



## AMDS PROGRAM DEEDS

### **What is an Approved Medical Deputising Service (AMDS) Program Deed?**

A Deed is an agreement signed by the Department of Health (Health) and a medical deputising service for the purpose of participating on the AMDS Program. A deputising service that has entered into a Deed is able to call itself an AMDS. A signed Deed means Health has approved a business arrangement to operate at an AMDS at a specified street address. In addition, a Deed instrument identifies the conditions for the deputising service's participation on the AMDS Program, including the:

- period of time that the service has been granted to participate on the Program;
- location (a street address) that is recognised by Health as being an AMDS and that will be linked to all Medicare provider numbers granted to non-vocationally recognised (non-VR) GPs employed to deputise under the conditions of the Program;
- number of non-VR GPs who may be employed to deputise for the provider;
- Medical Director arrangements that will apply under the service; and
- geographic regions that the service has advised that it will to deputise to.

An AMDS Deed provides the service with the opportunity to employ appropriately registered non-VR GPs during the after-hours period with access to the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS). Most non-VR GPs are subject to restrictions on their eligibility to access the MBS for employment engagements because of the operation of s19AA of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* (the HIA). By being recognised under a Deed as an AMDS, the deputising service gains the ability to employ most s19AA-restricted non-VR doctors and this significantly expands the workforce that is available to that provider.

An AMDS Deed does not identify individual non-VR GPs who are employed by a service provider. As a condition of entering into an AMDS Deed, the service provider takes responsibility for registering all non-VR GPs it employs to deputise with Health and for ensuring that it does not employ more of these doctors than the number specified on the Deed.

### **What is the link between an AMDS Program Deed and accreditation?**

As stated above, a provider must have its service location accredited as a medical deputising service by either Quality Practice Accreditation (QPA) or Australian General Practice Accreditation Ltd (AGPAL) before Health may consider entering into an AMDS Program Deed. The accreditation process assures Health that the provider meets the standards for general practice as set by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)

AMDS Program Deeds are time limited. The period of time that is covered by the Deed will generally correlate to the service's current certificate of accreditation with either QPA or AGPAL. The Deed will not extend beyond a service provider's current certificate of accreditation. In cases where a service provider renews its certificate of accreditation with their accreditation agency, it can use this as the basis for making an application to renew its AMDS Program Deed.

### **When can a deputising service apply for an AMDS Program Deed?**

A deputising service may apply to Health to enter into a Deed and join the AMDS Program if it:

- holds current accreditation as a medical deputising service by either QPA or AGPAL;
- has been operating as a deputising service for a minimum period of 12 months (this includes servicing the entirety of the after-hours period);
- has engaged a VR GP into a Medical Director role, this person being a registered medical practitioner who either:
  - holds Fellowship of the RACGP (FRACGP) or the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (FACRRM); or
  - has been recognised as vocationally registered under s3F of the HIA;
- can provide evidence that it applies a triage process that satisfies the minimum standards set out in Appendix 2 of the AMDS Program Guidelines; and
- is not engaged in any direct marketing activities that would breach the requirements of the AMDS Program Guidelines or s133 of the *Health Practitioner National Law Act 2009*.

These standards ensure a deputising service is fully operational at the point of being assessed for approval to employ non-VR GPs under an AMDS Deed. By compelling services to meet these standards at entry to the AMDS, Health is assured that non-VR GPs will be appropriately engaged to deputise according to their current general practice experience and within a continuous care framework.

### **Can an AMDS Program Deed cover multiple service locations?**

An AMDS Program Deed cannot cover multiple locations. If a provider seeks to operate multiple service locations under the AMDS Programs, each location will require a separate Deed.

### **Can an AMDS Program Deed be sold to a third party?**

While a Business may be sold to a third party, an AMDS Program Deed cannot be sold to a third party. Health is responsible for determining which providers meet the standards for participating on the AMDS Program and this approval **does not** transfer to the new owner if an AMDS is sold. If an operating AMDS is sold to a new provider, the incoming management of the deputising service must enter into a new AMDS Program Deed. This includes seeking accreditation and providing evidence that the above-mentioned minimum standards continue to be satisfied.

### **Contacting Health about the triaging capabilities under the AMDS Program**

The Access Programs Section of Health is responsible for the AMDS Program. The AMDS Program is supported by a dedicated in-box: [AMDS@health.gov.au](mailto:AMDS@health.gov.au). Please contact this in-box. The Access Programs Section responds to all emails within a 28 day timeframe

### **Further reading**

This Fact Sheet must be read in conjunction with the AMDS Program Guidelines that come into effect on 1 March 2018. The Guidelines explain all of the requirements placed on a provider when they join the AMDS Program under a Deed arrangement.