



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Health**

# **Practice Incentives Program Quality Improvement Incentive Fact Sheet**

**What practices need to know August 2019**

## 1. Why is there a new Quality Improvement Incentive under the PIP?

The new Quality Improvement (QI) Incentive under the Practice Incentives Program (PIP) aims to recognise and support those practices that commit to improving the care they provide to their patients. Participating practices will be supported to utilise the clinical information they have about their own communities and their knowledge of the particular needs of their own patients to develop innovative strategies to drive improvement.

As well as undertaking quality improvement activities, practices will share a minimum set of de-identified aggregated data with their local Primary Health Network (PHN), such as the proportion of patients who are diabetic, the proportion who smoke, the cardiovascular risk and weight profile. This information will be collated at the local level by the Primary Health Networks to assist in supporting improvement and understanding population health needs. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) as the national data custodian will be responsible for managing the use, access and protection of data in the collated national data set.

As the program uses de-identified data, no access of any individual or identified patient data, or any measures from an individual practice will be available to the Department of Health.

## 2. What is the PIP QI Incentive?

The PIP QI Incentive is a payment to general practices that participate in quality improvement activities to improve patient outcomes and deliver best practice care.

The PIP QI Incentive rewards general practices for undertaking continuous quality improvement activities in partnership with their local PHN through the collection and review of practice data. It represents a move away from process focused funding to a system that rewards improvement in primary care. It builds on 68% of general practices that already voluntarily share their practice data with PHNs for quality improvement and population health purposes.

Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) and other organisations funded under the Indigenous Australians' Health Programme (IAHP) have a well-established system of using primary health data to undertake quality improvement activities. These activities help improve the delivery of primary health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. For the purposes of the PIP QI Incentive, IAHP funded organisations will continue to provide data against the **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander National Key Performance Indicators (nKPIs)**, within their existing arrangement with the Department of Health. ACCHS and other IAHP organisations are not required to provide data to their local PHNs to be eligible to receive the PIP QI Incentive payment.

More information on the key eligibility requirements and how to participate is available on the Department of Health website:

[https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/PIP-QI\\_Incentive\\_guidance](https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/PIP-QI_Incentive_guidance)

### 3. What is the payment for participating in the PIP QI Incentive?

The PIP QI Incentive provides a payment of \$5 per Standardised Whole Patient Equivalent (SWPE) per annum to accredited practices who provide the PIP Eligible Data Set each quarter to their local PHN and participate in continuous quality improvement activities in partnership with their local PHN. Eligible general practices can receive a maximum payment of \$12,500 per quarter or \$50,000 per annum.

For example, any practice that meets the eligibility requirements each quarter with a SWPE of 10,000 or higher will hit the cap of \$50,000 per annum. The Incentive is paid quarterly to a cap of \$12,500. If a practice's SWPE is 7,500 they are eligible for \$37,500 per annum, which if their SWPE remains static would be paid at \$9,375 per quarter.

### 4. What does working in partnership with your local PHN mean?

The definition of partnership with your local Primary Health Network (PHN) is broad and is determined by the amount of support a general practice requires. For example, this may range from accessing self-service modules available on a PHN website to highly supported quality improvement programs. It is up to the general practice to determine what type of support they require from their PHN service offering. Please contact your local PHN for more information on what type of support they can offer your general practice.

### 5. When does the PIP QI Incentive commence?

The PIP QI Incentive commenced on 1 August 2019. General practices, Aboriginal and Community Controlled Health Services and other organisations funded under the Indigenous Australians' Health Programme can register for the PIP QI Incentive from 1 August 2019.

To qualify for the first quarterly payment in November 2019, practices will need to:

- Register with the Department of Human Services and submit the PIP Eligible Data Set to their local PHN by **15 October 2019** (see further details below).
- Commence a quality improvement activity in partnership with your local PHN by **30 October 2019**.

### 6. How do I sign up for the PIP QI Incentive?

If you are an accredited general practice that already participates in PIP you must follow the below steps to sign up for the QI Incentive:

- log on to [HPOS](#)
- Click **My Programs**
- Go to the **PIP tile**
- Click the **Update button**
- The **Program** and **PIP** information screen will appear
- Click the **Exit** button at the bottom of the information
- Look for the **Main menu** (red header at top-left of screen), and click **Incentive summary**
- In the **Quality Stream** section > **Quality Improvement Incentive**, click the **Apply** link
- Read the terms.
- Tick the **Participation Payment** option
- Click **Submit**

If you are an accredited general practice that does not participate in PIP but you qualify for the PIP you must follow the below steps to sign up for the QI Incentive:

- Register for a [PRODA account](#) or;
- Complete the [Practice Incentives Program Application form](#)
- Log on to **HPOS**
- Click **My Programs**
- Go to the **PIP tile**
- Click the **Update button**
- The **Program** and **PIP** information screen will appear
- Click the **Exit** button at the bottom of the information
- Look for the **Main menu** (red header at top-left of screen), and click **Incentive summary**
- In the **Quality Stream** section > **Quality Improvement Incentive**, click the **Apply** link
- Read the terms.
- Tick the **Participation Payment** option
- Click **Submit**

If you need assistance with registration and you are the practice owner or the authorised contact person you can use the HPOS mail centre to ask general questions about registration. You must seek permission to register from the practice owner.

Please remember to include your PIP practice ID number, your practice name and the name of the person sending the enquiry. This helps the Department of Human Services identify you and respond.

For more information you can also:

- visit the Human Services website at [humanservices.gov.au/pip](http://humanservices.gov.au/pip)
- call Human Services on 1800 222 032 (call charges may apply)
- email Human Services at [pip@humanservices.gov.au](mailto:pip@humanservices.gov.au)

## 7. What is the PIP Eligible Data Set?

The PIP Eligible Data Set is de-identified patient data, aggregated at the practice level that can be analysed by the demographic and clinical factors specified in the [PIP Eligible Data Set Data Governance Framework](#).

It is comprised of only those fields required to:

- Calculate the PIP QI ten improvement measures; and
- Conduct approved analysis (such as gender and age) in accordance with the PIP Eligible Data Set Data Governance Framework (see Principle 4).

## 8. How does a general practice submit the PIP Eligible Data Set?

In order to meet the data sharing eligibility requirements for the PIP QI Incentive, a general practice can choose to submit their data via the below options depending on the capabilities of their current clinical information system.

**Option 1)** General practices that already exchange data with their local PHN

- A general practice can continue to utilise the data extraction tool method agreed with their local PHN to submit the PIP Eligible Data Set.

**Option 2)** General practices that do not currently exchange data with their local PHN but have compatible software

- A general practice can utilise the data extraction method offered by their local PHN to submit the PIP Eligible Data Set.
- A general practice can purchase or licence their own data extraction tool which is compatible with their local PHN; or
- A general practice can work with their clinical information system provider and local PHN to submit the PIP Eligible Data Set in accordance with the PIP Eligible Data Set Data Governance Framework. General practices in this situation may wish to apply for a time limited exemption (refer Option 3).

**Option 3)** General practices that cannot exchange data with their local PHN because they do not currently have compatible software or who do not want to use the software offered by their PHNs

- Work with their clinical information system provider and local PHN to create a compatible system to submit the PIP Eligible Data Set in accordance with the PIP Eligible Data Set Data Governance Framework.
- Apply to the Department of Health for a time-limited exemption and work towards operationalising a compatible system.
- The Department of Health may give general practices up to 12 months to ensure that they have sufficient time to work with their PHN and clinical information system provider on finding a solution that complies with the PIP QI Incentive Guidelines and the PIP Eligible Data Set Data Governance Framework.
- If a time-limited exemption is approved by the Department of Health, practices will need to work in partnership with their local PHN to meet the other requirements of the PIP QI Incentive.

## 9. When does the PIP Eligible Data Set need to be submitted to the local Primary Health Network (PHN) by?

General practices are required to submit data to their local PHN at least once within the relevant dates specified in the data submission period.

**Table 1: Data submission periods for payment months**

Payment month	Data submission period
November	1 August to 15 October
February	1 November to 15 January
May	1 February to 15 April
August	1 May to 15 July

## **10. What happens if I haven't submitted the data by the due date?**

In programs such as the PIP QI Incentive there is an obligation on practices to manage their participation consistent with the criteria. For this to happen practices need to actively engage with and monitor the performance of their systems. However, the Department of Health will take into account the circumstances of each practice and the reasons data hasn't been submitted. If a practice can demonstrate it is making genuine efforts to supply the data – e.g. through having applied to the Department of Health for a time-limited extension while they work with their local PHN on data sharing arrangements – the practice will remain eligible for payment for the relevant quarter while these transitions issues are managed.

## **11. Does a general practice have to submit their entire data set?**

For the specific purposes of the PIP QI Incentive, general practices are required only to submit data relevant to the PIP Eligible Data Set. The Department of Health recognises however that PHNs and many general practices have contributed to better health outcomes through the sharing of broader clinical data from general practices to PHNs (the Population Health Data Set) and encourages general practices and PHNs to continue existing data sharing arrangements alongside the PIP QI.

## **12. Can patients opt out?**

General practice patient consent arrangements should provide patients with the opportunity to opt out. Software providers are required to support patient opt out with simple options to manage this. Contact your software provider for specific advice on how to do this.

## **13. Does a general practice get an incentive for submitting the PIP Eligible Data Set to their local PHN?**

A general practice must meet all eligibility requirements detailed in the [PIP QI Incentive Guidelines](#) to receive the PIP QI Incentive payment. To receive the incentive a general practice must:

- Be eligible for the PIP;
- Register for the PIP QI Incentive;
- Electronically submit the PIP Eligible Data Set to their local PHN quarterly; and
- Undertake continuous quality improvement activities in partnership with their local PHN.

## **14. How will the Department of Health know if my general practice has met the eligibility requirements of the PIP QI Incentive?**

PHNs will advise the Department of Health whether a practice:

- has submitted the PIP Eligible Data Set; or
- is working on data sharing arrangements under a time limited exemption

It is the practice's responsibility to maintain sufficient evidence that a CQI activity has been undertaken. While the Department of Health does not specify the type of evidence required, practices must retain documentation for 6 years in case they are selected for an audit.

Each year, general practices that participate in PIP are also required to sign and return an annual confirmation statement. The annual confirmation statement is a legal declaration of compliance or non-compliance. It is the sole responsibility of the general practice to sign and return this statement to the Department of Human Services. If a general practice fails to provide this statement all PIP payments will be withheld until it has been returned.

More information on the annual confirmation statement is available here:

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/organisations/health-professionals/services/medicare/practice-incentives-program-guidelines/eligibility/how-we-make-pip-payments#a2>

## 15. What does a PHN use the PIP Eligible Data Set for?

The PIP Eligible Data Set will assist PHNs to:

- work with general practices to support quality improvement, examples include:
  - providing practices with reports based on their practice population data which will help identify potential areas for improvement and in which they can focus their CQI activities
  - providing feedback on the quality of the data submitted
  - where the general practice agrees, provide benchmarking against an aggregate of other general practices in the region
  - providing advice on managing the patient population indicated in the data
- contribute to service planning and population health mapping at different levels including PHN boundaries, local health districts, jurisdictional boundaries and at national level.

PHNs will share the aggregated data with the national data custodian - the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) - for national level analysis and research. Researchers may apply to access the data securely and in accordance with data access and release protocols, which will be developed in accordance with the PIP Eligible Data Set Data Governance Framework. The AIHW will not be collecting data for the first 12 months of the PIP QI Incentive, however trial data exchanges will commence to ensure readiness for this to occur.

## 16. What are the privacy controls for the PIP Eligible Data Set?

Privacy is maintained through numerous controls:

- no identified data leaves the practice's software;
- suppression rules are applied by data custodians to prevent the sharing of information where small numbers of patients are involved;
- no data set linkage is permitted if such linkage could reasonably result in re-identification of the PIP Eligible Data Set;
- no commercialisation of the PIP Eligible Data Set is permitted; and
- collection, use and access is prescribed and monitored. Access to the PIP Eligible Data Set by external researchers and other interested parties will be controlled by the national data custodian (the AIHW) and published on a searchable register.

More information on the privacy controls can be found in the [PIP Eligible Data Set Data Governance Framework](#).

## **17. Are general practices required to use specific data extraction companies for extracting the PIP Eligible Data Set?**

No. As long as the PIP Eligible Data Set is submitted to the Primary Health Network (PHN) in accordance with the relevant requirements of the PIP Eligible Data Set Data Governance Framework, the practice will meet the data sharing eligibility requirement of the PIP QI Incentive.

## **18. What and who are the data custodians?**

The data custodians under the PIP QI Incentive are involved in aggregating the data into the PIP Eligible Data Set at local, regional and national level. The data custodians are governed by the PIP Eligible Data Set Data Governance Framework.

The roles and responsibilities of each data custodian is detailed in the PIP Eligible Data Set Data Governance Framework. The data custodians of the PIP Eligible Data Set are:

### **Local Data Custodian: General practice**

Role: Ensure the accuracy and completeness of data contained in their clinical information systems and use it to improve the quality of patient care and outcomes.

### **Regional Data Custodian: Primary Health Network**

Role: Extract and analyse the PIP Eligible Data Set to support participating general practices implement quality improvement activities.

### **National Data Custodian: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare**

Role: Analyse the PIP Eligible Data Set for population health planning, policy development, program management, disease burden analysis, and relevant trends

## **19. What is the Population Health Data Set?**

The Population Health Data Set is the voluntary data set that general practices choose to submit to their local PHN as part of a broader data sharing arrangement. The submission of the Population Health Data Set is not required to be eligible for the PIP QI Incentive. The PIP Eligible Data Set can be derived from the Population Health Data Set.

## **20. What is the difference between the PIP Eligible Data Set and the Population Health Data Set?**

The PIP Eligible Data Set is the data set that a general practice is required to submit to their local Primary Health Network (PHN) when participating under the PIP QI Incentive.

The Population Health Data Set is the data set that approximately 68% of general practices voluntarily submit to their PHNs. The PIP Eligible Data Set can be derived from the Population Health Data Set.

## **21. What do PHNs use the Population Health Data Set for?**

PHNs use the Population Health Data Set for local population health planning, service delivery planning and other quality improvement activities. Contact your local PHN for further details.

The data set is also used as a way for PHNs to assist general practices in understanding their practice population and developing quality improvement activities based on this data. A PHN will often use a general practice's Population Health Data Set to assist practices in identifying gaps in patient care, allocating resources and clinicians accordingly and building on clinical strengths including in the areas of quality and safety.



## 22. How do general practices submit their Population Health Data Set to PHNs?

Most PHNs provide general practices with a licence for a data extraction tool to assist them to securely extract and submit data. Under these arrangements, a general practice would submit their Population Health Data Set via PenCS or POLAR depending on the PHNs chosen extraction tool.

## 23. I have more questions who do I ask?

Firstly, ensure you have read all the resources available on the Department of Health website at [https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/PIP-QI\\_Incentive\\_guidance](https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/PIP-QI_Incentive_guidance).

The resources available include:

- PIP QI Guidelines
- Improvement Measures
- Improvement Measures – Annotated Specifications
- PIP Eligible Data Set Data Governance Framework
- PIP QI Who Do I Ask
- PIP QI FAQs

If you have further questions that have not been answered in the resources above, please refer to the 'Who Do I Ask' document. This document has been developed to assist general practices in directing their question to the most appropriate person. This document is available on the Department of Health at [https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/PIP-QI\\_Incentive\\_guidance](https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/PIP-QI_Incentive_guidance).

## 24. Contact Details

Your local **PHN** can answer questions about PIP QI such as:

- Guidelines
- PIP Eligible Data Set
- The ten Improvement Measures
- Data Governance Framework
- Quality improvement activities
- Your eligibility for a PIP QI payment

The [PHN website](#) has the contact details of your local PHN contact

The **Department of Human Services** can also answer questions about PIP QI such as:

- Applying for the PIP and the PIP QI
- Registering on HPOS
- PIP practice identifier
- Linking your HPOS account to your practice profile to enable you to manage your practice details online
- How payments are calculated and the Standardised Whole Patient Equivalent (SWPE) value
- Practice obligations and the Annual Confirmation Statement
- Review of decisions about your status or PIP payment

Email: [pip@humanservices.gov.au](mailto:pip@humanservices.gov.au) or Phone: 1800 222 032

If you have further questions regarding the PIP QI Incentive time limited exemption please email the [practicesupport@health.gov.au](mailto:practicesupport@health.gov.au).