market competition will encourage more continence product suppliers to offer special deals that will enable clients to access their products without incurring delivery costs. Some continence product suppliers already offer free postage to customers, if they order products of a certain value in a single order.

National Information Sessions on the new scheme will be conducted in all states and territories over coming months for clients, health professionals and continence product suppliers. The Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing wrote to CAAS clients in October 2009 advising them of the change and is currently developing a range of information to be made available to people who are unable to attend the information sessions. Additionally, the Department operates a policy line (1800 807 487 freecall) and can respond to questions during the transition and following the implementation of the new scheme.

The Department is working closely with the Continence Foundation of Australia (CFA) which, under the National Continence Management Strategy (NCMS), manages the National Continence Helpline. The free call Helpline (1800 330 066) is staffed by professional continence advisors who can provide information and referral advice to people affected by or caring for someone with bladder or bowel conditions.

Further information regarding the CAPS and changes to the CAAS will be made available on the Department's Bladder Bowel Website www.bladderbowel.gov.au. Anyone with a specific policy enquiry can email continence@health.gov.au or contact the CAAS Policy Line on 1800 807 487. From 1 July 2010 Medicare Australia will operate a public enquiries phone line.