



Australian Government
Department of Health

OUTER METROPOLITAN OTHER MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS PROGRAM

January 2019



OUTER METROPOLITAN OTHER MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS PROGRAM

Important Notice:

From 1 January 2019, the Outer Metropolitan Other Medical Practitioners Program (OMOMPs Program) will not be accepting new applications to join the Program.

The OMOMPs Program will cease on 30 June 2023. Medical practitioners who are already on the OMOMPs Program can continue in the Program and access A1 Medicare rebates until 30 June 2023.

These Guidelines have effect from 1 January 2019.

1. Introduction

The Outer Metropolitan Other Medical Practitioners Program (OMOMPs Program) was established to encourage eligible non-vocationally recognised (non-VR) doctors to remain in an outer metropolitan area by granting them access to higher Medicare rebates. The Program is administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS) through Medicare on behalf of the Department of Health. All decisions under the Program are made by senior and executive officers in the Department of Health who are authorised by the Minister for Health (Authorised Persons).

The OMOMPs Program provides the higher A1 Medicare rebate to eligible non-vocationally recognised medical practitioners, who provide general practice services in designated outer metropolitan locations of Australia and who express an interest in undertaking a pathway to Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (FRACGP) or the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM).

A medical practitioner participating in this Program may practice in an inner and or outer metropolitan area. The higher A1 Medicare rebates available through this program will only be available for services performed at the approved outer metropolitan location(s). A participating medical practitioner may work at more than one practice under this Program.

2. Eligibility

To be eligible for this Program persons must:

- be a participant in an Other Medical Practitioners (OMPs) program on or after 1 January 2019;
- be registered as a medical practitioner with a State or Territory Medical Registration Board before 1 November 1996;
- be a non-vocationally recognised medical practitioner or not hold fellowship of one of the general practice colleges;

- be enrolled in a pathway to assessment of Fellowship of the RACGP or the ACRRM; and
- be in general practice in an outer metropolitan approved location area.

3. Transferring between Programs

All OMPs programs were closed to new participants on 1 January 2019. Medical practitioners participating in another OMPs program before 1 January 2019 can apply to join the OMOMPs Program, noting that all OMPs programs will cease on 30 June 2023. Applications to transfer between OMPs programs will be assessed against the eligibility requirements of the relevant program.

OMPs programs are:

- Medicare Plus for Other Medical Practitioners Program (MOMPs Program)
- Rural Other Medical Practitioners Program (ROMPs Program)
- After Hours Other Medical Practitioners Program (AHOMPs Program)
- Outer Metropolitan Other Medical Practitioners Program (OMOMPs Program)

4. Eligible Locations

Outer Metropolitan Area

For the purposes of this Program ‘outer metropolitan area’ means: the part of the State capital city Statistical Division (using the 2001 Australian Standard Geographic Classification definition) that lies outside the 1991 Urban Centre area of the capital city” defined in the Australian Bureau of Statistics publication 1216.0.

Certain areas within an inner metropolitan Statistical Local Area (SLA) or an entire inner metropolitan SLA may be declared Areas of Consideration for the purpose of the OMOMPs Program.

Areas of Consideration are those SLAs located in an inner metropolitan area which are experiencing workforce shortage similar to their bordering Outer Metropolitan Area(s). Such areas are declared to be Areas of Consideration provided they meet a number of additional requirements.

An inner metropolitan area can be declared to be an Area of Consideration where that area is demonstrably experiencing a workforce shortage and meets one or more of the following requirements:

- it is generally continuous with the existing outer metropolitan area;
- it forms a band adjacent to the inner boundary of an outer metropolitan area;
- it is situated within a growth corridor adjacent to the outer metropolitan boundary; or

- it is situated near the outer metropolitan boundary and exhibits an 'island effect', i.e. where an area of low population is surrounded by areas with much higher populations.

The Authorised Person may consider submissions on proposed Areas of Consideration which meet the conditions and has the authority to declare or revoke status as an Area of Consideration.

The Authorised Person has the authority to declare an Area of Consideration on the basis of special circumstances, not otherwise mentioned in these Guidelines, where those special circumstances are supported by evidence for which an objective assessment of the need for additional doctors within a specified area could be made.

Applications from medical practitioners proposing to access the higher Medicare rates at an Area of Consideration will be assessed in the same manner as applications to access the higher Medicare rates at an eligible outer metropolitan area.

Eligible Practices

Eligible practices are those practices that are located in the outer metropolitan areas of Australia's capital cities, the entire area of Darwin and declared Areas of Consideration for the purpose of the OMOMPs Program.

Eligible practices include other practice sites which the Authorised Person has declared eligible for the OMOMPs Program because the patients from these practices are from outer metropolitan areas or Areas of Consideration. An individual practice may be declared eligible if the practice:

- is experiencing long term difficulties recruiting medical practitioners;
- draws the majority of its patients from Outer Metropolitan Areas or Areas of Consideration;
- is within very close proximity to the outer metropolitan boundary;
- is located within an inner metropolitan area that meets one or more of the requirements; or
- can demonstrate other special circumstances, for example, if the community it services has a large indigenous population.

The Authorised Person may consider submissions from medical practitioners currently working in inner metropolitan areas. The Authorised Person may consider whether the majority of patients are drawn from outer metropolitan Areas of Consideration. The Authorised Person may, if circumstances change, revoke a practice's eligibility.

With the approval of the Authorised Person, a medical practitioner may change their approved location for another eligible location.

If a location becomes ineligible after a medical practitioner is approved for that location, the doctor will remain eligible for the Program at that location.

With the approval of the Authorised Person, a participating medical practitioner may work at more than one approved location.

5. Pathway to Fellowship Conditions

It is a requirement of the Program that a participant be either enrolled in a course based pathway leading to Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (FRACGP) or the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM).

The delegate will require written evidence from the applicant of enrolment in a Fellowship pathway or assessment for Fellowship.

6. Authorised Person's Discretion

The Authorised Person for the OMOMPs Program will have full discretion to make decisions on all matters relating to the administration of the Program, including but not limited to approval of locations and medical practitioners.

6. Application Process

Medical practitioners seeking to participate in the Program must complete the application form which is available on the Department of Health website.

Completed applications and supporting documentation (including written evidence of current enrolment in a pathway or assessment for attaining GP Fellowship with the FRACGP or FACRRM) should be provided to the Department of Health.

The Authorised Person will assess applications for eligibility in accordance with requirements set out in these Guidelines. The Authorised Person may exercise discretion when making a decision in relation to individual applications.

The Authorised Person may seek further information, particularly if he or she is not satisfied that the medical practitioner has provided all the necessary documentation to assist in determining eligibility for the Program.

The Authorised Person will inform applicants of the outcome within 28 days of receipt of the application.

Successful applicants will receive an approval letter confirming the approved location(s) and their obligations under the Program.

Once the approval letter is received, if required and not already done so, the applicant must submit an application to DHS for a Medicare Provider Number which is specific to the approved location practice address. A copy of the approval letter from the Department of Health must be included with the Medicare Provider Number application form.

The Department of Health will notify DHS of the doctor's participation in the Program to enable access to Medicare rebates at the higher (A1/A11) level at the approved location. DHS will provide the participant with written notification of the commencement date for accessing the higher Medicare rebates.

Change of details

Whilst participating in this Program, medical practitioners must:

- ensure their provider number is correct and up to date;
- ensure that the information provided to the Department of Health is accurate and current;
- advise the Department of Health of any change in circumstances which is relevant to continued eligibility for the Program; and
- ensure any change in circumstances is provided in writing to the Authorised Person.

If a medical practitioner ceases practising at an approved location, access to the higher Medicare rebates will not continue. In the event that a medical practitioner wishes to participate in the program at a different location, a new application must be submitted in writing to the Authorised Person.

Participants may withdraw from participation in the Program at any time by providing written notice to the Department of Health.

The Department of Health will confirm the medical practitioner's withdrawal from the Program.

7. Termination of a Participant in Program

The Authorised Person may terminate the participation of a medical practitioner if they consider that they are not meeting the obligations of the Program. The Authorised Person will notify the participant regarding the termination and will provide the participant an opportunity to appeal this decision.

The Authorised Person will notify the participant of a decision to terminate at least 14 days prior to a decision taking effect. The participant may provide a written response, providing evidence to the Authorised Person outlining why they should not be terminated. The participant is required to respond within 28 business days of the date of correspondence, should they wish to dispute the decision.

The Department will terminate the medical practitioner's participation in the Program if:

- the medical practitioner does not respond within 28 days of the notice;
- the medical practitioner fails to take action within 28 days of the notice;
- the Authorised Person is not satisfied with the medical practitioner's response; or
- the medical practitioner notifies the Department of Health of their inability to meet their obligations under the Program

Health will provide an explanation to the medical practitioner regarding the reasons for terminating their participation on the Program

9. Review of decisions

Applicants to, and participants in the Program may request review of a decision made by the Authorised Person. The review will be undertaken by another, more senior, Authorised Person in the Department of Health.

The applicant must clearly identify why he or she believes the original decision was wrong, and provide any relevant supporting information or evidence.

The Department of Health will contact the applicant if insufficient information has been provided, or the Department of Health proposes to use information not provided by the applicant.

Any further information must be submitted within the time limit specified by the Department of Health, or, if no time limit is set, within 28 days from the date of request.

The original decision will have effect until a different decision is made. The review outcome is final.

10. Privacy

Personal information is protected by law under the *Privacy Act 1988* and is collected by the Department of Health for the purposes of determining eligibility for and administering the Program. If medical practitioners do not provide information requested, the Department of Health may not be able to determine a medical practitioner's eligibility for the Program.

In addition to any other uses of the information that are authorised by law, personal information will also be used for the administration of the Program. Consequently, the Department of Health may exchange information with DHS for the purposes of administering, monitoring and revising the Program.

11. Program contact details

All written communication for the purposes of an application for participation in the Program, updating of information, or for any other purpose related to participation in, or management of, the Program must be directed to the Program address as follows:

The Delegate- OMOMPs Program
Department of Health
GPO Box 9848
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Email: [omps](mailto:omps@health.gov.au) (omps@health.gov.au)

For further information regarding continuing professional development contact:

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
RACGP National Office
100 Wellington Parade
East Melbourne, VIC, 3002
Ph: 1800 472 247

[The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners](http://www.racgp.org.au) (www.racgp.org.au)

OR

The Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine

ACRRM

GPO Box 2507

Brisbane, QLD, 4000

Ph: 1800 223 226

[Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine](http://www.acrrm.org.au) (www.acrrm.org.au)

