

## Backpocket Brief

### District of Workforce Shortage System

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#### February 2018 annual update – potential delay

- The Department is required to delay the 2018 update to the District of Workforce Shortage (DWS) system due to a review of the Full Service Equivalent (FSE) methodology.

#### Full Service Equivalent (FSE)

- FSE is a measure of the medical workforce. The chief difficulty in developing a workforce measure based on Medicare figures is that Medicare does not include information on hours worked. FSE provides a methodology to estimate the total hours worked based on information captured in the Medicare statistics.
- Changes to Medicare items have affected the FSE calculations. The Department is reviewing the methodology to stabilise the calculation of total hours worked to ensure consistency across years.

#### How this affects the DWS

- The FSE is used to determine the size of the medical workforce within DWS Assessment Areas. As such, the population to doctor ratio, both nationally and in DWS Assessment Areas, cannot be determined until the review is completed.

#### Consideration for affected areas

- The Department is aware of towns in need and who have been waiting for this update to occur. The Department is currently considering options to minimise the impact on recruitment within these areas.

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