

Joint Standing Committee on Migration
21 September 2011 – additional information (Hansard page 9)
Department of Human Services

The Australian Government has signed reciprocal health care agreements (RHCA) with some countries, which means residents of those countries can receive medically necessary treatment while visiting Australia.

The RHCAs allow visitors from Finland, Italy, Malta, Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway, Belgium, Slovenia and the United Kingdom to enrol in the Medicare program which entitles them to:

- free treatment as a public in-patient or outpatient in a public hospital
- subsidised medicines under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
- Medicare benefits for out-of-hospital medical treatment provided by doctors through private surgeries and community health centres.

The RHCAs allow visitors from New Zealand and the Republic of Ireland to:

- free treatment as a public in-patient or outpatient in a public hospital
- subsidised medicines under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

Visitors from New Zealand and the Republic of Ireland are not enrolled in the Medicare program. They prove their eligibility by providing their passport when accessing the services.

Negotiation and maintenance of RHCAs is managed by the Medicare Benefits Branch of the Department of Health and Ageing.

DHS is responsible for ensuring that eligible visitors from RHCA countries are appropriately enrolled in the Medicare program.