

Department of Health, Disability and Ageing – 10-06-2026

- From 1 July 2026, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (ACCHOs), such as Nganampa Health Council, will have greater flexibility in how they obtain patient assignment for bulk billed services.
- There will be no mandated form, as has been the longstanding legal requirement. Assignment can be captured in paper or electronically, provided it includes all the information required and is agreed to in writing, and records are retained for two years.
- ACCHOs will be able to determine how best to integrate AoB processes into their service delivery models. This may include obtaining assignment at booking, check-in, during the consultation, or post-service using paper or electronic approaches such as SMS or email.
- The department is progressing regulatory amendments to enable enduring assignment of benefit arrangements from 2027, allowing a one-off consent for ongoing care for patients of ACCHOs.
- In response to concerns raised by some stakeholders, the Department is prioritising consideration of additional regulatory reform to further simplify the process for ACCHOs and vulnerable patient populations. In addition to ACCHOs, this will include consideration of residents of residential aged care homes who are unable to consent and where an authorised assignor is not readily available to consent on their behalf.
- The intent is to ensure payments are supported by clear, auditable consent while maintaining flexibility for providers, particularly in very remote settings.
- Changes to assignment of Medicare benefits have been informed by ongoing and broad engagement with health sector representatives, including the ACCHO sector.
- Engagements with ACCHS, particularly in remote and very remote regions have been prioritised since late 2025. The Department has worked with NACCHO to engage and consult with providers, including via workshops and a survey. Feedback from this consultation is reflected in how enduring assignment will be implemented and has informed options for further regulatory reform under current consideration.
- Overall, the Department has hosted more than 50 meetings with over 160 stakeholder organisations across the health sector since 2024.
- The updates to assignment of Medicare benefits are a significant change for many. The department will continue to work with practitioners, ACCHOs and peak bodies to support their transition to the updated requirements. This will include supporting the change, encouraging improved awareness, and promoting voluntary compliance.

- The department's Medicare compliance monitoring and assessment processes consider the broader environment including legislative reform. An early focus will be on education and provider support, with an emphasis on understanding where practitioners currently stand regarding these changes. As is the approach for any enforcement activity, the priority will be where the risks and impact of harm are the greatest.