Introduction

The Medical Professional Development program (the program) supports the ongoing professional development and medical education of medical practitioners in rural in regional Victoria. Furthermore, the program also aims to encourage trainee doctors to complete rural and regional placements by providing access to professional development subsidies.

The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (the department) recognises the importance of an appropriately educated and distributed rural workforce to meet the State’s primary health care needs, particularly for the delivery of public and community health services in rural and hospitals.

Funding assists with the development, recruitment and retention of a skilled medical workforce for rural and regional Victoria. The long term objective of the program is to ensure that practising medical practitioners in rural and regional Victoria are supported in undertaking medical professional development appropriate to their area of practise and relevant to the community needs.

Program funding

Funding assists medical practitioners or general practice registrars enrolled in the Australian General Practice Training Program (AGPT) currently practising in general practice in rural and regional Victoria, and interns who are required to complete a minimum of 13 weeks in a Victorian rural community placement.

Program funding is entirely separate from existing professional development arrangements available under enterprise agreements, or any other type of professional development support provided to a medical practitioner by their employing health service under contractual terms. Health services must ensure that funding is not used to replace or diminish other professional development entitlements and is not used for purposes other than what is outlined in these guidelines.

The total funding contribution from the department is capped and there are also funding limits of each eligible subsidy in an application.

Furthermore, priority for program funding will be given to:

- Applications where the skill to be acquired contributes to the service needs of the community in which they practise; and
- Applications from practising rural medical practitioners seeking to fulfil a service needs in their own community.

From 1 July 2016, the program will be administered by the Rural Workforce Agency Victoria (RWAV) on behalf of the department. RWAV will be responsible for managing all funding and ensuring that any proposed training will address the medical service needs of the community.

Funding is designed to support and subsidise medical practitioners in undertaking professional development, as opposed to providing full cost recovery. The guidelines are based on this fundamental principle. In accordance to public funding guidelines, original receipts will be required for all claims. Funding is restricted to:
Registration and Course Fees

Subsidies are provided towards registration costs of accredited training undertaken in Victoria. The program will subsidise up to 70 per cent of the registration and course fees related to rural procedural training. Subsidies for non-procedural training, which are in line with the department priorities, aim to subsidise 50 per cent of the associated registration and course fees.

Subsidies will not be provided towards registration and course fees for orientation programs.

Subsidies can also be provided towards accredited medical education workshops or seminars when medical practitioners are required to travel a location that is considered a long distance from their usual location of practice.

Travel, Accommodation and Childcare Costs

Subsidies for travel related expenses will be provided based on a return trip from the medical practitioner’s place of residence to the respective training location. Travel subsidies are calculated via the most direct and practical route. Stopovers or additional journeys will not be covered.

- The rate of reimbursement is 66 cents per km for car travel, and by the cheapest economy air fare via the most direct route for air travel.

Subsidies for accommodation are also available under the program. Private accommodation costs at non-commercial registered premises will not be covered.

- The rate of reimbursement is $140 per night irrespective of location (rural or metropolitan)

Subsidies for Childcare costs for a maximum of 5 days per financial year are also available under the program.

- The rate of reimbursement is $60 per day.

Distance Education Aides (e.g. Software)

Subsidies for the costs related to distance education aides are subject to approval. Claims for distance education aides (e.g. software) will only be paid where similar training is not otherwise available via lectures, seminars, workshops, conferences, or where it is not practicable to attend such courses (e.g. sole practitioner general practice).

2017 – 18 Professional Development Priorities

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<th>Indigenous Health</th>
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Applications and Administration

Submissions to the department will be coordinated and lodged by RWAV. All applications for funding must be submitted within 60 days of completion of the activity. Applications beyond this time will not be eligible for funding. Applications must be lodged by the medical practitioner who attends the training and must be accompanied by:

- Completed Application Form (Available from RWAV)
- Original receipts of all claims made (detailing name of attendee, name of training, training provider, dates and amounts paid)
- Proof of attendance.

Reporting

An evaluation will be required upon completion of training to assist in evaluating the impact of the program in supporting rural medical practitioners to update their medical knowledge and skills. The report should be provided within 4 weeks of completing the training program.

Eligibility

Subsidies under the program are available medical practitioners practising in rural and regional Victoria (RA2-RA5) and are:

- Fellowed General Practitioners;
- International Medical Graduates
- Australian Medical Graduates working in general practice;
- Registrars in the Australian GP Training Program; or
- Interns, who are required to complete a minimum of 13 weeks in a rural community placement.

Contact

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