

14 Medicare statistics

14.1 Medicare medical providers and service use

These tables relate to services on a 'fee-for-service' basis for which Medicare benefits were paid in the period in question. Excluded are details of:

- services rendered free of charge in recognised hospitals;
- services rendered under an entitlement conferred by legislation other than the *Health Insurance Act*: for example, services rendered to repatriation beneficiaries or defence personnel, or services covered by third party or workers' compensation provisions for which a provisional Medicare benefit has not been paid;
- services rendered for insurance or employment purposes;
- health screening services; and
- services rendered under grant provisions such as the Department of Health and Family Services Program Grant arrangements.

Unless otherwise stated, the data in these tables are for practitioners who provided at least one service under Medicare in the year in question. The data reflect the year of processing rather than the year of service.

The data in these tables incorporate the effect of Medicare adjustments. Medicare adjustments are made to correct errors in previously processed claims and to reflect adjustments resulting from cheque cancellations. Apart from obstetrics services, these are generally not significant. Any practitioner who had net negative claims in any year (for example, resulting from the fact that one or more stale cheques had been cancelled by the Health Insurance Commission and no other claims for the practitioner were processed in the period) is not included in tables for that year.

These data differ from that collected in the medical labour force survey (presented in previous parts of this bulletin) in several important respects. The labour force survey data are self reported and are generally presented for the practitioner's main job as measured by the total hours per week at that job. A salaried hospital non-specialist doctor who does some fee-for-service items in the Medical Benefits Schedule billed to Medicare will appear in the survey data as a hospital non-specialist or a specialist-in-training, and in Medicare data as a recognised general practitioner, other medical practitioner or in the appropriate specialist peer group. Similarly, a practitioner with specialist qualifications whose services billed to Medicare are for mainly unreferral attendances will self-report as a specialist in the labour force survey but be classified as a recognised general practitioner or other medical practitioner in Medicare data. Medicare statistics for specialists include non-specialists whose main income from Medicare is in a specialist field.

The main features of these Medicare data were as follows.

- From June 1995 to June 1996 the population of Australia increased by 1.4% from 18,063,300 to 18,311,500. During the same period:
 - Medicare providers increased by 2.1%;
 - medical practitioner Medicare providers increased by 2.1%;
 - recognised general practice providers increased by 2.1%; and
 - recognised medical specialist Medicare providers increased by 3.6%.
- Between 1984–85 and 1995–96, the number of medical practitioners providing Medicare services increased by 47.7% from 27,372 to 40,428.

- General practice providers, including other medical practitioners, comprised 61.9% of medical practitioners in 1984–85 and, after rising to 62.7% in 1989–90, declined to 60.3% in 1995–96.
- The average number of services undertaken by each Medicare provider in 1995–96 was 4,433, increasing by 1.2% from 1994–95. Specialist pathologists undertook most services, averaging 87,892 in 1995–96; while non-specialist surgeon Medicare providers undertook an average of 460 services.
- The obstetrician/gynaecologist peer group showed the greatest increase (17.2%) in the average number of services undertaken between 1994–95 and 1995–96, due largely to a change to obstetric items in the Medicare Benefits Schedule in November 1995. From that date all antenatal visits are billed individually.
- Over the period 1984–85 to 1995–96, Medicare medical practitioners per 100,000 population have grown from 173.5 to 220.8—an increase of 27.3%.
- In June 1996, there were 133.1 Medicare general practitioners per 100,000 population (or one for every 751 persons in Australia) and there were 87.7 Medicare specialists and non-specialists working in specialist fields per 100,000 population (or one for every 1,141 persons).
- Over the period 1987–88 to 1995–96, the average number of Medicare services per person increased by 34.8% from 6.40 to 8.63 for males, and by 28.8% from 9.91 to 12.76 for females. Care should be exercised in interpreting this change. Much of the increase is a result of structural change in the Medical Benefits Schedule without accompanying change in patient services. For example, early in 1992 pathology patient episode initiation items (to cover overheads with specimen collection) were added to the Medical Benefits Schedule and this resulted in an additional 15 million services with no change in the service to patients.
- The average number of Medicare services per person for those aged 65–74 years has increased by 65.9% for males and 33.3% for females between 1987–88 and 1995–96.

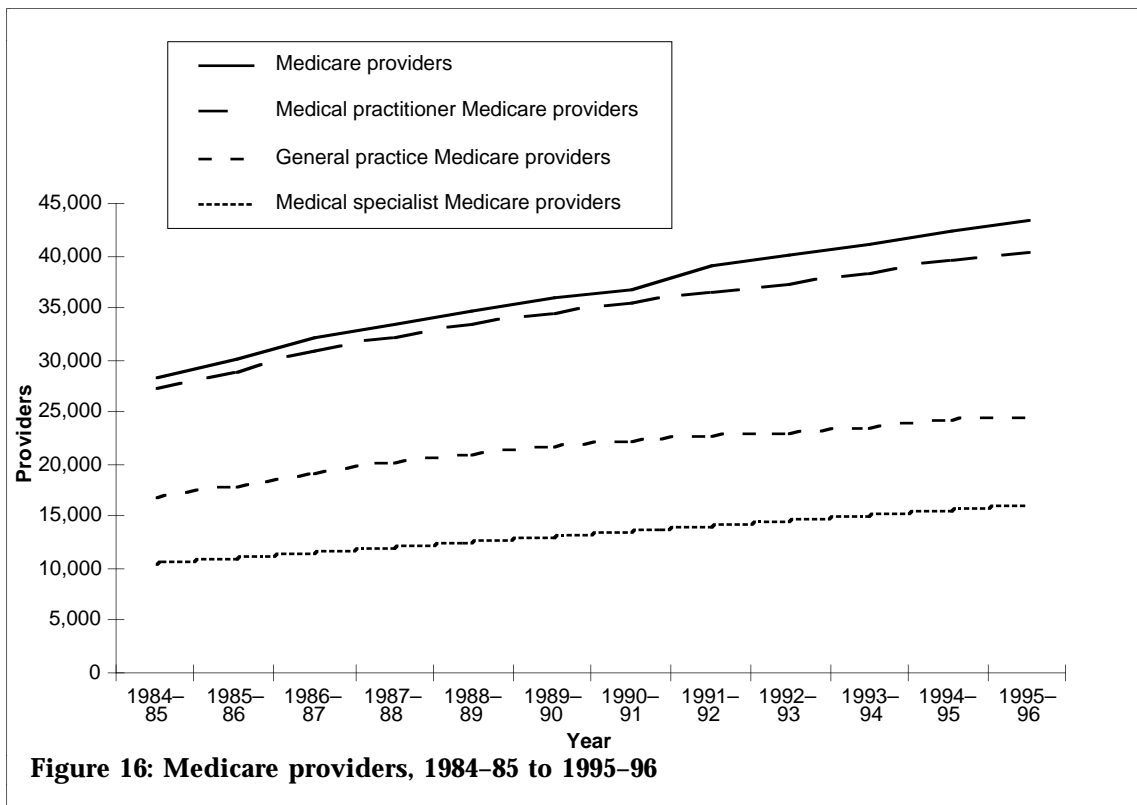


Table 100: Medicare providers: peer group and speciality, 1984–85 to 1995–96

| Peer group/specialty | 1984–85 | 1989–90 | 1990–91 | 1991–92 | 1992–93 | 1993–94 | 1994–95 | 1995–96 |
|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| General | 16,951 | 21,647 | 22,152 | 22,746 | 23,088 | 23,587 | 24,206 | 24,376 |
| Vocationally registered | .. | 5,127 | 7,471 | 10,744 | 14,826 | 16,280 | 17,341 | 17,711 |
| Other medical practitioner | 16,951 | 16,520 | 14,681 | 12,002 | 8,262 | 7,307 | 6,865 | 6,665 |
| Obstetrician/gynaecologist | 833 | 899 | 920 | 923 | 930 | 867 | 899 | 896 |
| In-vitro fertilisation | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | 63 | 67 | 72 |
| Surgeon | 3,188 | 3,884 | 4,005 | 4,140 | 4,270 | 4,418 | 4,597 | 4,714 |
| Specialist | 2,870 | 3,222 | 3,289 | 3,355 | 3,433 | 3,479 | 3,586 | 3,598 |
| Non-specialist | 318 | 662 | 716 | 785 | 837 | 939 | 1,011 | 1,116 |
| Anaesthetist | 1,264 | 1,618 | 1,680 | 1,764 | 1,805 | 1,892 | 1,952 | 2,022 |
| Specialist | 1,207 | 1,534 | 1,589 | 1,652 | 1,702 | 1,781 | 1,814 | 1,859 |
| Non-specialist | 57 | 84 | 91 | 112 | 103 | 111 | 138 | 163 |
| Psychiatrist | 1,028 | 1,331 | 1,389 | 1,437 | 1,501 | 1,555 | 1,582 | 1,615 |
| Diagnostic imagist | 853 | 1,040 | 1,078 | 1,159 | 1,221 | 1,247 | 1,266 | 1,436 |
| Specialist | 774 | 958 | 983 | 1,050 | 1,114 | 1,143 | 1,169 | 1,311 |
| Non-specialist | 79 | 82 | 95 | 109 | 107 | 104 | 97 | 125 |
| Radiation oncology | 57 | 102 | 100 | 106 | 104 | 113 | 119 | 130 |
| Pathologist | 545 | 644 | 663 | 670 | 645 | 616 | 607 | 586 |
| Specialist | 468 | 545 | 566 | 569 | 544 | 517 | 506 | 493 |
| Non-specialist | 77 | 99 | 97 | 101 | 101 | 99 | 101 | 93 |
| Dermatologist | 204 | 237 | 239 | 242 | 245 | 260 | 267 | 275 |
| Physician | 2,233 | 2,854 | 2,980 | 3,143 | 3,333 | 3,477 | 3,664 | 3,868 |
| Other medical | 216 | 246 | 286 | 271 | 298 | 356 | 382 | 438 |
| <i>Total medical</i> | <i>27,372</i> | <i>34,502</i> | <i>35,492</i> | <i>36,601</i> | <i>37,440</i> | <i>38,451</i> | <i>39,608</i> | <i>40,428</i> |
| Optometrist | 901 | 1,130 | 1,160 | 2,287(a) | 2,356 | 2,424 | 2,500 | 2,576 |
| Dental/orthodontist | 251 | 319 | 339 | 382 | 382 | 409 | 420 | 409 |
| Total | 28,524 | 35,951 | 36,991 | 39,270 | 40,178 | 41,284 | 42,528 | 43,413 |

(per cent—year on year change)

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|----|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| General | .. | 3.6 | 2.3 | 2.7 | 1.5 | 2.2 | 2.6 | 0.7 |
| Vocationally registered | .. | .. | 45.7 | 43.8 | 38.0 | 9.8 | 6.5 | 2.1 |
| Other medical practitioner | .. | -20.9 | -11.1 | -8.2 | -31.2 | -11.6 | -6.0 | -2.9 |
| Obstetrician/gynaecologist | .. | 2.0 | 2.3 | 0.3 | 0.8 | -6.8 | 3.7 | -0.3 |
| In-vitro fertilisation | .. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | .. | 6.3 | 7.5 |
| Surgeon | .. | 2.7 | 3.1 | 3.4 | 3.1 | 3.5 | 4.1 | 2.5 |
| Specialist | .. | 1.0 | 2.1 | 2.0 | 2.3 | 1.3 | 3.1 | 0.3 |
| Non-specialist | .. | 11.4 | 8.2 | 9.6 | 6.6 | 12.2 | 7.7 | 10.4 |
| Anaesthetist | .. | 3.1 | 3.8 | 5.0 | 2.3 | 4.8 | 3.2 | 3.6 |
| Specialist | .. | 2.7 | 3.6 | 4.0 | 3.0 | 4.6 | 1.9 | 2.5 |
| Non-specialist | .. | 10.5 | 8.3 | 23.1 | -8.0 | 7.8 | 24.3 | 18.1 |
| Psychiatrist | .. | 4.8 | 4.4 | 3.5 | 4.5 | 3.6 | 1.7 | 2.1 |
| Diagnostic imagist | .. | -0.1 | 3.7 | 7.5 | 5.3 | 2.1 | 1.5 | 13.4 |
| Specialist | .. | 1.5 | 2.6 | 6.8 | 6.1 | 2.6 | 2.3 | 12.1 |
| Non-specialist | .. | -15.5 | 15.9 | 14.7 | -1.8 | -2.8 | -6.7 | 28.9 |
| Radiation oncology | .. | 9.7 | -2.0 | 6.0 | -1.9 | 8.7 | 5.3 | 9.2 |
| Pathologist | .. | -0.2 | 3.0 | 1.1 | -3.7 | -4.5 | -1.5 | -3.5 |
| Specialist | .. | -0.7 | 3.9 | 0.5 | -4.4 | -5.0 | -2.1 | -2.6 |
| Non-specialist | .. | 3.1 | -2.0 | 4.1 | 0.0 | -2.0 | 2.0 | -7.9 |
| Dermatologist | .. | 3.5 | 0.8 | 1.3 | 1.2 | 6.1 | 2.7 | 3.0 |
| Physician | .. | 5.5 | 4.4 | 5.5 | 6.0 | 4.3 | 5.4 | 5.6 |
| Other medical | .. | -4.7 | 16.3 | -5.2 | 10.0 | 19.5 | 7.3 | 14.7 |
| <i>Total medical</i> | .. | <i>3.4</i> | <i>2.9</i> | <i>3.1</i> | <i>2.3</i> | <i>2.7</i> | <i>3.0</i> | <i>2.1</i> |
| Optometrist | .. | 5.0 | 2.7 | 97.2(a) | 3.0 | 2.9 | 3.1 | 3.0 |
| Dental/orthodontist | .. | -0.9 | 6.3 | 12.7 | 0.0 | 7.1 | 2.7 | -2.6 |
| Total | .. | 3.4 | 2.9 | 6.2 | 2.3 | 2.8 | 3.0 | 2.1 |

(a) Optometry services provided by a multi-practitioner practice before 1991–92 may have been billed to Medicare under the provider number of the principal. From 1991–92, services were billed by the provider number of each practitioner.

Source: Department of Health and Family Services.

Table 101: Average number of services per Medicare provider: peer group and specialty, 1984–85 to 1995–96

| Peer group/specialty | 1984–85 | 1989–90 | 1990–91 | 1991–92 | 1992–93 | 1993–94 | 1994–95 | 1995–96 |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| General | | | | | | | | |
| Vocationally registered | .. | 5,808 | 5,666 | 5,749 | 5,637 | 5,428 | 5,304 | 5,345 |
| Other medical practitioner | 3,995 | 3,476 | 3,074 | 2,490 | 1,520 | 1,521 | 1,426 | 1,554 |
| Obstetrician/gynaecologist | 2,318 | 2,479 | 2,461 | 2,446 | 2,404 | 2,265 | 2,370 | 2,777(b) |
| In-vitro fertilisation | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | 3,878 | 3,947 | 3,973 |
| Surgeon | | | | | | | | |
| Specialist | 2,160 | 2,327 | 2,378 | 2,430 | 2,473 | 2,497 | 2,502 | 2,510 |
| Non-specialist | 436 | 351 | 295 | 298 | 424 | 418 | 444 | 460 |
| Anaesthetist | | | | | | | | |
| Specialist | 1,606 | 1,376 | 1,411 | 1,429 | 1,452 | 1,424 | 1,463 | 1,441 |
| Non-specialist | 1,428 | 1,293 | 1,292 | 1,335 | 1,405 | 1,632 | 1,508 | 1,627 |
| Psychiatrist | 1,241 | 1,265 | 1,273 | 1,314 | 1,334 | 1,368 | 1,379 | 1,385 |
| Diagnostic imagist | | | | | | | | |
| Specialist | 5,808 | 6,934 | 7,391 | 7,092 | 7,203 | 7,260 | 7,503 | 6,928 |
| Non-specialist | 2,362 | 2,623 | 2,632 | 2,271 | 2,499 | 2,760 | 2,762 | 2,584 |
| Radiation oncology | 3,348 | 3,154 | 3,344 | 3,439 | 3,704 | 3,825 | 4,017 | 4,053 |
| Pathologist | | | | | | | | |
| Specialist | 42,397 | 42,041 | 40,498 | 47,456 | 65,403 | 73,330 | 83,938 | 87,892 |
| Non-specialist | 10,525 | 8,590 | 7,729 | 6,586 | 7,467 | 9,618 | 9,923 | 10,115 |
| Dermatologist | 4,729 | 5,359 | 5,647 | 6,034 | 6,409 | 6,334 | 6,366 | 6,191 |
| Physician | 1,846 | 1,999 | 1,987 | 2,069 | 2,105 | 2,106 | 2,138 | 2,140 |
| Other medical | 4,032 | 3,343 | 2,793 | 2,281 | 2,194 | 1,816 | 1,680 | 1,567 |
| Optometrist | 1,650 | 2,147 | 2,260 | 1 218(a) | 1,275 | 1,296 | 1,314 | 1,380 |
| Dental/orthodontist | 33 | 33 | 42 | 63 | 96 | 105 | 111 | 124 |
| Total | 3,945 | 3,974 | 3,909 | 3,927 | 4,227 | 4,302 | 4,381 | 4,433 |

(per cent—year on year change)

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|----|-------|-------|----------|-------|-------|------|---------|
| General | | | | | | | | |
| Vocationally registered | .. | .. | -2.4 | 1.5 | -1.9 | -3.7 | -2.3 | 0.8 |
| Other medical practitioner | .. | -11.5 | -11.6 | -19.0 | -39.0 | 0.1 | -6.2 | 9.0 |
| Obstetrician/Gynaecologist | .. | 2.3 | -0.7 | -0.6 | -1.7 | -5.8 | 4.6 | 17.2(b) |
| In-vitro fertilisation | .. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | 1.8 | 0.7 |
| Surgeon | | | | | | | | |
| Specialist | .. | 2.8 | 2.2 | 2.2 | 1.8 | 1.0 | 0.2 | 0.3 |
| Non-specialist | .. | -6.9 | -16.0 | 1.0 | 42.3 | -1.4 | 6.2 | 3.6 |
| Anaesthetist | | | | | | | | |
| Specialist | .. | 1.8 | 2.5 | 1.3 | 1.6 | -1.9 | 2.7 | -1.5 |
| Non-specialist | .. | 13.0 | -0.1 | 3.3 | 5.2 | 16.2 | -7.6 | 7.9 |
| Psychiatrist | .. | 3.6 | 0.6 | 3.2 | 1.5 | 2.5 | 0.8 | 0.4 |
| Diagnostic imagist | | | | | | | | |
| Specialist | .. | 4.8 | 6.6 | -4.0 | 1.6 | 0.8 | 3.3 | -7.7 |
| Non-specialist | .. | 1.8 | 0.3 | -13.7 | 10.0 | 10.4 | 0.1 | -6.4 |
| Radiation oncology | .. | 10.5 | 6.0 | 2.8 | 7.7 | 3.3 | 5.0 | 0.9 |
| Pathologist | | | | | | | | |
| Specialist | .. | -14.8 | -3.7 | 17.2 | 37.8 | 12.1 | 14.5 | 4.7 |
| Non-specialist | .. | -24.2 | -10.0 | -14.8 | 13.4 | 28.8 | 3.2 | 1.9 |
| Dermatologist | .. | -1.1 | 5.4 | 6.9 | 6.2 | -1.2 | 0.5 | -2.7 |
| Physician | .. | -0.7 | -0.6 | 4.1 | 1.7 | 0.0 | 1.5 | 0.1 |
| Other medical | .. | 7.4 | -16.5 | -18.3 | -3.8 | -17.2 | -7.5 | -6.7 |
| Optometrist | .. | 4.5 | 5.3 | -46.1(a) | 4.7 | 1.6 | 1.4 | 5.0 |
| Dental/orthodontist | .. | 10.0 | 27.3 | 50.0 | 52.4 | 9.4 | 5.7 | 11.7 |
| Total | .. | -2.3 | -1.6 | 0.5 | 7.6 | 1.8 | 1.8 | 1.2 |

(a) Optometry services provided by a multi-practitioner practice before 1991–92 may have been billed to Medicare under the provider number of the principal. From 1991–92, services were billed by the provider number of each practitioner.

(b) Increase largely due to a change in the Medical Benefits Schedule in November 1995. From that date, ante natal visits are billed separately.

Source: Department of Health and Family Services.

Table 102: Number of Medicare providers per 100,000 population: peer group and specialty, 1984–85 to 1995–96

| Peer group/specialty | 1984–85 | 1989–90 | 1990–91 | 1991–92 | 1992–93 | 1993–94 | 1994–95 | 1995– |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| General | 107.4 | 126.8 | 128.1 | 130.0 | 130.7 | 132.1 | 134.0 | 133.1 |
| Vocationally registered | .. | 30.0 | 43.2 | 61.4 | 83.9 | 91.2 | 96.0 | 96.7 |
| Other medical practitioner | 107.4 | 96.8 | 84.9 | 68.6 | 46.8 | 40.9 | 38.0 | 36.4 |
| Obstetrician/gynaecologist | 5.3 | 5.3 | 5.3 | 5.3 | 5.3 | 4.9 | 5.0 | 4.9 |
| In-vitro fertilisation | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.4 |
| Surgeon | 20.2 | 22.8 | 23.1 | 23.7 | 24.1 | 24.8 | 25.5 | 25.7 |
| Specialist | 18.2 | 18.9 | 19.0 | 19.2 | 19.4 | 19.5 | 19.9 | 19.6 |
| Non-specialist | 2.0 | 3.9 | 4.1 | 4.5 | 4.7 | 5.3 | 5.6 | 6.1 |
| Anaesthetist | 8.0 | 9.5 | 9.7 | 10.0 | 10.2 | 10.6 | 10.8 | 11.1 |
| Specialist | 7.6 | 9.0 | 9.2 | 9.4 | 9.6 | 10.0 | 10.0 | 10.2 |
| Non-specialist | 0.4 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.8 | 0.9 |
| Psychiatrist | 6.5 | 7.8 | 8.0 | 8.2 | 8.5 | 8.7 | 8.8 | 8.8 |
| Diagnostic imagist | 5.4 | 6.1 | 6.2 | 6.6 | 6.9 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 7.9 |
| Specialist | 4.9 | 5.6 | 5.7 | 6.0 | 6.3 | 6.4 | 6.5 | 7.2 |
| Non-specialist | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.7 |
| Radiation oncology | 0.4 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 0.7 |
| Pathologist | 3.5 | 3.8 | 3.9 | 3.9 | 3.7 | 3.5 | 3.4 | 3.2 |
| Specialist | 3.0 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 3.1 | 2.9 | 2.8 | 2.7 |
| Non-specialist | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.5 |
| Dermatologist | 1.3 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.5 |
| Physician | 14.1 | 16.7 | 17.2 | 18.0 | 18.9 | 19.5 | 20.3 | 21.1 |
| Other medical | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.7 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 2.0 | 2.1 | 2.4 |
| Optometrist | 5.7 | 6.6 | 6.7 | 13.1(a) | 13.3 | 13.6 | 13.8 | 14.1 |
| Dental/orthodontist | 1.6 | 1.9 | 2.0 | 2.2 | 2.2 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 2.2 |
| Total | 180.8 | 210.7 | 213.9 | 224.5 | 227.5 | 231.3 | 235.4 | 237.1 |

(per cent—year on year change)

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| General | .. | 2.1 | 1.0 | 1.5 | 0.5 | 1.1 | 1.4 | –0.7 |
| Vocationally registered | .. | .. | 44.0 | 42.1 | 36.6 | 8.7 | 5.3 | 0.7 |
| Other medical practitioner | .. | –22.1 | –12.3 | –19.2 | –31.8 | –12.6 | –7.1 | –4.2 |
| Obstetrician/gynaecologist | .. | 1.9 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | –7.5 | 2.0 | –2.0 |
| In-vitro fertilisation | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Surgeon | .. | 1.3 | 1.3 | 2.6 | 1.7 | 2.9 | 2.8 | 0.8 |
| Specialist | .. | –0.5 | 0.5 | 1.1 | 1.0 | 0.5 | 2.1 | –1.5 |
| Non-specialist | .. | 11.4 | 5.1 | 9.8 | 4.4 | 12.8 | 5.7 | 8.9 |
| Anaesthetist | .. | 1.1 | 2.1 | 3.1 | 2.0 | 3.9 | 1.9 | 2.8 |
| Specialist | .. | 1.1 | 2.2 | 2.2 | 2.1 | 4.2 | 0.0 | 2.0 |
| Non-specialist | .. | 0.0 | 0.0 | 20.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 33.3 | 12.5 |
| Psychiatrist | .. | 2.6 | 2.6 | 2.5 | 3.7 | 2.4 | 1.1 | 0.0 |
| Diagnostic imagist | .. | –1.6 | 1.6 | 6.5 | 4.5 | 1.4 | 0.0 | 12.9 |
| Specialist | .. | 0.0 | 1.8 | 5.3 | 5.0 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 10.8 |
| Non-specialist | .. | –16.7 | 0.0 | 20.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | –16.7 | 40.0 |
| Radiation oncology | .. | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 16.7 | 0.0 |
| Pathologist | .. | –2.6 | 2.6 | 0.0 | –5.1 | –5.4 | –2.9 | –5.9 |
| Specialist | .. | –3.0 | 3.1 | 0.0 | –6.1 | –6.5 | –3.4 | –3.6 |
| Non-specialist | .. | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | –16.7 |
| Dermatologist | .. | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 7.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Physician | .. | 3.7 | 3.0 | 4.7 | 5.0 | 3.2 | 4.1 | 3.9 |
| Other medical | .. | –6.7 | 21.4 | –11.8 | 13.3 | 17.6 | 5.0 | 14.3 |
| Optometrist | .. | 3.1 | 1.5 | 92.6(a) | 1.5 | 2.3 | 1.5 | 2.2 |
| Dental/orthodontist | .. | 0.0 | 5.3 | 10.0 | 0.0 | 4.5 | 0.0 | –4.3 |
| Total | .. | 1.8 | 1.5 | 5.0 | 1.3 | 1.7 | 1.8 | 0.7 |

(a) Optometry services provided by a multi-practitioner practice before 1991–92 may have been billed to Medicare under the provider number of the principal. From 1991–92, services were billed by the provider number of each practitioner.

Source: Department of Health and Family Services.

Table 103: Average number of Medicare services per person: age and sex, 1987–88 to 1995–96

| Age (years) | 1987–88 | 1988–89 | 1989–90 | 1990–91 | 1991–92 | 1992–93 | 1993–94 | 1994–95 | 1995–96 |
|----------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Males | | | | | | | | | |
| 0–4 | 8.10 | 8.48 | 8.67 | 8.49 | 8.86 | 9.70 | 9.89 | 9.66 | 9.81 |
| 5–9 | 4.68 | 4.94 | 5.09 | 4.76 | 4.99 | 5.38 | 5.46 | 5.24 | 5.27 |
| 10–14 | 3.91 | 4.09 | 4.22 | 3.98 | 4.22 | 4.49 | 4.59 | 4.49 | 4.52 |
| 15–19 | 3.94 | 4.12 | 4.31 | 4.22 | 4.38 | 4.70 | 4.81 | 4.77 | 4.84 |
| 20–24 | 4.30 | 4.42 | 4.44 | 4.37 | 4.57 | 4.93 | 5.09 | 5.19 | 5.38 |
| 25–34 | 4.73 | 4.90 | 4.87 | 4.88 | 5.13 | 5.48 | 5.62 | 5.80 | 5.95 |
| 35–44 | 5.51 | 5.76 | 5.69 | 5.72 | 5.99 | 6.38 | 6.58 | 6.84 | 7.04 |
| 45–54 | 7.32 | 7.47 | 7.34 | 7.39 | 7.65 | 8.22 | 8.59 | 9.02 | 9.31 |
| 55–64 | 10.05 | 10.54 | 10.71 | 10.98 | 11.66 | 12.68 | 13.30 | 13.90 | 14.28 |
| 65–74 | 10.99 | 11.18 | 11.25 | 11.47 | 12.53 | 14.19 | 15.55 | 17.03 | 18.23 |
| 75+ | 15.68 | 16.09 | 16.24 | 16.43 | 17.37 | 18.86 | 19.58 | 19.86 | 20.18 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>6.40</i> | <i>6.65</i> | <i>6.71</i> | <i>6.72</i> | <i>7.10</i> | <i>7.73</i> | <i>8.07</i> | <i>8.35</i> | <i>8.63</i> |
| Females | | | | | | | | | |
| 0–4 | 7.32 | 7.73 | 7.91 | 7.71 | 8.07 | 8.85 | 9.04 | 8.85 | 8.98 |
| 5–9 | 4.67 | 4.91 | 5.03 | 4.73 | 4.98 | 5.37 | 5.47 | 5.23 | 5.23 |
| 10–14 | 4.08 | 4.31 | 4.38 | 4.17 | 4.38 | 4.67 | 4.76 | 4.63 | 4.64 |
| 15–19 | 6.82 | 7.25 | 7.31 | 7.30 | 7.63 | 8.19 | 8.48 | 8.53 | 8.61 |
| 20–24 | 9.93 | 10.23 | 9.91 | 9.70 | 10.20 | 11.16 | 11.61 | 11.93 | 12.28 |
| 25–34 | 11.05 | 11.48 | 11.03 | 10.89 | 11.35 | 12.38 | 12.70 | 13.14 | 13.51 |
| 35–44 | 9.50 | 10.01 | 9.80 | 9.80 | 10.34 | 11.25 | 11.54 | 11.97 | 12.11 |
| 45–54 | 10.76 | 11.19 | 11.04 | 11.18 | 11.70 | 12.77 | 13.11 | 13.61 | 13.79 |
| 55–64 | 12.38 | 12.87 | 12.82 | 13.02 | 13.80 | 14.98 | 15.47 | 16.08 | 16.54 |
| 65–74 | 15.01 | 15.44 | 15.38 | 15.49 | 16.42 | 17.74 | 18.38 | 19.23 | 20.01 |
| 75+ | 18.44 | 18.83 | 19.05 | 19.33 | 20.40 | 21.93 | 22.57 | 23.00 | 23.63 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>9.91</i> | <i>10.34</i> | <i>10.24</i> | <i>10.24</i> | <i>10.79</i> | <i>11.74</i> | <i>12.11</i> | <i>12.46</i> | <i>12.76</i> |
| Persons | 8.16 | 8.50 | 8.48 | 8.48 | 8.95 | 9.74 | 10.10 | 10.41 | 10.70 |

Source: Department of Health and Family Services.

Table 104: Average number of Medicare services per person: service type, 1987–88 to 1995–96

| Service type | 1987–88 | 1988–89 | 1989–90 | 1990–91 | 1991–92 | 1992–93 | 1993–94 | 1994–95 | 1995–96 |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| GP attendances | 4.58 | 4.76 | 4.99 | 4.91 | 5.08 | 5.27 | 5.41 | 5.45 | 5.58 |
| Specialist | 0.79 | 0.81 | 0.84 | 0.86 | 0.89 | 0.92 | 0.94 | 0.97 | 0.99 |
| Obstetrics | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.04 | 0.04 | 0.07(a) |
| Anaesthetics | 0.08 | 0.08 | 0.08 | 0.09 | 0.09 | 0.09 | 0.09 | 0.09 | 0.09 |
| Pathology—patient episode initiation | .. | .. | .. | .. | 0.25 | 0.72 | 0.77 | 0.83 | 0.88 |
| Pathology tests | 1.77 | 1.86 | 1.53 | 1.51 | 1.49 | 1.52 | 1.63 | 1.76 | 1.77 |
| Diagnostic imaging | 0.40 | 0.42 | 0.45 | 0.48 | 0.49 | 0.52 | 0.53 | 0.55 | 0.57 |
| Operations | 0.22 | 0.22 | 0.24 | 0.26 | 0.27 | 0.28 | 0.28 | 0.28 | 0.29 |
| Assist in operations | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 |
| Optometry | 0.12 | 0.13 | 0.14 | 0.15 | 0.16 | 0.17 | 0.18 | 0.18 | 0.19 |
| Radiotherapy and therapeutic nuclear medicine | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.02 |
| Other | 0.13 | 0.14 | 0.15 | 0.16 | 0.17 | 0.18 | 0.20 | 0.21 | 0.22 |
| Total | 8.16 | 8.50 | 8.48 | 8.48 | 8.95 | 9.74 | 10.10 | 10.41 | 10.70 |

(a) Increase largely due to a change in the Medical Benefits Schedule in November 1995. From that date, ante natal visits are billed separately.

Source: Department of Health and Family Services.

14.2 Changes to the Medicare work force

Data in this section are for characteristics of medical practitioners who:

- became active as Medicare providers in 1995–96 after not being active in 1994–95; and
- became inactive as Medicare providers in 1995–96 after being active in 1994–95.

Additions to the Medicare work force in 1995–96

- There were 3,381 additions to the Medicare work force in 1995–96, of whom 1,080 (32.0%) were females.
- Additions included 342 VRGPs, 1,992 OMPs and 1,047 specialists. This mix is likely to change considerably in future years because there are restrictions on the issue of provider numbers which preclude practice as OMPs.
- Additions included 2,395 Australian medical graduates, 126 New Zealand medical graduates, 437 British medical graduates and 417 graduates from other countries. The Australian graduates included doctors re-entering the work force after practice overseas or temporary withdrawal locally.
- Of those for whom age was known, 55.8% of additions were younger than 35 years of age, 38.2% were aged 35–64 years, and 6.0% were aged 65 years and over.

Withdrawals from the Medicare work force in 1995–96

- There were 2,564 withdrawals from the Medicare work force in 1995–96, of whom 698 (27.3%) were females.
- Withdrawals included 307 VRGPs, 1,512 OMPs and 745 specialists.
- Withdrawals included 1,703 Australian medical graduates, 97 New Zealand medical graduates, 498 British medical graduates and 266 graduates from other countries.
- Of those for whom age was known, 35.7% of withdrawals were younger than 35 years of age, 40.8% were aged 35–64 years, and 23.5% were aged 65 years and over.

Net additions to the Medicare work force in 1995–96

- There were 817 net additions to the Medicare work force.
- The differences between additions and withdrawals were 35 VRGPs, 480 OMPs and 302 specialists. However, during 1995–96, 680 OMPs became VRGPs or specialists, resulting in the overall changes in the work force seen in Table 100, that is, a net increase of 370 VRGPs, a net loss of 200 OMPs, and a net increase of 650 in the specialist peer groups.
- The net additions to the work force were in the under-35 years age group (935 medical practitioners) and the 35–44 years age group (278 medical practitioners) while the net losses were in the 55–64 years (53 practitioners) and the 65 years or more age groups (375 practitioners). Additions and withdrawals in the 45–54 years age group were about even (a net increase of 17 practitioners).
- Of the net additions, 695 (85.1%) were Australian trained, 29 (3.5%) were New Zealand trained, 55 (6.7%) were trained in southern Asia, 53 (6.5%) were trained in Africa. There was a net outflow of 61 practitioners (–7.5%) trained in the United Kingdom and Ireland.
- There is a strong annual flow in and out of the work force of medical practitioners from the United Kingdom and Ireland, mainly on visas to fill area-of-need positions. There were 437 additions and 498 withdrawals in 1995–96.

Additions to the Medicare work force in 1995-96

Table 105: Medicare providers active in 1995-96 but not in 1994-95: field of practice and country of initial qualification

| Country of initial qualification | VRGPs | OMPs | Specialists | Total |
|-----------------------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Australia | 280 | 1,355 | 763 | 2,398 |
| New Zealand | 7 | 76 | 43 | 126 |
| United Kingdom/Ireland | 35 | 294 | 108 | 437 |
| Other Europe | 4 | 39 | 22 | 65 |
| United States of America and Asia | 0 | 24 | 13 | 37 |
| Other | 12 | 111 | 59 | 182 |
| Total | 342 | 1,992 | 1,047 | 3,381 |

Source: Department of Health and Family Services.

Table 106: Medicare providers active in 1995-96 but not in 1994-95: country of initial qualification, age and sex

| Country of initial | Age group | | | | | Not known | Total |
|------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| | < 35 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65+ | | |
| Males | | | | | | | |
| Australia | 865 | 351 | 108 | 63 | 124 | 87 | 1,598 |
| Other | 234 | 238 | 97 | 55 | 42 | 31 | 697 |
| Total | 1,099 | 589 | 205 | 118 | 166 | 118 | 2,295 |
| Females | | | | | | | |
| Australia | 540 | 163 | 31 | 13 | 22 | 28 | 797 |
| Other | 157 | 74 | 27 | 9 | 4 | 12 | 283 |
| Total | 697 | 237 | 58 | 22 | 26 | 40 | 1,080 |
| Persons | | | | | | | |
| Australia | 1,405 | 514 | 139 | 76 | 146 | 115 | 2,395 |
| New Zealand | 75 | 31 | 3 | 10 | 3 | 4 | 126 |
| United Kingdom/Ireland | 214 | 100 | 39 | 31 | 27 | 26 | 437 |
| Other | 102 | 181 | 82 | 23 | 16 | 13 | 417 |
| Total(a) | 1,797 | 826 | 263 | 140 | 192 | 163 | 3,381 |

(a) Includes 6 providers for whom sex was unknown.

Source: Department of Health and Family Services.

Withdrawals from the Medicare work force in 1995-96

Table 107: Medicare providers active in 1994-95 but not in 1995-96: field of practice and country of initial qualification

| Country of initial qualification | VRGPs | OMPs | Specialists | Total |
|-----------------------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| Australia | 197 | 1,001 | 505 | 1,703 |
| New Zealand | 8 | 54 | 35 | 97 |
| United Kingdom/Ireland | 73 | 327 | 98 | 498 |
| Other Europe | 4 | 18 | 15 | 37 |
| United States of America and Asia | 0 | 7 | 12 | 19 |
| Other | 18 | 51 | 44 | 113 |
| Other | 7 | 54 | 36 | 97 |
| Total | 307 | 1,512 | 745 | 2,564 |

Source: Department of Health and Family Services.

Table 108: Medicare providers active in 1994-95 but not in 1995-96: country of initial qualification, age and sex

| Country of initial | Age group | | | | | Not known | Total |
|------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| | < 35 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65+ | | |
| Males | | | | | | | |
| Australia | 379 | 192 | 126 | 96 | 372 | 68 | 1,233 |
| Other | 172 | 174 | 63 | 66 | 119 | 31 | 625 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>551</i> | <i>366</i> | <i>189</i> | <i>162</i> | <i>491</i> | <i>99</i> | <i>1,858</i> |
| Females | | | | | | | |
| Australia | 202 | 127 | 37 | 19 | 54 | 28 | 467 |
| Other | 107 | 55 | 20 | 12 | 22 | 15 | 231 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>309</i> | <i>182</i> | <i>57</i> | <i>31</i> | <i>76</i> | <i>43</i> | <i>698</i> |
| Persons | | | | | | | |
| Australia | 581 | 319 | 163 | 115 | 426 | 96 | 1,700 |
| New Zealand | 39 | 38 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 97 |
| United Kingdom/Ireland | 190 | 114 | 36 | 44 | 85 | 29 | 498 |
| Other | 50 | 77 | 41 | 28 | 51 | 14 | 261 |
| Total(a) | 862 | 548 | 246 | 193 | 567 | 148 | 2,564 |

(a) Includes 8 providers for whom sex was unknown.

Source: Department of Health and Family Services.