



Australian Government

Information kit for residential aged care providers

Understanding, communicating, and supporting the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive

Effective – August 2024



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About this resource

This information kit provides a range of resources for residential aged care providers to help you to **understand, communicate, and support** the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive in your residential aged care home.

This information kit is for all staff in your residential aged care home including managers, educators, nurses, care staff and others such as activity coordinators. It may also be of interest to your board and members of relevant committees such as clinical governance committees.

It has 3 parts:

- Part 1 – information to help you **understand** the design, eligibility requirements and benefits of the incentive
- Part 2 –resources to help you **communicate** with residents, their families, friends and carers about the incentive
- Part 3 – explains ways you can **support** the incentive's implementation.

This information kit should be used with other supporting resources about the incentive available on the Department of Health and Aged Care website at health.gov.au/our-work/gpaci.

Disclaimer

These guidelines and tools are for information purposes to support the introduction of the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive.

The Australian Government may alter arrangements for the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive at any time and without notice. The Australian Government does not accept any legal liability or responsibility for any injury, loss or damage incurred by the use of, reliance on, or interpretation of the information provided in these guidance or associated tools.

Background

Health care for all people matters

Residents living in residential aged care homes have higher rates of multiple complex conditions, including frailty and cognitive impairment and higher rates of emergency department presentations.

These complex needs require a proactive response that involves various people across both the health and aged care systems. Some general practitioners (GPs) do attend residential aged care homes and provide exceptional care to residents. But overall, this is a need that has been inadequately met by the current health system.



Supporting better care

The General Practice in Aged Care Incentive is a new incentive payment for general practitioners and their practice, which commenced on 1 July 2024. Eligible GPs and practices registered in MyMedicare that meet the eligibility and servicing criteria can receive incentive payments for providing their registered patients who live in a residential aged care home with care planning and regular visits at the home.

The incentive supports GPs and practices to deliver more proactive, planned and continuous care for people living in a residential aged care home. The incentive is an important part of the Australian Government's response to the final report of the [Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety](#) and [Strengthening Medicare](#).

More information about the incentive, including eligibility and service requirements, is available at health.gov.au/our-work/gpaci.

Benefits for residential aged care home providers

By registering for MyMedicare, residential aged care home residents may benefit from the incentive by:

- knowing people in their care are getting regular and coordinated health care
- the assurance that care plans will be reviewed as needs change
- having the opportunity for more residents to have a regular GP
- having improved health and wellbeing outcomes
- experiencing fewer preventable hospitalisations especially during the after-hours period
- being supported by staff who are part of the extended healthcare team
- meeting their Aged Care Quality Standards responsibilities by ensuring residents can access safe and effective clinical care.

Under the [Aged Care Quality Standards](#), residential aged care providers must deliver safe and effective clinical care in accordance with a person's needs, goals and preferences to optimise health and wellbeing. Supporting your residents to register for MyMedicare and facilitating providers visiting residents may help you meet your Aged Care Quality Standards responsibilities by ensuring your residents can access safe and effective clinical care.

A partnership approach to care planning and coordination with local GPs and practices can contribute to the achievement of this standard. This approach will be enhanced by the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive. Better health care experiences and outcomes for residential aged care home residents who receive care from a GP and practice that participate in the incentive can contribute to an overall sense of wellbeing.



Part 1: Understand the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive

MyMedicare

Residential aged care home residents, their preferred GP, and the practice they work with must register in MyMedicare to participate in the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive.

Be aware that only practices, individuals or, if a person does not have capacity, a 'responsible person' can register someone with MyMedicare. A 'responsible person' means an adult person accompanying the patient or in whose care the patient has been placed. This could include a parent or guardian, a person who holds power of attorney or a guardianship order, or the next of kin.

More detailed information about MyMedicare, what it is, its benefits and how to register are available at health.gov.au/our-work/mymedicare/about.

General Practice in Aged Care Incentive fact sheets

The following fact sheets have been developed to help stakeholders understand everything they need to know about the incentive:

- General Practice in Aged Care Incentive
- Facts and benefits
- Roles and contributions
- Person-centred care

These resources and the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive Program Guidelines are available on the Department of Health and Aged Care website at health.gov.au/our-work/gpaci.

Please circulate these amongst your staff to help them understand the incentive.

Patient journeys

Mavis' and Bernie's stories illustrate how the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive can be applied to deliver high quality primary health care. Their stories demonstrate how across the course of a year, proactive, planned and continuous team-based care makes a difference.

Please use these as discussion starters and case studies with your staff.

These are available on the Department of Health and Aged Care website here: health.gov.au/our-work/gpaci.



Staff information sessions

Hosting information sessions with your staff will be a useful way of ensuring all they are aware of the new incentive, its potential benefits and how it strengthens access to quality primary care and other health services.

Included tool



To help you host a staff information session a suggested seminar agenda has been prepared in this information kit at Appendix 1. A pre-prepared presentation that you can use and adapt are available for download.



Part 2: Communicating about the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive

Residential aged care home providers and staff are a trusted source of information and advice for residents, their families, and carers. Staff can support the objectives of the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive by communicating about the incentive, its aims and how to participate.



Top tip

Supporting people in your care to understand and choose to participate in something new like the incentive requires time and effort. Here are some tips to support effective communication:

- Keep people and their families at the centre of advice and care
- Ensure information is clear, accurate and easy to understand
- Ensure communication is culturally safe, appropriate and caters to peoples' specific needs
- Harness trusted and regularly used sources of information
- Make use of 'champions' who can help convey the benefits of participating and promote the incentive.

The following resources provide suggested activities to inform residents in your residential aged care home, their families, and carers about the incentive. This includes:

- in-house seminars and information sessions
- written communications.

In all your communication about the incentive reassure your residents that if their GP does not participate in the incentive, they will still be able to deliver services to them as normal and they will still have access to existing Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) items and rebates.

In-house seminars and information sessions

Information sessions are an easy, personalised way for people in your residential aged care home, their families, and carers to learn about the incentive.



Included tool

To help you host an in-house seminar or information session a suggested agenda has been prepared in this information kit at Appendix 2. A pre-prepared presentation and talking points you can use and adapt are available for download.



Top tip

People typically turn to family, carers, and others who they trust to learn about a new health service and weigh up whether to get involved. It is often through spontaneous conversations in safe, informal spaces, combined with authoritative information that people make decisions. Here are some tips to support in-house seminars:

- Invite family members, friends, and carers to attend.
- Consider hosting an information session with morning or afternoon tea, or as part of day club programs or social activities.
- Think of these sessions as fostering shared, informed decision making in a safe, supportive environment.
- Invite a guest speaker (more on this below).
- Nominate 'champions' (more on this below).

Invite a guest speaker

Guest speakers can provide different perspectives and new information that give residents and staff the full picture of how the incentive works. This can create the opportunity for discussion, question, and answers.

Suggested guest speakers include:

- a local GP or GP registrar
- a practice nurse or nurse practitioner
- someone from your Primary Health Network (PHN)
- someone from your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner or Aboriginal health worker
- a local aged care advocate
- your clinical care coordinator.

Nominate 'champions'

Residents' groups and seniors' clubs are an opportunity to discuss the importance of primary care, the benefits of a regular GP and what the incentive offers. Discussions within these forums can influence and inform the attitudes and decisions of your residential aged care home residents.

To support their role as champions of the incentive, offer organisers:

- separate information sessions so they can serve as additional sources of information and advice
- the opportunity to serve as influencers for the incentive in your residential aged care home
- regular updates on developments with MyMedicare and the incentive.



Written communications

For many people, taking in a lot of new information at once can be overwhelming. Older people in particular often feel the need to go back and check the facts.

Your residential aged care home residents, their families and carers will appreciate some 'take-away' written information they can refer to later.

Distribute an Information booklet

Providing an information booklet about the incentive, its benefits and action steps will help reinforce messaging and inform decision making.



Included tool

An information booklet designed for you to use as a handout is available for download. This would be a useful resource to have in your libraries, resource centres and other areas where people gather.

Send out an email bulletin and newsletter article

Circulating an email bulletin and/or newsletter article about the incentive and its benefits is a helpful approach to communicate information to your residential aged care home residents, as well as their families and carers.



Included tool

Suggested wording for an email and newsletter article has been drafted in this information kit at Appendix 3 and Appendix 4. You can adapt these to various communication channels you regularly use in your residential aged care home to communicate important, topical information.



Part 3: Support the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive

This section provides some suggestions on how to put systems and practices in place that will be beneficial for implementation of the incentive and communication about it.

Remember it is NOT the responsibility of residential aged care home providers to:

- register their residents with MyMedicare or obtain informed consent
- search for practices registered with MyMedicare and the incentive
- recommend or promote one practice or GP more than another.

Registration for MyMedicare is voluntary. The choice of GP, as well as decision to register with MyMedicare and participate in the incentive, rests solely with the aged care home resident, in collaboration with their family or carers. It is the responsibility of the practice to link the resident to the GP in MyMedicare and select the indicator on the patients' MyMedicare profile to participate in the incentive.

However, residential aged care home providers do have an important role in supporting their residents, their families, and carers to understand and participate (if they choose) in the incentive.



Top tip

Generally, there are 3 groups of residents in your residential aged care home:

1. Those who have a regular GP who is registered with MyMedicare and the incentive.
2. Those whose regular GP is not yet registered with the incentive.
3. Those with no regular GP. This is typically those who have recently moved to a new residential aged care home and their usual GP does not visit residential aged care homes.

Residential aged care providers can provide support for all of these groups, and the provision of proactive, planned and continuous care. It will be important for residential aged care providers to consider what they need to have in place to achieve this. Here are some suggested systems and practices you could implement or strengthen, which are detailed further below:

- strengthen a relationship with your PHN
- allocate a responsible staff member
- develop a database for participation
- provide and discuss updates
- adopt an improvement mindset
- communication mechanisms.



Support GPs and their care teams to deliver services in your residential aged care home

The effective delivery of the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive will require GPs and their care teams to work differently. GPs and their care teams can work with you to develop new systems and patterns to provide services to residents in your residential aged care home. You may wish to engage with GPs who already deliver services in your aged care home about the practical ways to streamline service delivery, to maximise the mutual benefits of the incentive.

Strengthen a relationship and engage with your PHN

PHNs are funded by the Australian Government to coordinate primary care within their region. Your PHN may be able to provide a list of GPs and practices who provide services to residents in residential aged care homes. Some PHNs are funded to enhance access to primary care. To find the location and contact details of your PHN, visit: health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/primary-health-network-locator.

Allocate a responsible staff member

Designate a 'go to' staff member (or members) to be the key contacts for information on the incentive. This could be someone in your team who is already keeping a track of other aged care reforms, or those with an existing health sector liaison role. The key contacts may be different staff depending on the tasks at hand for example, an administrative member of staff might assist with database updates, whereas a nursing director will play a role in care coordination with incentive-registered GPs and residents.

Task these staff members with the responsibility to:

- inform themselves of the incentive and stay abreast of developments
- develop and review policies, processes and systems that will support implementation
- be across the status of residents participating in the incentive
- establish communication mechanisms
- function as the key liaison for organisations such as general practices, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, Aboriginal Medical Services and PHNs
- troubleshoot challenges and issues as they arise
- provide regular updates to residential aged care home staff and residents.

Adopt an improvement mindset

Consider undertaking a survey of people living in your residential aged care home of those who have participated in the incentive about their experience and satisfaction with services being provided by the incentive. This could be added to any current surveys being undertaken or undertaken as a standalone.



If survey fatigue is an impediment, consider adding discussions about experiences with the incentive to the meeting agendas for your consumer advisory committees. This is another mechanism for gathering feedback about implementation and ideas for improvement.

Given the importance of access to quality primary care to the health and wellbeing, the survey results would be a useful tool for:

- discussions with GPs, practices and PHNs for improvement
- informing future information sessions
- informing interprofessional and continuing professional education (CPD) for GPs, practices, and other members of the care team.

Communication mechanisms

To be effective, the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive will require a partnership approach. As the key stakeholders involved, it is desirable for residential aged care home providers, GPs, practices, and PHNs to be in regular contact.

Regular meetings between these partners to discuss the mechanisms and systems that support implementation of the incentive, collaboration and cooperation will be essential. It is acknowledged that each of the organisations have different infrastructure and use different software. It is advisable to have early and regular scheduled discussions on how you can work together.

You will need to consider how you communicate, how often you communicate, who needs to be involved and what are the key items for discussion. This will be necessary so that all staff are aware of policy and procedures in relation to this incentive and are empowered as part of the care team.



Appendix 1 – Seminar agenda for staff (1 hour and 15 mins)

Time	Topic and discussion points	Suggested speakers
10 mins	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Welcome.</p> <p>Acknowledgement of Country.</p> <p>Briefly explain the purpose of the discussion: to inform staff about the introduction of the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive, eligibility, and service requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to discuss residents' support needs for MyMedicare registration to explain services and the cycle of care provided to residents by their GP and practice under the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive to explore how to support patients register with a preferred GP and gain access to services provided under the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive. 	CEO, activity coordinator, or another relevant senior leader
10 mins	<p>Icebreaker activity</p> <p>Engage staff with a simple icebreaker activity to get everyone comfortable and involved.</p>	Activity coordinator
15 mins	<p>Presentation on primary care</p> <p>Give a brief talk on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> why it's important for people to have a regular GP and practice the role of GPs and their care teams in preventive care, managing chronic conditions, coordinating with specialists, and promoting overall wellbeing. 	Local GP, local PHN
15 mins	<p>Introducing the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive</p> <p>Deliver a PowerPoint presentation about the incentive and MyMedicare.</p>	Residential aged care home and PHN staff
15 mins	<p>Communicating about the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive to residents</p> <p>Discuss and agree on an approach to communicating with and supporting residents to gain access to planned, proactive care provided by GPs</p>	GP, practice nurse or exercise physiologist



Time	Topic and discussion points	Suggested speakers
	and practices participating in the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive.	
10 mins	Wrap-up Summarise key points from the discussion. Hand out the patient information booklet for further reading.	Residential aged care home providers and PHN staff
Refreshments and socialising		



Appendix 2 – Seminar agenda for aged care residents (1 hour and 30 minutes)

Time	Topic and discussion points	Suggested speakers
10 mins	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Welcome and introductions.</p> <p>Acknowledgement of Country.</p> <p>Briefly explain the purpose of the discussion is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> highlight the importance of primary care and how it impacts overall health and wellbeing inform attendees about some new GP care arrangements. 	CEO, activity coordinator, or another relevant senior leader
10 mins	<p>Icebreaker activity</p> <p>Engage people with a simple icebreaker activity to get everyone comfortable and involved.</p>	Activity coordinator
15 mins	<p>Presentation on primary care</p> <p>Give a brief talk on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> what primary care entails, and why it's important for people to have a regular and practice the role of GPs and their care teams in preventive care, managing chronic conditions, coordinating with specialists, and promoting overall wellbeing. 	Local GP, PHN
15 mins	<p>Introducing the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive</p> <p>Deliver presentation about the incentive and MyMedicare.</p>	Residential aged care home providers and PHN staff
15 mins	<p>Interactive Q&A session</p> <p>Invite participants to reflect on the value of a regular. Open the floor for questions and answers to clarify concerns and gaps in information.</p> <p>Encourage participants to share their thoughts, questions, and insights.</p>	Co-facilitated by residential aged care home providers, PHN staff and a GP adviser
15 mins	<p>Health Living (optional).</p> <p>Incorporate a 'fun' element such as a talk on practical tips and strategies for maintaining good health and wellbeing in older people, emphasising the importance of nutrition, exercise and social engagement or some light exercises.</p>	GP, practice nurse or exercise physiologist



Time	Topic and discussion points	Suggested speakers
10 mins	Wrap-up Summarise key points from the discussion. Hand out the residential aged care home resident information booklet for further reading.	Residential aged care home providers and PHN staff
<hr/> Refreshments and socialising <hr/>		



Appendix 3 – Draft email text

Suggested distribution list

All residents in your residential aged care home, and their nominated contact people.

Suggested text:

Since 1 July 2024, new arrangements are making it easier for your GP (doctor) to see you here at [insert name of residential aged care home].

The new incentive, called the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive, means your GP will be receive extra money to make regular visits to you to look after your health.

Everyone who participates in the incentive must be registered with [MyMedicare](#). This includes you, your GP, and their practice.

Many of you have a regular GP who will be eligible to receive care and services under the incentive.

Over coming weeks, we will help you learn more about these new arrangements and support you in taking the steps to benefit from services under the incentive.

We will be hosting information sessions on [provide details of dates/locations/times] where you will have the opportunity to ask questions of experts.

For now, you can read more about the incentive and what it means for you here: health.gov.au/our-work/gpaci.

We look forward to introducing this incentive at our residential aged care home to support your health and wellbeing.



Appendix 4 – Draft newsletter article

A new government incentive to give people living in a residential aged care home the chance to regularly see their doctor was introduced on 1 July 2024.

Called the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive, the new incentive will bring GPs and their care team into residential aged care homes to regularly visit patients, to look after their health and coordinate their care.

Participating in the incentive is voluntary. It's your choice.

If you and your GP choose to participate, you can expect to benefit from regular visits from a GP and care team right here in your residential aged care home to provide proactive, planned and continuous care. Because of this your GP:

- has a chance to really get to know your health needs
- can see you regularly, not just when you are sick
- can help to keep you in good health, which might mean fewer hospital visits
- will have time to coordinate and review your care
- can bring along other health professionals who can help you.

We will help you understand the General Practice in Aged Care Incentive.

Over the coming weeks, we will help you learn more and support you in taking the steps to benefit from services under the incentive.

We will be hosting information sessions on [provide details of dates/locations/times] where you will have the opportunity to ask questions of experts.

It's important to know that everyone who participates in the incentive must be registered with MyMedicare. You can find out more about MyMedicare at <https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/mymedicare/patients>.

For now, you can read more about the incentive and what it means for you at [health.gov.au/our-work/gpaci](https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/gpaci).

We look forward to introducing this incentive at our residential aged care home to support your health and wellbeing.



All information in this publication is correct as of August 2024.