Continuing Professional Development for Rural General Practitioners
Subsidy program

Introduction

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a targeted educational activity designed to improve the quality of medical practice.

A long-term objective of the CPD for Rural General Practitioners (GPs) Subsidy program is to ensure that GPs appointed to undertake practice in designated clinical areas in rural and remote areas are supported in undertaking CPD appropriate to their area of practice and relevant to community needs.

Key principles underpinning the CPD for Rural GPs Subsidy program include the following:

• The content of the CPD should be designed to directly improve the quality of health service delivery by the practitioner;
• Subsidies are only available for procedural training and non-procedural training that is in line with Department of Health and Human Services priorities;
• To ensure that the procedural training for which the GP is seeking a subsidy is in line with community needs, evidence of support from the relevant local health service is required;
• If other funds (including Commonwealth funds) are received in respect of the CPD, doctors will be ineligible to receive a subsidy under this program;
• The total contribution of the Department is capped and there are limits to individual components of the subsidy;
• The CPD program aims to subsidise rather than fully fund the cost of professional development.

Eligibility

General practitioners working in rural general practice in Victoria (RA 2-5) are eligible to claim subsidies for CPD activities.

In addition, rural stream registrars undertaking GP terms in RA 2-5 are also eligible to claim subsidies for CPD activities not funded through their vocational training.

ELIGIBLE TOPICS

Subsidies are available for ACRRM and RACGP accredited courses covering:

• Procedural training in anaesthetics, accident & emergency, obstetrics & gynaecology and surgery;
• Training in clinical skills, public & community health topics;
- Non-health professional development training (conflict resolution, financial management, role delineation etc).

The non-procedural health related training subsidised under the CPD program is based on Department of Health priorities, and the list of priority topics will be reviewed and updated periodically.

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PRIORITIES**
- Chronic disease
- Emergency medicine
- General medicine
- General surgery
- Geriatrics
- Indigenous health
- Maternity services
- Medical administration
- Paediatrics
- Pathology
- Psychiatry / Mental health
- Women's health

**Rationale**

All GPs are required to provide a statement that outlines the relevance of the training to the GP’s rural practice and the community’s health needs.

In addition, claims for procedural training require a statement of support from the relevant local health service, where this exists (see Appendix 1).

**Subsidy Levels**

The CPD for Rural GPs Subsidy program is designed to support rural GPs undertaking training and therefore aims to subsidise the cost of professional development, as opposed to providing full cost recovery. The following guidelines are based on this fundamental principal. In accordance with public funding guidelines, original receipts will be required for all claims.

The total level of Department of Health subsidy available will be capped at $2,000 per GP for eligible training undertaken per financial year.

Subsidies are restricted to course fees, travel, and accommodation and childcare expenses.

Interstate and overseas training will only be supported for health related training in instances where local training is unavailable. International/interstate training will not be supported for non-health related training.
REGISTRATION AND COURSE FEES
Support is provided towards registration costs of accredited training undertaken in Victoria. The Department subsidises up to 70 per cent of the registration and course fees related to rural procedural CPD. Procedural CPD is restricted to anaesthetics, accident & emergency, obstetrics & gynaecology and surgery. Registration and course fees costs for non-procedural CPD that meets Department of Health priorities will be subsidised up to 50 per cent. Support will not be provided towards registration and course fees for orientation programs.

TRAVEL
Full subsidies will be provided based on a return trip from the GP’s usual place of residence via the most direct and practicable route. The rate of reimbursement is 75 cents per km for car travel, and the by the cheapest economy airfare via the most direct route for air travel. Stopovers and additional journeys will not be covered.

ACCOMMODATION
Full subsidies will be provided up to $140 per night irrespective of location (rural or metro). Accommodation at registered commercial premises attracts a subsidy. Private accommodation will not be subsidised.

CHILDCARE COSTS
Childcare subsidies up to $60 per day for a maximum of 5 days per year are available.

DISTANCE EDUCATION
Reimbursements for costs related to distance education aides are subject to the Department’s discretion. Claims for distance education software will only be paid where similar training is not otherwise available via lecture/seminar/workshop/conference or where it is not practicable to attend such courses. Claims for distance education must comply with Department of Health priorities.

Administration
The list of topics eligible for support, as part of the CPD program will be reviewed periodically. Subsidies for training will be restricted to these topics.

All GPs are required to provide a statement that outlines the relevance of the training to the GP’s rural practice and the community’s health needs.

GPs wishing to claim subsidies for procedural training are required to provide a statement of support from the relevant local health service, where this exists. A standard form for completion by the respective service is found in Appendix 1.
Application process

The CPD program is administered by the Rural Workforce Agency Victoria. All applications for CPD subsidies must be submitted within 60 days of completion /commencement of the activity. Applications received beyond this time will not attract a subsidy.

Applications must be lodged by the GP who attends the training using the claim form provided (Appendix 2). Applications should be accompanied by:

- Original receipts for all claims made (detailing GP’s name, name of training event, provider, dates and amounts paid);
- Letter of support from the hospital/community health centre/multi-purpose service (MPS) agencies (where applicable);
- Proof of CPD attendance (copy of program and registration form).

Applications should be submitted to RWAV by email to: grants@rwav.com.au

Further information

For further information please contact:

Rural Workforce Agency Victoria (RWAV)
Telephone: (03) 9349 7800
Email: grants@rwav.com.au