



australasian society of clinical immunology and allergy

7 October 2022

Professor Robyn Ward
Chair, Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC)
Email: MBSContinuousReview@health.gov.au

Dear Professor Ward,

Re: ASCIA support of HGSA application for services provided by genetic counsellors

We are writing to you on behalf of the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) to express support for the [Human Genetics Society of Australasia \(HGSA\) application](#) to open a dialogue about the introduction of Medicare Provider numbers and Medicare Benefits Scheme (MBS) items for services provided by genetic counsellors.

In 2022 the [ASCIA Immunodeficiency Strategy for Australia and New Zealand](#) was launched, to improve the health and wellbeing of people living with primary immunodeficiencies (PIDs) and minimise the burden on individuals, carers, health services and the community. PIDs are a diverse group of more than 400 potentially serious, chronic illnesses due to inherited absence or dysregulation of parts of the immune system. Early diagnosis and specialist treatment of PID provides profound benefits to allow curative treatment and avoid severe complications due to infections and early death.

For an increasing number of PIDs, genetic diagnosis is required to make a definitive diagnosis. It also enables targeted therapy and counselling about outcomes based on what is known about that gene, and informed reproductive/family planning decisions. The complex process and implications of genetic testing for patients and families requires timely access to genetic counselling with experience in PID to provide support during their diagnostic journey. However, currently access to genetic counselling is limited and variable. Funding of this service through the MBS would help to ensure that all families have access to this essential service.

For these reasons ASCIA advocates for the provision of services by appropriately trained, qualified, and regulated genetic counsellors as a necessary part of the diagnosis and management of patients with PID. We support this application and its acceptance by MSAC for consideration and entry into the MSAC process.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Patrick Quinn
Chair, ASCIA Immunodeficiency committee

Dr Peter McNaughton
ASCIA Immunodeficiency committee member

Copy: ASCIA Directors (A/Prof Theresa Cole - ASCIA President, Dr Michael O'Sullivan - ASCIA President Elect, A/Prof Jane Peake, Dr Kathryn Patchett) and ASCIA CEO (Jill Smith).