Australian Government
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

Aged Care On-site Pharmacist Measure

October 2026

Reflecting on the First Two Years

Since 1 July 2024, under the Aged Care On-site Pharmacist Measure, funding has been available for community pharmacies and aged care providers to employ aged care on-site pharmacists in residential aged care homes. The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety identified medication management and safety in residential aged care homes as an essential area for improvement. This measure responds to the final report recommendations.

This publication reflects on the first two years of the Measure, from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2026.

What has changed

- On 1 February 2026, the requirement for residential aged care homes to have implemented an electronic National Residential Medication Chart (eNRMC) was removed, to support equitable access and uptake of the Measure,.
- Primary Health Networks commenced their role in implementation of the Measure in May 2025 to increase awareness of the Measure and assist residential aged care homes to engage aged care on-site pharmacists where required.
- Annual indexation is applied to the funding available under the Measure, with the first indexation adjustment taking effect on 1 July 2025 and the second on 1 July 2026.
- By February 2026, five organisations were delivering Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) accredited aged care on-site pharmacist training programs, supporting development of the role ready workforce.
- The number of aged care on-site pharmacist-credentialed pharmacists participating in the Measure increased by more than 60% over the second year of the Measure.

Building momentum: What we achieved over the first two years

- In the first two years over 22% of all eligible residential aged care homes across Australia have taken up an on-site pharmacist. Uptake has been steadily increasing since commencement.
- The Australian Capital Territory continues to have the highest percentage of eligible residential aged care homes participating in the Measure, with 50% participation.
- Strong uptake has been seen across Australia, with more than 20% of eligible residential aged care homes participating in the Measure in New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. Queensland and South Australia saw over 25% participation.

- Based on the total number of residential aged care homes participating within each state and territory, participation remains highest in New South Wales.
- The Measure funds employment of one full time equivalent pharmacist per 250 residential aged care home beds, banded into 50 bed increments. This results in funding for a pharmacist for at least one full day each week in participating residential aged care homes. Funding for the aged care on-site pharmacist's salary is paid to a community pharmacy or to the residential aged care home.
- Strong participation has been seen across residential aged care homes of all sizes. Participation is very similar in residential aged care homes with 51-100, 101-150, 151-200 and 201-250 beds, averaging 27% participation.
- When looking at residential aged care home participation by Modified Monash (MM) category location, there is similar participation across regional centres, large, medium and small rural towns (MM 2 to 5 locations), with approximately 14% to 21% of eligible residential aged care homes in MM 2 to 5 locations participating in the Measure. The Measure has also been taken up by some residential aged care homes in remote and very remote communities (MM 6 and 7).
- In the second year of the Measure there has been slightly higher increase in uptake in metropolitan areas (MM 1) in comparison to the first year with approximately 27% of residential aged care homes participating.
- For a residential aged care home to receive funding it must be unsuccessful in sourcing an aged care on-site pharmacist from a community pharmacy. This may be because:
    - community pharmacies can't or choose not to participate; or
    - the residential aged care home and community pharmacy can't come to a suitable agreement.
- Approximately 85% of participating residential aged care homes have engaged an aged care on-site pharmacist through a community pharmacy, with the remainder directly engaging an aged care on-site pharmacist through the residential aged care home.
- This employment arrangements trend is unchanged from the first year of the Measure. The trend likely continues to be influenced by the Measure requirement to be unsuccessful in sourcing a pharmacist from a community pharmacy before a residential aged care home is permitted to directly engage a pharmacist.