Victorian Rural Continuing Medical Education (CME) grants

Introduction
As part of its election commitment to support the rural medical workforce, the Victorian Government is providing funding of $250,000 in 2015–16 for grants to offset the costs of medical education for doctors working in rural and regional Victoria and encouraging trainee doctors to complete rural placements. Specific grants will be provided to rural doctors to update their knowledge and skills at metropolitan locations. Trainee doctors, who complete a minimum of 13 weeks in a rural placement, will be paid an additional allowance.

The Victorian Rural Continuing Medical Education (CME) Grant scheme is administered by the Rural Workforce Agency Victoria (RWAV) on behalf of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Eligibility
All registered medical practitioners working in rural / regional locations are eligible to access the Victorian Rural CME Grant scheme. This includes medical practitioners working in hospital settings as well as general practitioners with visiting medical officer rights.

Note that the Department of Health and Human Services also provides funding to the RWAV for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Grants for GPs. Doctors who have received a CPD Grant from RWAV in the current financial year are not eligible for a Victorian Rural CME Grant in the same financial year.

Also note that this new arrangement is entirely separate from existing CME Support arrangements available under enterprise agreements or any other professional development support provided to a doctor by his/her employing health service under contractual terms.

Funding guidelines
Funding for Rural CME Grants is divided into the following categories:

METROPOLITAN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Registered medical practitioners will have access to up to $2,000 per annum to assist them to update their knowledge and skills at metropolitan locations.

Doctors in training who are undertaking a minimum of 13 weeks in a rural rotation will have access to up to $3,000 per annum under this scheme.
**METROPOLITAN EXTENDED UPSKILLING**

Medical practitioners who are not currently part of a College accredited specialist training program but are seeking to undertake extended or intensive upskilling training programs in metropolitan locations may be eligible for a Victorian Rural CME Grant. This includes medical practitioners wishing to undertake a recognised Certificate or Diploma, or those seeking to access simulation skills training.

Grants for Metropolitan Extended Upskilling will be capped at $10,000 per applicant, unless the health service can demonstrate exceptional circumstances due to a service related need. Applications under this category will be individually assessed and subject to availability of funds.

**Priorities**

Submissions targeting one (or more) of the following areas will be given priority should there be higher demand than funds available:

- Chronic disease
- Emergency medicine
- General medicine
- General surgery
- Geriatrics
- Indigenous health
- Maternity services
- Medical administration
- Paediatrics
- Pathology
- Psychiatry / Mental health
- Women’s health

**Payments and accountability**

Approved funding under the Victorian Rural CME Grant scheme will be made in a single payment directly to the rural / regional public health service to administer.

The department will require a brief report on completion of training to assist in evaluating the impact of the Victorian Rural CME Grants 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.

Health services must be able to discretely identify Victorian Rural CME Grant funding use from other existing CME Support or professional development funding and costs relating to enterprise agreements or contractual undertakings. Health services must also ensure that Victorian Rural CME Grant funding is not used to replace or diminish other CME Support entitlements and is not used for purposes other than described above.
How to apply

Public health services should apply to RWAV who is administering the program on behalf of the department for access to a Victorian Rural CME Grant once an education/training opportunity has been identified for a particular doctor in a metropolitan location.

All applications must be endorsed by the Chief Executive Officer or delegate. CME grant funding is capped and there is no guarantee that all health services that apply will receive funding.

Applications must be submitted to RWAV prior to 31 May 2015. Please note that applications made later in the year will only be considered subject to availability of funds.

Further information

For further information please contact:
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