



## Workforce Incentive Program (WIP)

The Workforce Incentive Program (WIP) provides targeted financial incentives to encourage doctors to deliver services in rural and remote areas. The WIP also provides financial incentives to support general practices to engage the services of nurses, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners and Health Workers, and eligible allied health professionals.

From early 2020, general practices and doctors participating in the Practice Nurse Incentive Program (PNIP) and the General Practice Rural Incentives Program (GPRIP) will automatically transition to the WIP. An up to date rural classification system will be used to ensure metropolitan areas will no longer be able to access incentives intended for rural and remote Australia.

Better targeted incentives will address workforce maldistribution, giving patients in rural and remote areas improved access to quality medical, nursing and eligible allied health services.

### Two payment streams

The WIP rationalises major workforce distribution incentive payments into two streams and funds the continued growth of the general practice, nursing and eligible allied health workforce in primary care. Two streams of payments:

#### WIP – Doctor Stream

Payments will be made directly to medical practitioners, similar to current arrangements for GPRIP

#### WIP – Practice Stream

Payments will be made directly to general practices, similar to current arrangements for PNIP

### Eligibility for incentives

More than 5,000 practices and 7,000 medical practitioners will be eligible for incentive payments under the WIP.

#### WIP – Doctor Stream

Eligibility requirements for the Doctor Stream will be the same as those under the [GPRIP](#).

#### WIP – Practice Stream

Practices in all locations may be eligible for incentives to support the engagement of nurses, allied health professionals, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners or Health Workers. The WIP will expand eligibility for allied health to all areas of Australia and include pharmacists (non-dispensing role) and Nurse Practitioners to support increased team-based care arrangements. Practices will need to consider the needs of their community when determining which health professional or combination of health professionals to engage.

## Incentives to improve access to services

Attracting health professionals to rural and regional areas can be difficult. People in remote and very remote communities have less access to health services than those in other areas of Australia. The WIP will give rural and remote areas improved access to quality medical, nursing and allied health services. Targeted incentives will encourage health professionals to work in these areas. WIP incentives provide doctors, nurses, and eligible allied health professionals with the opportunity to be a key part of the general practice health care team, delivering much needed care to people with chronic and complex conditions.

## Payment levels

The WIP will use the Modified Monash Model (MMM) 2019 geographical classification. The MMM was developed to better target health workforce programs to attract health professionals to more remote and smaller communities.

The MMM classifies metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas into seven categories according to geographical remoteness, as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), and town size. The MMM 2019 has been updated using the latest available Census (2016) data.

Incentive payments will be available through two streams:

### WIP – Doctor Stream

Medical practitioners located in MM 3-7 can receive an annual payment of between \$4,500 and \$60,000 (depending on the location). Calculation of payment is based on services provided within eligible locations and the length of time a doctor has been on the program.

### WIP – Practice Stream

Eligible practices in all locations can receive incentive payments of up to \$125,000 per year. The incentive payment amount depends on practice size and the hours worked by the health professionals at the practice.

A rural loading is applied on top of WIP – Practice Stream incentive payments in recognition of the difficulties rural and regional areas face attracting and retaining health professionals. A rural loading of 20-50% will be applied to incentive payments to practices located in MM 3-7.

## Commencement dates

WIP – Doctor Stream      1 January 2020

WIP – Practice Stream    1 February 2020

These dates align with existing payment quarters and allow a smooth transition to the WIP.

## WIP Guidelines and further information

- Department of Health's website [www.health.gov.au/workforceincentiveprogram](http://www.health.gov.au/workforceincentiveprogram)
- Department of Human Services website [www.humanservices.gov.au](http://www.humanservices.gov.au)
- MMM geographical classification [www.doctorconnect.gov.au](http://www.doctorconnect.gov.au)