

**MEDIA RELEASE:**

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## **Record benefits paid for 13.5 million with private health**

Private health insurers continue to pay record benefits to over 13.5 million Australians with cover, according to the latest quarterly figures from the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority.

Statistics released on Tuesday show benefits paid by health funds in the year to 31 March 2020 reached \$21.5 billion, up 3.7% on March 2019 figures.

During that one-year period, health insurers covered more than 93 million general treatment episodes for services such as dental, optical and physio, and 4.7 million hospital treatment episodes.

In the March 2020 quarter alone, health funds covered 22 million general treatment episodes, 754,215 private hospital episodes, 144,181 Day Hospital episodes, 49,197 hospital substitute episodes and 193,916 public hospital episodes.

As anticipated, the APRA data shows the emerging impact of COVID-19 restrictions on Australia's healthcare services, with declines recorded for some episodic services and extras.

"With restrictions now eased, it is going to be a huge relief for millions of Australians that they can confidently go back to see their regular healthcare providers," said Members Health CEO Matthew Koce.

"Like most industries, the private health sector experienced disruption during the global pandemic. Government restrictions were placed on non-urgent surgery, dental services and a range of other health services for a six-week period," said Members Health CEO Matthew Koce.

"But the good news is that restrictions are now rapidly being removed and there is an uplift in people booking in for elective surgery and other important health services such as dental, optical and physio."

"Private hospitals and surgeons are now quickly shifting into top gear to care for patients who had to delay their medical procedures. That means lots of insurance claims for Members Health funds, who stand ready to support their policyholders."

"Private hospitals beds are likely to become even more sought after as public hospital waiting lists grow. Even before COVID-19, wait times in public hospitals ran beyond a year for some surgeries.

"Members Health funds have put in place a range of hardship provisions to help support their members. Anyone experiencing financial hardship should call their health fund for a chat. The last thing anyone would want is for families to have to drop their cover during this difficult time.

Health insurers with the Members Health Fund Alliance pride themselves on providing fast access to the highest quality care. Being not-for-profit or part of a member owned group means they return more back in benefits compared to the rest of the industry.

*Members Health is the peak industry body for an alliance of 27 health funds that are not-for-profit or part of a member-owned group, regional or community based. They all share the common ethic of putting their members' health before profit. Our funds represent the interests of more than 3 million Australians.*

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