

District of Workforce Shortage 2018 update – Talking Points

- The Districts of Workforce Shortage system annual update was delayed due to technical difficulties. These issues have been resolved and the update occurred on 26 April 2018, which include the following changes:
 - 14 areas have gained District of Workforce Shortage status for the specialty of General Practice, which contains 41 communities, or parts thereof; and
 - 18 areas have lost District of Workforce Shortage status for the specialty of General Practice, which contains 42 communities, or parts thereof.
- The update is available on the DoctorConnect website and health professionals can check the status of their areas on the maps available on www.doctorconnect.gov.au
- There is no provision to apply for Districts of Workforce Shortage status and the department does not make discretionary Districts of Workforce Shortage determinations however:
 - the Government funds a network of seven Rural Workforce Agencies in each state and the Northern Territory to provide assistance to communities that experience difficulties attracting and retaining health professionals.
 - Practices in areas that are not considered to be Districts of Workforce Shortage who have difficulty recruiting and retaining staff are encouraged to contact the Rural Workforce Agency in their state or the Northern Territory.
- The Districts of Workforce Shortage system using population data and Medicare billing information (over a 12 month period) to get a GP-to-population ratio.
- Areas not classified as Districts of Workforce Shortage reflect an assessment area with better population-to-GP ratios than the Australian average based on this latest available Medicare billing information.
- The Government has appointed the Distribution Working Group to review rural health workforce programs and to make recommendations to improve the distribution of health professionals across Australia. This includes a review of the Districts of Workforce Shortage system.

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