



# Frequently Asked Questions: Workforce Incentive Program – Practice Stream (WIP-PS)

## What is the Workforce Incentive Program – Practice Stream (WIP-PS)?

The WIP-PS provides financial incentives to eligible general practices, Aboriginal Medical Services and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services in Modified Monash (MM) regions 1-7 to help with the costs of engaging a multidisciplinary team. Eligible practitioners include nurses, midwives, Aboriginal health workers and practitioners and allied health professionals.

There are many benefits of multidisciplinary team-based care models including improved patient outcomes, prevention of disease and cost-effective care.

## Which practices and health professionals are eligible for WIP-PS?

To be eligible under the WIP-PS, a practice must be an accredited general practice as defined by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and meet certain eligibility requirements outlined in the [Guidelines](#).

Accreditation must:

- be current at the point-in-time date<sup>1</sup> of each payment quarter to be eligible for payment.
- if registered for accreditation, practices must achieve accreditation against the RACGP Standards within 12 months of being approved in the WIP – Practice Stream, or within 12 months of being approved in the Practice Incentives Program (PIP) if a PIP consenting practice. Accreditation must be maintained thereafter.

Eligible health professional types include nurse practitioners, registered nurses, midwives, enrolled nurses, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners and workers. Allied health professional types include audiologists, chiropractors, diabetes educators, dietitians/nutritionists, exercise physiologists, occupational therapists, orthoptists, orthotists/prosthetists, osteopaths, paramedics, pharmacists (non-dispensing role), physiotherapists, podiatrists, psychologists, social workers and speech pathologists. Extra requirements apply for some professional types - refer to the [Guidelines](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Each payment quarter has a reference period and a point-in-time date as set out in the [Guidelines](#).

## Has the list of eligible health professional types been expanded?

The list of eligible health professions under the WIP-PS was expanded from 1 November 2023. WIP-PS practices can include average weekly hours worked by midwives and paramedics in their Quarterly Confirmation Statement (QCS).

## How much are the WIP-PS quarterly incentive payments?

The maximum incentive amount an eligible practice can receive is \$32,500 per quarter or \$130,000 per year before rural loadings and indexation are applied. Indexation will be applied each year from 2024-25, commencing in August 2024.

The amount paid to each eligible general practice depends on the following factors:

- Practice size measured in Standardised Whole Patient Equivalent (SWPE);
- practice location;
- type of practice;
- type of eligible health professionals engaged;
- average weekly hours worked by eligible health professionals at the practice over the quarter; and
- loadings applicable. Loading by Modified Monash (MM) region and Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) concession status.

If a practice meets the eligibility criteria, payment amounts will be calculated by Services Australia following submission and approval of an application.

## What are the types of Payments under the WIP-PS?

There are three payments available under the WIP-PS. They are:

- Quarterly incentive payments;
- Quarterly rural loading payments; and
- Annual DVA loading payments

Services Australia calculate and administer the payments for the Department of Health and Aged Care (Health) each quarter in February, May, August, and November. Eligible practices will receive the quarterly incentive payment and the rural loading payment (if applicable) combined in one transaction each quarter. Annual DVA loading payments are made separately each August.

After each quarterly payment, Services Australia provides participating practices with a WIP-PS Quarterly Payment Advice letter. This letter itemises the total amount provided to the practice under each payment type applicable for that quarter. The annual DVA loading amounts are provided in the August quarterly payment advice.

## How is the WIP-PS supporting rural and remote communities?

Practices located in MM 3-7 are eligible for a quarterly rural loading payment in addition to their quarterly incentive payment amount. The loading is a percentage of the quarterly incentive payment and is determined by the main location of the practice. The WIP-PS rural loading percentages are 30% for MM 3, 40% for MM 4- 5, and 60% for MM 6 -7.

The [Health Workforce Locator can be used to find the MM classification of a practice location](#). For the WIP-PS, the practice location is the address that is nominated as the practice's main location.

## Are telehealth services eligible under WIP-PS?

Average hours reported by an eligible health professional under the WIP-PS can include hours providing telehealth services, as long as they have not been claimed under the Medicare Benefits Schedule services, or if an exemption is in place (*Refer to Section 1.5.3 in the [Guidelines](#)*).

For more information, please refer to the [MBS Telehealth – Video and Phone Services for Medical Practitioners in General Practice Fact Sheet](#)

## Are private providers eligible under WIP-PS?

WIP-PS eligible practices can engage eligible health professionals as a part of a multidisciplinary team through direct, contracted or casual employment. The practice decides the form of engagement with the eligible health professional. Private providers may enter into an agreement with a practice, however only hours worked under that agreement can be claimed under the program. Hours claimed under the program cannot then be claimed by the private provider through the Medicare Benefits Schedule services (*unless an exemption applies - refer to the [Guidelines](#)*).

General Practitioners (GPs) could be 'employed' by the practice through direct employment, contracted or casual arrangements.

## Is time funded through other programs or the MBS able to be included in the hours claimed under WIP-PS?

Practices are not eligible to claim payment for any hours where they already receive financial support to employ or engage an eligible health professional, or if the financial support covers the services performed by an eligible health professional. This includes Australian, state or territory government funding; other private funding (e.g. funding from a parent organisation); or funding from other incentive programs.

Practices that employ or engage the services of a nurse practitioner or midwife (with an endorsement for scheduled medicines), allied health professional, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner with their own provider number cannot claim WIP-PS

incentives for any time those health professionals spend on the relevant Medicare Benefits Schedule services.

The above conditions do not apply to Aboriginal Medical Services, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, and state or territory government health clinics in rural and remote communities that:

- have an exemption under Section 19(2) of the *Health Insurance Act 1973*; or
- receive funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners, or allied health professionals through Health.

## What happens if the practice relocates or closes for a period of time?

Practices must advise Services Australia of any changes to practice arrangements within 7 calendar days or at least 7 calendar days before the relevant point-in-time period, whichever date is first.

A practice can do this by:

- submitting an [Incentive Programs Change of Practice details \(IP005\)](#) form along with the required supporting documents or update their details through [Health Professional Online Service \(HPOS\)](#); and
- providing an updated accreditation certificate, showing the new location.

Practices are required to advise their accrediting agency of changes as soon as practical. Practices should work with their approved accredited agency during transition and ensure requirements under the program eligibility can continue to be met.

### Temporary relocation

The practice must notify its accrediting agency and Services Australia of the temporary address and dates of relocation. The accrediting agency will work with the practice during the transition to ensure the practice is meeting accreditation requirements at the temporary location. Practices must continue to meet all WIP-PS requirements to remain eligible for payments. Refer to 'permanent relocation' in the [Guidelines](#) for other relocation scenarios.

## What happens if the staff change at the practice?

Practices are required to keep their records and reporting up to date. Practices must advise Services Australia of any changes to practice arrangements within 7 calendar days or at least 7 calendar days before the relevant point-in-time period, whichever date is first.

Changes to practice arrangements include:

- practitioners leaving or joining the practice;
- changes to the authorised contact person for the practice; and
- changes in hours worked by each eligible health professional or changes to their employment status (to be notified in the QCS)

Practices that do not confirm their QCS by the required date (*refer to the [Guidelines](#)*) will have their payments withheld until returned. To complete the QCS, the authorised contact person or practice owner registered with the WIP-PS must:

- confirm that the practice details reported within the QCS are current and correct; or
- include any changes in practice arrangements as outlined above

When a practitioner joins or extends their provider number at a location, keeping their details up to date through [HPOS](#) will ensure that eligible services they provide are included in the practice's SWPE value calculation.

Most changes made through HPOS are effective immediately and can be made up to, and on, the relevant point in time date. Changes cannot be made to practitioner details and payments after the practice has confirmed the QCS.

## The practice receives Practice Incentives Program (PIP) payments, can the department use that information for the WIP-PS?

If your practice is applying for, or is, already approved for the Practice Incentives Program (PIP) you can become a PIP consenting practice. This means you can consent to the use of your information transferring to your WIP-PS application.

PIP consenting practices will have identical PIP and WIP-PS practice IDs and must give consent to allow usage of PIP information (such as SWPE value) for the purposes of the WIP-PS. A PIP consenting practice must remain eligible for the PIP to be eligible for the WIP-PS.

The PIP is designed to encourage general practices to continue providing quality care, improve capacity and improve access and health outcomes for patients. PIP payments are made directly to eligible practices and general practitioners (for the Aged Care Access Incentive) for Health by Services Australia. In line with WIP-PS, eligibility requirements and SWPE calculations of eligible practices help inform the administration of both incentive payments.

To learn more about the PIP, please read the PIP Guidelines using the following link: [Practice Incentives Program - Services Australia](#)

## Contact Details

### Who can I contact for questions on eligibility and payments?

Services Australia assists in the administration and provision of WIP-PS payments for Health. For enquiries about payments, please contact Services Australia on the details provided below:

**Phone:** 1800 222 032 | **Fax:** 1300 587 696 | **Email:** [wippractice@servicesaustralia.gov.au](mailto:wippractice@servicesaustralia.gov.au)

## More Information

For more WIP-PS information please consult the [Guidelines](#) available from the Department's website: [www.health.gov.au/our-work/workforce-incentive-program](http://www.health.gov.au/our-work/workforce-incentive-program) or Services Australia through [Incentive Programs](#).