

**What's the definition of 'resident' for PBS purposes?**

To be eligible for PBS a customer must be eligible for Medicare.

People are eligible for Medicare if they are an Australia citizen, have been issued with a permanent visa, hold a New Zealand citizenship, have applied for a permanent visa or are from countries with reciprocal agreements with Australia.

**Can a patient have a valid Medicare card but be ineligible for PBS subsidies?**

If a person has a valid Medicare card they are also entitled to PBS subsidies.

**Can a patient have a valid Centrelink concession card but be ineligible for PBS subsidies?**

A person can have a valid Centrelink Concession card but be ineligible for Medicare and PBS.

A person who has been living overseas for more than five years is not considered to be eligible for Medicare and therefore PBS. Exceptions to this are Commonwealth Officers and their families posted overseas. Centrelink payments can be made to people who live overseas.

**Is a pharmacist risking rejection of payment by unknowingly dispensing to a 'non-resident'?**

No – if a person has a valid Medicare card they are also entitled to PBS subsidies.

**Is a pharmacist risking more than rejection of payment by knowingly dispensing to a 'non-resident'?**

If the person is able to provide a valid Medicare card number to the pharmacist, the pharmacist is not at risk of breaching legislation.

If the customer is unable to provide a valid Medicare number and the pharmacist has reason to believe the person is not eligible for Medicare and therefore PBS, the pharmacist would be in breach of section 86 of the National Health Act 1953 if a supply of PBS medicines is made.

Medicare Australia advises that people travelling overseas with PBS medication complete a Medicine Export Declaration. Failing to do so may result in an investigation by the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service and/or the Australian Federal Police.

**Does the practice described (dispensing PBS scripts to somebody who only visits twice a year) constitute fraud?**

If a person has a valid Medicare card number or can provide evidence of their Medicare eligibility, there is no fraud.

Commonwealth officers and family who reside overseas may continue to be eligible to receive pharmaceutical benefits whilst living overseas.

However, if a person believes someone is misrepresenting their residency status in order to obtain Medicare and Pharmaceutical Benefits this should be reported to Medicare Australia by telephone - 131 524\* (local call rate) or by mail to

Compliance and Business Services Division  
Compliance Operations  
PO Box 9822  
Sydney NSW 2001

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