



Australian  
Rheumatology  
Association

## **PBS Therapeutic Update**

### **Services Australia Updates**

#### **PBS Authority Prescription Rejections**

We are aware that many members have faced recent frustrations with PBS Authority prescriptions being rejected, despite previously receiving approval. Following meetings with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, and Services Australia, it has become clear that legislative constraints now prevent Services Australia from approving prescriptions that do not strictly meet PBS criteria. This is a significant shift from past practice, where some discretion was applied in reasonable circumstances.

Unfortunately, due to these legislative limitations, Services Australia currently has **no flexibility** to grant exemptions, and this situation is unlikely to change in the near future.

Given this, the only pathway to address these issues is to seek amendments to the PBS listings through the PBAC (Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee). For example, we have identified some common issues from member feedback:

- Grandfathering — Patients who have relocated to Australia on b/tsDMARD therapy and previously met PBS eligibility are now ineligible to continue without requalifying under initial criteria.
- Methotrexate Contraindications — Patients who are unable to take methotrexate alongside abatacept or golimumab are currently ineligible for PBS subsidy, even in cases of absolute contraindications.

If you have examples of Authority prescriptions being rejected, please share them with Jing Ye (ARA Clinical Project Officer) at [project@rheumatology.org.au](mailto:project@rheumatology.org.au). These case studies will strengthen our advocacy efforts with PBAC.

#### **ARA Member Information Session**

On 5 August 2025, Services Australia conducted an information session for ARA members, addressing the following issues:

- Special consideration/grandfathering challenges
- HPOS system changes regarding delegate access



- PBS complex drugs database updates.

The session was recorded, and the recording is available in the Members Only section of the ARA website [here](#) (scroll to the bottom of the page).

### **In case you missed it – RA and PsA Authority Applications Transition to Online**

Services Australia has commenced transitioning PBS Authority approvals from written to **online submissions**. Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and psoriatic arthritis (PsA) listings have already moved online, with other conditions expected to follow by year-end. Key resources

- [RA – Summary of changes 1 June 2025](#)
- [RA – Updated item code cheat sheet](#) (as of 1 June 2025)
- [PsA – Summary of changes 1 July 2025](#)
- [PsA – Updated item code cheat sheet](#) (as of 1 July 2025).

**As a reminder, Chris McMaster's handy guide to identifying PBS item codes for biologics can be found here:**

**PBS Biologics Prescriber Helper - <https://cmcmaster-pbs-biologics-helper.hf.space/>**

### **PBS listing changes – 1 August 2025**

The following new PBS listings and updates came into effect on 1 August 2025:

- New Biosimilar — Steqeyma (ustekinumab) listed for severe psoriatic arthritis.
- New Biosimilars — Jubbonti & Wyost (denosumab)
  - 60mg/mL (Jubbonti)
  - 120mg/1.7mL (Wyost)

Listed for osteoporosis, giant cell tumour of bone, and bone metastases. Authority Required (Streamlined) applies for both initial and continuing treatments.

- Vision-Threatening Non-Infectious Uveitis — Adalimumab  
Grandfathering arrangements have been removed.

If you have any questions on any of the above, please contact Jing Ye, ARA Clinical Project Officer, [project@rheumatology.org.au](mailto:project@rheumatology.org.au).

