



MEDIA RELEASE

PSR to consider impact of COVID-19 on 80/20 rule.

The Director of the Professional Services Review Professor Julie Quinlivan today stated that the impact of COVID will be considered for any practitioner referred by the Department of Health for breaching the 80/20 rule. The 80/20 rule refers to a practitioner rendering 80 or more attendance items on 20 or more days in any 12 month period and the Department of Health is required under the Health Insurance Act 1973 to refer these practitioners to the Director of the Professional Services Review. When high levels of servicing are seen, there is a concern that patients do not receive adequate clinical input and that patients might be harmed as a result of high volumes of services being provided in a day. A breach of the 80/20 rule can result in a finding of inappropriate practice.

However, a breach of the 80/20 rule does not constitute inappropriate practice if “exceptional circumstances” existed on the day when the rule was breached that affected the rendering or initiating of services on that day. An unusual occurrence causing an unusual level of need for relevant services on a day is deemed to constitute “exceptional circumstances” on that day.

Professor Quinlivan stated “patients presenting for COVID-19 testing could cause an unusual level of need for services. This will be taken into consideration for any practitioner referred for a breach of the 80/20 rule. Practitioners should remember that the need for a contemporaneous record of the services billed remains.”

The number of practitioners referred to the PSR for breaching the 80/20 rule has fallen in recent years. In the 2019-2020 period only one practitioner was referred for breaching the rule.

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