



Fact Sheet: Changes to the Workforce Incentive Program – Doctor Stream from 1 January 2024 for non-vocationally registered doctors

September 2023

THIS FACT SHEET PROVIDES ADVANCE NOTICE OF UPCOMING CHANGES TO THE WORKFORCE INCENTIVE PROGRAM – DOCTOR STREAM INCENTIVE AMOUNTS FOR NON-VOCATIONALLY REGISTERED DOCTORS

Background

The Workforce Incentive Program (WIP) - Doctor Stream commenced on 1 January 2020 and replaced the General Practice Rural Incentive Program (GPRIP).

The WIP - Doctor Stream aims to encourage doctors to practise in regional, rural and remote communities and to promote careers in rural medicine through the provision of financial incentives. For doctors to receive WIP – Doctor Stream incentive payments, they must provide eligible services in eligible locations.

What is changing?

The 2022 October Budget introduced a change to the WIP - Doctor Stream payment that non-vocationally registered doctors who are not on an approved training pathway will receive 80% of the value of WIP - Doctor Stream payments. This comes into effect from 1 January 2024.

The value of payments will range between \$3,600 and \$48,000, depending on a doctor's activity levels, location and duration of active services within the program.

This change to the WIP - Doctor Stream incentive is consistent with advice to the National Rural Health Commissioner on the development of the National Rural Generalist Pathway to further encourage and support doctors to work towards fellowship. It also aligns with the reduced Medicare rebates for non-vocationally registered doctors where they are not participating in an approved training pathway.

What do non-vocationally registered doctors need to consider?

Non-vocationally registered doctors not on an approved training pathway are encouraged to consider:

- Exploring the approved training pathways on offer from GP Colleges. This includes the Rural Generalist Training Scheme, Australian General Practice Training Program, Remote Vocational Training Scheme or other relevant GP training pathways. The GP Colleges -

Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) or the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) are responsible for GP training including application processes, with timing for applications varying across pathways/colleges. The contact details for the Colleges are in Attachment A below.

- Enrolling in an approved training pathway as soon as possible.
- Doctors enrolled in a training program at any time in the WIP -Doctor Stream quarter are eligible for the full vocationally registered WIP- Doctor Stream payment.
- Doctors can discuss the changes with the state/territory Rural Workforce Agency, especially if the doctor is receiving WIP - Doctor Stream payments under the Flexible Payment System or interested in a career in rural general practice/primary care.

Non-vocationally registered doctors engaged in an approved training pathway do not need to do anything.

Once a doctor is on an approved training pathway, the doctor can confirm with the college that they have notified Services Australia Medicare of the doctor’s approved training placement. The doctor may also be required to complete an *Application for a Medicare provider number or prescriber number for a medical practitioner form (HW019)* available on the Services Australia website. Once processed, Services Australia Medicare will send the doctor written confirmation of their placement provider number.

Doctors that are practising as a non-vocationally registered doctor in primary care, in addition to their training placements, may like to have their additional primary care work recognised through the Flexible Payment System with the Rural Workforce Agency.

Payments for the WIP - Doctor Stream

As of 1 January 2024, a doctors vocational registration status will have implications for the amount of incentive that may be payable.

Non-vocationally registered doctors not on an approved training pathway and work in primary care (MM3-7) may be eligible for the following WIP- Doctor Stream payments in Table A.

Table A: Maximum WIP - Doctor Stream incentive amounts for eligible non-vocationally registered doctors not in an approved training pathway– effective from 1 January 2024

Location (MM)	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5 plus
MM 3	\$0	\$3,600	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$9,600
MM 4	\$0	\$6,400	\$10,400	\$10,400	\$14,400
MM 5	\$0	\$9,600	\$13,600	\$13,600	\$18,400
MM 6	\$12,800	\$12,800	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$28,000
MM 7	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$28,000	\$28,000	\$48,000

Attachment A

Is eligibility for the WIP – Doctor Stream changing?

No. Eligibility for WIP – Doctor Stream, remains the same. Doctors must:

- provide a minimum amount of eligible primary care services or undertake eligible general practitioner (GP) or rural generalist training under an approved training pathway in Modified Monash (MM) 3-7 locations
- meet the required number of active quarters for payment
- have an eligible current Medicare provider number
- have provided current bank account details to Services Australia specifically for the WIP – Doctor Stream in the required timeframe through the [Health Professional Online Services](#) (HPOS).

Are incentives for doctors working in primary care while undertaking vocational training changing?

No. There will be no change to the maximum incentive amounts for doctors undertaking eligible GP or rural generalist training under an approved training pathway in MM3-7, provided other eligibility requirements for WIP Doctor Stream payment are met.

From January 2024, Doctors undertaking vocational training in MM3-7 may be eligible for the maximum WIP Doctor Stream (vocationally registered) payment, once they meet the required number of active quarters.

How are WIP - Doctor Stream payments paid?

There are two payment systems used for the WIP – Doctor Stream, the:

- **Central Payment System (CPS)** - this is used for doctors who bill Medicare for eligible primary care services. Doctors receive automated payments made by Services Australia through the CPS and do not need to apply for this payment.
- **Flexible Payment System (FPS)** - Doctors need to apply under the FPS if they provide eligible non-MBS billed primary care services/or undertake approved GP training that is not reflected in the MBS records.

Services Australia administers all WIP - Doctor Stream payments on behalf of the Department of Health and Aged Care for both the CPS and FPS.

More information on the WIP – Doctor Stream, including the eligibility and payments systems (the CPS and FPS) is available from the Department of Health and Aged Care's website (www.health.gov.au/our-work/workforce-incentive-program).

How do Doctors apply for WIP - Doctor Stream?

If a doctor is billing the MBS regularly, no application is needed. Through the CPS, these billings are automatically assessed and the incentive is calculated and processed as a single payment if the doctor is eligible.

However, if the doctor is providing eligible non-billed primary care services or undertaken approved GP training that is not reflected in Services Australia records, the doctor may need to apply under the FPS. When submitting an application for FPS the doctor must:

- apply directly to the Rural Workforce Agency (RWA) in the state or territory in which they provide the majority of services; and
- include all time spent providing WIP - Doctor Stream eligible services, regardless of whether the services were MBS Billed. This is to ensure all eligible primary care activity has been counted to meet the minimum level of activity.

Contact Information

Department of Health and Aged Care - for eligibility enquiries:

Website: www.health.gov.au/our-work/workforce-incentive-program

Email: WIP@health.gov.au

Rural Workforce Agencies - for FPS enquiries and to submit applications under FPS:

[Northern Territory Primary Health Network](#)

Email: gpwip@ntphn.org.au

Phone: (08) 8982 1000

[Rural Doctors Workforce Agency South Australia](#)

Email: gpservices@ruraldoc.com.au

Phone: (08) 8234 8277

[Rural Health West](#)

Email: accounts@ruralhealthwest.com.au

Phone: (08) 6389 4500

[HRPlus Tas](#)

Email: admin@hrplus.com.au

Phone: (03) 6332 8600

[New South Wales Rural Doctors Network](#)

Email: gppgrants@nswrdn.com.au

Phone: (02) 4924 8000

[Health Workforce Queensland](#)

Email: wipds@healthworkforce.com.au

Phone: (07) 3105 7853

[Rural Workforce Agency Victoria](#)

Email: rwav@rwav.com.au

Phone: (03) 9349 7800

GP Colleges - for enquiries about approved training pathways, including eligibility and application processes:

[Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine](#) – Pathways to Fellowship

Email: selection@acrrm.org.au

Phone: 1800 223 226

[Royal Australian College of General Practitioners](#) - GP career and application support:

Email: becomeagp@racgp.org.au

Email: AGPTeligibility@racgp.org.au

Phone: 1800 472 247

[Services Australia](#) – for CPS assessment, calculation and all post-payment enquiries:

Phone: 1800 222 032

Email: WIPDoctor@servicesaustralia.gov.au