Evaluation of the Better Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and General Practitioners through the Medicare Benefits Schedule Initiative

Summative Evaluation

FINAL REPORT

Jane Pirkis\(^1\), Meredith Harris\(^2\), Wayne Hall\(^3\), Maria Ftanou\(^1\)

1. Centre for Health Policy, Programs and Economics, Melbourne School of Population Health, The University of Melbourne
2. School of Population Health, The University of Queensland
3. The University of Queensland Centre for Clinical Research

22 February 2011
Table of contents

Executive summary .............................................................................................................. 2

Chapter 1: Background .................................................................................................... 12

Chapter 2: Overview of evaluation questions and data sources ..................................... 15

Chapter 3: Question 1 – Has Better Access improved access to mental health care? .......................................................... 23

Chapter 4: Question 2 – Is Better Access an effective (and cost-effective) model of service delivery? .......................................................................................... 37

Chapter 5: Question 3 – Has Better Access had an impact on the profile and operation of Australia’s mental health workforce? ........................................................................ 41

Chapter 6: Discussion and conclusions .............................................................................. 44

References ...................................................................................................................... 47

Appendix 1: Relationship between original evaluation framework and current evaluation questions ........................................................................................................ 50

Appendix 2: Assessing the effects of uncertainty in the Department of Health and Ageing’s estimate of the proportion of Australians with a mental disorder who received mental health care each year between 2006-07 and 2009-10 ...... 51