

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016, 10 February 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000211

OUTCOME: 3 - Access to Medical and Dental Services

Topic: ELISA and Western Blot Test Costs

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Madigan, John

Question:

Individually, how much do an ELISA and a Western blot test cost:

- a) for the laboratory;
- b) for the patient; and
- c) what is the Medicare funded component?

Answer:

- a) The cost of tests and related consumables is the subject of commercial arrangements between the laboratories and suppliers.
- b) While the Australian Government is responsible for setting the MBS fees and the level of the Medicare rebates, health practitioners, including pathologists, may set their own fees for their services. The laboratory is under no obligation to charge the MBS fee set by the Government or to bulk bill. However, practitioners may alter their fees for particular individuals if they choose to and they are encouraged to consider the personal circumstances of their patients when determining the fees they charge, and many do so. The Australian Government encourages all health care providers to let patients know what fees they will incur before they receive treatment and to obtain the patient's agreement to proceed.
- c) ELISA assays and Western blots may be performed under a range of items, which are listed in P3 Microbiology of Category 6 Pathology Services of the MBS. The applicable items and rebates are listed in the following table.

Item Number	Item Descriptor
69384	Quantitation of 1 antibody to microbial antigens not elsewhere described in the Schedule – 1 test (This fee applies where a laboratory performs the only antibody test specified on the request form or performs 1 test and refers the rest to the laboratory of a separate APA) (Item is subject to rule 6) Fee: \$15.65 Benefit: \$11.75

69387	<p>2 tests described in item 69384</p> <p>(This fee applies where 1 laboratory, or more than 1 laboratory belonging to the same APA, performs the only 2 estimations specified on the request form or performs 2 of the antibody estimations specified on the request form and refers the remainder to the laboratory of a separate APA)</p> <p>(Item is subject to rule 6)</p> <p>Fee: \$29.00 Benefit: \$21.75</p>
69390	<p>3 tests described in item 69384</p> <p>(This fee applies where 1 laboratory, or more than 1 laboratory belonging to the same APA, performs the only 3 estimations specified on the request form or performs 3 of the antibody estimations specified on the request form and refers the remainder to the laboratory of a separate APA)</p> <p>(Item is subject to rule 6)</p> <p>Fee: \$42.35 Benefit: \$31.80</p>
69393	<p>4 tests described in item 69384</p> <p>(This fee applies where 1 laboratory, or more than 1 laboratory belonging to the same APA, performs the only 4 estimations specified on the request form or performs 4 of the antibody estimations specified on the request form and refers the remainder to the laboratory of a separate APA)</p> <p>(Item is subject to rule 6)</p> <p>Fee: \$55.70 Benefit: \$41.80</p>
69396	<p>5 or more tests described in item 69384</p> <p>(This fee applies where 1 laboratory, or more than 1 laboratory belonging to the same APA, performs the only 5 estimations specified on the request form or performs 5 of the antibody estimations specified on the request form and refers the remainder to the laboratory of a separate APA)</p> <p>(Item is subject to rule 6)</p> <p>Fee: \$69.10 Benefit: \$51.80</p>
69400	<p>A test described in item 69384, if rendered by a receiving APP, where no tests in the item have been rendered by the referring APP – 1 test</p> <p>(Item is subject to rules 6 and 18)</p> <p>Fee: \$15.65 Benefit: \$11.75</p>
69401	<p>A test described in item 69384, other than that described in 69400, if rendered by a receiving APP – each test to a maximum of 4 tests</p> <p>(Item is subject to rules 6 and 18)</p> <p>Fee: \$13.35 Benefit: \$10.05</p>
69494	<p>Detection of a virus or microbial antigen or microbial nucleic acid (not elsewhere specified). 1 test</p> <p>(Item is subject to rules 6 and 26)</p> <p>Fee: \$28.65 Benefit: \$21.50</p>
69495	<p>2 tests described in 69494</p> <p>(Item is subject to rules 6 and 26)</p> <p>Fee: \$35.85 Benefit: \$26.90</p>
69496	<p>3 tests described in 69494</p> <p>(Item is subject to rules 6 and 26)</p>

	Fee: \$43.05 Benefit: \$32.30
69497	<p>A test described in item 69494, if rendered by a receiving APP, where no tests in the item have been rendered by the referring APP – 1 test</p> <p>(Item is subject to rules 6, 18 and 26)</p> <p>Fee: \$28.65 Benefit: \$21.50</p>
69498	<p>A test described in item 69494, other than that described in 69497, if rendered by a receiving APP – each test to a maximum of 2 tests</p> <p>(Item is subject to rules 6, 18 and 26)</p> <p>Fee: \$7.20 Benefit: \$5.40</p>