



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

RURAL HEALTH WORKFORCE STRATEGY

General Practice Rural Incentives Program General Practitioners (GP) Component

FLEXIBLE PAYMENTS SYSTEM APPLICATION FORM

Current from September 2010

PART 1 – Overview

The General Practice Rural Incentives Program (GPRIP) commenced on 1 July 2010. GPRIP was funded in the 2009–10 Budget as part of the *Rural Health Workforce Strategy*.

The Program aims to encourage medical practitioners to relocate to and practice in rural and remote communities and to promote careers in rural medicine. It consolidates two previous rural incentive programs and provides a new relocation grant. GPRIP comprises:

- GP Component (previously known as the Rural Retention Program – RRP);
- Registrar Component (previously known as the Registrars Rural Incentive Payment Scheme – RRIPS); and
- Rural Relocation Incentive Grant (RRIG).

The GP Component of GPRIP comprises two payment systems – the Central Payment System and the Flexible Payment System.

- The **Central Payments System** (CPS) applies to medical practitioners who bill Medicare services. These medical practitioners will have their eligibility automatically assessed each billing period and will be advised and paid by Medicare Australia when a payment is due.
- The **Flexible Payments System** (FPS) applies to medical practitioners who provide services outside the Medicare billing system that would not be adequately reflected in the Medicare records e.g. medical practitioners working for the Royal Flying Doctors Service (RFDS).

To be assessed under the FPS, medical practitioners must contact the Rural Workforce Agency (RWA) in the State or Territory in which they provide services.

In extenuating circumstances where the RWA cannot assess the application, RWAs will seek advice from the GPRIP Advisory Body, through the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (the Department).

This application form relates only to the **FPS**. If you wish to apply for a payment under the FPS, you will need to complete Parts 4 and 5 of this Application Form.

NB: Please ensure your personal and your bank details are updated with Medicare Australia.

PART 2 – FPS Eligibility Criteria

The FPS assists medical practitioners in three broad categories:

1. Medical practitioners providing eligible services through alternative forms of employment not captured under the CPS;
2. Medical practitioners in isolated communities receiving minimal payments under the CPS that do not accurately reflect their workload; and
3. Medical practitioners who would have received CPS payments, but a period of acceptable leave has caused them to lose accrued eligibility.

To be eligible for the GP Component, medical practitioners must provide primary care services in rural and remote locations, and meet the continuous service requirements.

Incentive payments to medical practitioners are scaled according to location (the practice's Australian Standard Geographical Classification - Remoteness Areas (ASGC-RA) location), practise time (length of time medical services have been provided) and clinical workload. The table below sets out the maximum payment available to medical practitioners practising in rural and remote locations.

ASGC-RA	PERIOD OF TIME (YEARS) IN A RURAL LOCATION				
Classification	0.5	1	2	3-4	5+
Inner Regional (ASGC-RA2)	—	\$2,500	\$4,500	\$7,500	\$12,000
Outer Regional (ASGC-RA3)	\$4,000	\$6,000	\$8,000	\$13,000	\$18,000
Remote (ASGC-RA4)	\$5,500	\$8,000	\$13,000	\$18,000	\$27,000
Very Remote (ASGC-RA5)	\$8,000	\$13,000	\$18,000	\$27,000	\$47,000

Recipients need to declare such payments for tax purposes and are advised to seek advice regarding their own tax arrangements.

Eligibility under the FPS is based according to the following ASGC-RA categories:

Alternative Employment

ASGC-RA CATEGORIES	
ASGC-RA2 to 5	Medical practitioners working for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the RFDS; and Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander Medical Services.
ASGC-RA4 to 5	State salaried medical practitioners providing primarily primary care services, and medical practitioners providing procedural services to private patients in hospital settings.
ASGC-RA5	Medical practitioners working on Norfolk Island or Antarctica.

Top up provisions

ASGC-RA CATEGORIES	
ASGC-RA4 to 5	Medical practitioners, who, because of low Medicare billing rates, receive an inappropriately low part-payment under the CPS may be eligible for a top-up payment. Reasons for this low billing may include: excessive travel time to provide outreach services, time spent providing population health work in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and the provision of essential services to relatively small communities.

Acceptable Leave

ASGC-RA CATEGORIES									
ASGC-RA2 to 5	Medical practitioners may be eligible for leave in accordance with the following justifications: <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Length of leave</th> <th>Justification</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>4 quarters (12 months)</td> <td>None required</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6 quarters (18 months)</td> <td>Upskilling and secondary training</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8 quarters (24 months)</td> <td>Maternity/Paternity leave</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Length of leave	Justification	4 quarters (12 months)	None required	6 quarters (18 months)	Upskilling and secondary training	8 quarters (24 months)	Maternity/Paternity leave
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4 quarters (12 months)	None required								
6 quarters (18 months)	Upskilling and secondary training								
8 quarters (24 months)	Maternity/Paternity leave								

Leave Clustering

ASGC-RA CATEGORIES	
ASGC-RA4 to 5	Medical practitioners working in remote communities under contract arrangements are entitled to cluster their leave for up to four months at the end of their contract without compromising their accrued eligibility.

PART 3 – Definitions of Key Terms used in this Application Form

Quarter	The following quarters apply under the Program:								
	<table> <tr> <td>March Quarter:</td> <td>January, February, March</td> </tr> <tr> <td>June Quarter:</td> <td>April, May, June</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September Quarter:</td> <td>July, August, September</td> </tr> <tr> <td>December Quarter:</td> <td>October, November, December</td> </tr> </table>	March Quarter:	January, February, March	June Quarter:	April, May, June	September Quarter:	July, August, September	December Quarter:	October, November, December
March Quarter:	January, February, March								
June Quarter:	April, May, June								
September Quarter:	July, August, September								
December Quarter:	October, November, December								
Active quarter in alternative employment	A quarter in which a medical practitioner has provided, on average, at least two sessions per week of eligible services, with a minimum of three hours per session.								
Eligible Services	<p>Eligible services under the FPS are broadly equivalent to those rewarded under the CPS but are provided outside of the Medicare system.</p> <p>Eligible services are primary care services equivalent to the General Medical Services Section of the Medicare Benefits Schedule book. Eligible services are from the following categories:</p> <p>Category 1 – Professional attendances</p> <p>Category 2 – Diagnostic procedures and investigations</p> <p>Category 3 – Therapeutic services</p> <p>Category 7 – Cleft lip and cleft palate</p> <p>Eligible services do not include diagnostic imaging, pathology services, dentistry, optometry or bulk billing items 10990, 10991 and 10992.</p> <p>Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) medical practitioners and medical practitioners who provide services predominantly to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can include as eligible services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • travel time to provide outreach services; and/or • population health work or support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers. 								
ASGC-RA	Australian Standard Geographical Classification – Remoteness Areas (ASGC-RA) – the index used to determine and classify eligible locations under the Program.								
Location	Except in the case of RFDS medical practitioners (or similar), for the purposes of this Application Form, location means the town or locality where services were provided, or where the practice is located, rather than a suburb of that town or locality. For RFDS practitioners, location means the town or locality in which the medical practitioner provided services AND spent the night following the provision of services.								
Retention Payment Category	Retention Payment Categories have been determined using the ASGC-RA classification. Eligible categories range from RA2 to RA5, with RA5 indicating the most remote locations. The categories are used to apply different qualifying periods and payment rates for medical practitioners in these locations. The ASGC-RA status of any location can be determined using the mapping locator on the DoctorConnect website (www.doctorconnect.gov.au).								
Session	A session for the purposes of the GP Component is a period in which a medical practitioner provides eligible services, for a minimum of three hours. A medical practitioner may claim a maximum of two sessions per day.								

Part 4 – Flexible Payments System – Application

PERSONAL DETAILS

1. **Full Name** Title Mr Mrs Miss Ms Dr Other
 Family Name
 Given Names

2. **Provider Number(s)**
 Please provide all provider numbers you have used over the past 5 years

3. **Current Practice Name and Address**

 Postcode

4. **Preferred Mailing Address**
 If different from above

 Postcode

5. **Contact Details**
 Daytime phone number
 Mobile phone number
 Fax number
 Email address

6. **On what grounds are you applying for a Flexible Payments System payment?**
Please tick whichever applies

Alternative Employment
 You provide eligible services that are not within the Medicare billing system (e.g. Royal Flying Doctor Service, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Medical Services, State salaried medical practitioner providing predominantly primary care services, medical practitioners working on Norfolk Island or Antarctica).

Top Up Provisions
 You are a medical practitioner providing 'eligible services' in an isolated location and have only received a part-payment under the CPS that does not reflect your relevant workload. Only available to medical practitioners in ASGC-RA4 and 5. Medical practitioners in less remote locations (ASGC-RA2 or 3) providing services predominantly to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's may also be considered.

Leave
 You have taken a period of leave that has caused you to lose accrued eligibility under the Central Payments System.
 Date leave commenced Date leave ceased
 ____ / ____ / ____ ____ / ____ / ____
 Reason for leave

Note: Medicare data will be used in determining your eligibility and payment level, if appropriate.

INFORMATION NEEDED TO CALCULATE ELIGIBILITY – INCLUDING MEDICARE AND NON-MEDICARE SERVICES

7. Eligibility for a payment under the Flexible Payments System.

The information required in this question will determine your eligibility under the Flexible Payments System.

Please note that this table will need to cover a period of between two and eight quarters. The exact requirement will be dependent on the remoteness of the location(s) in which you have provided eligible services. The least remote locations will require information for 2 years.

If you would like to determine the period appropriate to your particular circumstances, please contact the Rural Workforce Agency in your State or Territory. Please attach additional pages if required.

(a) Locations/Qualifying period/Eligible services

(including Medicare services, if appropriate)

Location(s) in which you have provided eligible services	Date commenced	Date ceased	Name of Employer	Average number of sessions* per week
_____	___/___/___	___/___/___	_____	_____
_____	___/___/___	___/___/___	_____	_____
_____	___/___/___	___/___/___	_____	_____
_____	___/___/___	___/___/___	_____	_____
_____	___/___/___	___/___/___	_____	_____
_____	___/___/___	___/___/___	_____	_____
_____	___/___/___	___/___/___	_____	_____
_____	___/___/___	___/___/___	_____	_____

*Note: A session roughly equates to half a day, but must be at least 3 hours. No more than two sessions per day can be claimed.

(b) Leave

Have you taken any leave, within the time frame covered in the table above which has resulted in you having completed one or more inactive quarters?

No

Yes Please provide details below

Date commenced leave	Date returned to work	Reason for leave
___/___/___	___/___/___	_____
___/___/___	___/___/___	_____
___/___/___	___/___/___	_____
___/___/___	___/___/___	_____

The period allowable for back payments under the GP Component of GPRIP is limited to twelve months. Eligible medical practitioners are therefore only able to claim retrospective payments dating back twelve months from the date the application is signed and dated by the applying medical practitioner.

Provision will exist for exceptional circumstances to be reviewed on a case by case basis in order to ensure that medical practitioners are not unfairly disadvantaged due to occurrences beyond their control. Such situations will be reviewed by the Department, which may seek advice/recommendation from the GPRIP Advisory Body.

INFORMATION NEEDED TO CALCULATE YOUR PAYMENT

8. The information required in this question is about eligible services other than Medicare services that you provided during the last 6 quarters.

The information required in this question will determine the level of payment to which you may be entitled.

– Non-Medicare services only
(Medicare services are captured separately and taken into consideration)

Please Note:

- * Medical practitioners providing outreach services should list in the ‘Locations’ column only those locations where they provided eligible services AND spent the night(s) while providing those services.
- ** Only Medical practitioners who provide services predominantly to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are entitled to claim additional sessions in respect of travel to provide outreach services.
- *** Only medical practitioners who provide services predominantly to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are entitled to claim additional sessions in respect of population health work or support of Aboriginal health workers.

1st quarter (most recent) – average number of sessions per week _____

Quarter ending (month/year) ____ / ____ / ____

Locations*	Eligible Sessions	Travel time**	Population health work/support of Aboriginal health workers***	Total
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

2nd quarter – average number of sessions per week _____

Quarter ending (month/year) ____ / ____ / ____

Locations*	Eligible Sessions	Travel time**	Population health work/support of Aboriginal health workers***	Total
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Please Note:

- * Medical practitioners providing outreach services should list in the 'Locations' column only those locations where they provided eligible services AND spent the night(s) while providing those services.
- ** Only Medical practitioners who provide services predominantly to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are entitled to claim additional sessions in respect of travel to provide outreach services.
- *** Only medical practitioners who provide services predominantly to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are entitled to claim additional sessions in respect of population health work or support of Aboriginal health workers.

3rd quarter – average number of sessions per week _____

Quarter ending (month/year) ____ / ____ / ____

Locations*	Eligible Sessions	Travel time**	Population health work/support of Aboriginal health workers***	Total
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

4th quarter – average number of sessions per week _____

Quarter ending (month/year) ____ / ____ / ____

Locations*	Eligible Sessions	Travel time**	Population health work/support of Aboriginal health workers***	Total
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Please Note:

- * Medical practitioners providing outreach services should list in the 'Locations' column only those locations where they provided eligible services AND spent the night(s) while providing those services.
- ** Only Medical practitioners who provide services predominantly to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are entitled to claim additional sessions in respect of travel to provide outreach services.
- *** Only medical practitioners who provide services predominantly to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are entitled to claim additional sessions in respect of population health work or support of Aboriginal health workers.

5th quarter – average number of sessions per week _____

Quarter ending (month/year) ____ / ____ / ____

Locations*	Eligible Sessions	Travel time**	Population health work/support of Aboriginal health workers***	Total
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

6th quarter – average number of sessions per week _____

Quarter ending (month/year) ____ / ____ / ____

Locations*	Eligible Sessions	Travel time**	Population health work/support of Aboriginal health workers***	Total
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Checklist

Your provider number is included on this application form

Attached is supporting documentation to justify your claim
(see Section 9 for further information)

Ensure Medicare Australia has your personal and your bank details
updated on their system (to ensure payment)

You have completed all required sections of this form

**(Incomplete forms may delay determination of your eligibility
and subsequently, a potential payment)**

Part 5 – Documentation and Declaration

- 9. Supporting Documentation** In assessing applications under the FPS, RWAs are responsible for calculating medical practitioners' correct entitlements. To do so, all necessary documentation must be provided before the assessment can commence.

Your application is to be accompanied by a signed letter of employment from your employer/s. The letter must confirm your employment or engagement, as well as include a statement regarding the number of sessions you have completed at each location. If this is not possible, you will need to provide some other form of supporting documentation, for example, a Statutory Declaration. If you are in doubt as to what constitutes sufficient supporting documentation in your particular case, you should contact the RWA in your relevant State or Territory to discuss.

- 10. Consent to release information** It is necessary for RWAs to obtain Medicare Australia records on medical practitioners' locations and services in order to complete the eligibility assessment process and to calculate payments. RWAs also need to provide information to Medicare Australia and the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing for the purposes of monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the Program, and to ensure any future payments to you under the Central Payments System are correct.

RWAs will use personal information held by them only for the purposes of administering the Flexible Payments System. They are bound by the Information Privacy Principles contained in the *Privacy Act 1988* to the extent that the content of those principles applies to the activities they are undertaking in administering the Flexible Payments System, as if they were agencies as defined in that Act.

A condition of eligibility is that the RWA in your State or Territory:

- has access to your data as recorded by Medicare Australia in order to assess your eligibility for a payment and to calculate your payment level (if appropriate); and
- is able to provide the information contained in your Application Form and the outcome of your application to the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing and Medicare Australia for the purposes of administering, monitoring and evaluating the GP Component of GPRIP.

11. Declaration

I declare that:

- The information that I have supplied in this application form is true and correct in every particular. I understand there are penalties that apply to providing false information.
- I will advise the RWA in my State or Territory within 14 days of any change in my circumstances that may affect my entitlement to a payment under the Flexible Payments System.
- I am aware that agreement to the release of information as specified in section 10 of this form is a condition of eligibility for a payment under the FPS, and I hereby consent to the release of such information for the purposes as specified.

Signature _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

The General Practice Rural Incentives Program is subject to change or termination at any time, depending on Government policy. Payments are made on a discretionary basis and medical practitioners do not have a legally enforceable entitlement to these payments.