



## QUALITY PRESCRIBING INCENTIVE » GUIDELINES

JANUARY 2009

THESE GUIDELINES PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRACTICE INCENTIVES PROGRAM (PIP) QUALITY PRESCRIBING INCENTIVE (QPI).

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The PIP provides a number of incentives that aim to encourage general practices to improve the quality of care provided to patients. Practices must be accredited or registered for accreditation against the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) *Standards for general practices* to participate in the PIP.

Payments are made through the PIP:

- to encourage use of electronic health systems;
- to ensure patients have access to after hours care;
- to support rural practices;
- to encourage rural general practitioners (GPs) to provide procedural services;
- to support practices to employ practice nurses;
- to encourage practices to teach medical students;
- for participating in educational activities to improve prescribing behaviour;
- to encourage cervical screening;
- for best practice management of patients with asthma and diabetes;
- to encourage general practices in rural and remote areas to act as a referral point for women experiencing domestic violence; and
- to encourage GPs to provide increased and continuing services in Commonwealth-funded Residential Aged Care Facilities.

The PIP is administered by Medicare Australia on behalf of the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

### 2. THE PIP QUALITY PRESCRIBING INCENTIVE

The PIP Quality Prescribing Incentive (QPI) aims to encourage practices to keep up to date with information on the quality use of medicines. The PIP QPI rewards participation by practices in a range of activities recognised or provided by the National Prescribing Service (NPS).

The NPS aims to assist GPs to achieve more effective, quality prescribing through a range of education, support and prescribing information. The NPS is a professional organisation, run independently of the Australian Government with broad GP representation and leadership.

### 3. WHAT ARE PIP QUALITY PRESCRIBING INCENTIVE REQUIREMENTS?

To qualify for the PIP QPI, practices are required to participate in three activities per full-time GP per year, on average, by 30 April each year. One of the activities must be a clinical audit.

Recognised activities include:

- A clinical audit of prescribing for specific drug groups using materials approved or produced by the NPS (available to all practices three to four times a year).
- Case studies using problem-based distance learning provided by the NPS (available to all practices six times a year). The case studies present a clinical scenario accompanied by a set of questions designed to help participants refine their clinical decision-making skills. The NPS presents each case study in two formats: a printed version inserted with NPS News and an online version.
- Practice visit(s) by an independent pharmaceutical detailer working from some Divisions of General Practice. These 'academic detailing' visits will act as a resource for GPs and promote the quality use of medicines. The availability of this option may be geographically limited.

Each activity is undertaken on an individual level, and the NPS will provide feedback to individual GPs. Payment will only be made if the practice meets a minimum participation level, set at an average of three activities per full-time GP per year. One of these activities must be a clinical audit, while the other two can be any recognised activity.

For example, a practice with one full-time GP would need to participate in three activities, including at least one clinical audit. A practice with five full-time GPs would need to participate in at least 15 activities, including five clinical audits, to receive payment. Some GPs in the practice may undertake more or less activities, so long as the practice as a whole averages three activities per full-time GP.

The NPS may recommend additional activities for inclusion in the PIP QPI. Practices will be notified if additional activities are available.



## QUALITY PRESCRIBING INCENTIVE » GUIDELINES

For more information on the NPS or recognised PIP QPI activities:

Web: [www.nps.org.au](http://www.nps.org.au)

Phone: (02) 8217 8700 or 1300 138 677  
(call charges may apply).

### 4. WHAT ARE THE QUALITY PRESCRIBING INCENTIVE PAYMENTS?

The payment for the PIP QPI is made to the practice annually in the May quarter.

A payment of \$1 per Standardised Whole Patient Equivalent (SWPE) is made to practices that meet the requirements of the PIP QPI.

Medicare Australia calculates payments using information supplied by the NPS on the number of activities undertaken by each provider. To ensure the practice receives the correct payment, each GP must provide their name, contact details, provider and prescriber numbers on the relevant forms to the NPS when undertaking a recognised activity.

Medicare Australia will advise practices through their PIP quarterly statements of the expected number of PIP QPI activities that must be completed in order to be eligible for the payment. The number of required activities may vary from quarter to quarter depending on the activities already undertaken and size of the practice. Information on the number of activities completed can be obtained by calling NPS on (02) 8217 8700 or 1300 138 677 (call charges may apply).

### 5. IS OUR PRACTICE ELIGIBLE FOR THE PIP QUALITY PRESCRIBING INCENTIVE?

To be eligible for the PIP QPI, the practice must:

- participate in the PIP;
- meet the minimum participation level by 30 April each year (three recognised activities, including one clinical audit per full time GP each year); and
- ensure the NPS is correctly advised of activities completed by practice GPs.

### 6. HOW DOES THE PRACTICE APPLY FOR THE PIP QUALITY PRESCRIBING INCENTIVE?

Practices can apply for the PIP QPI by completing the relevant parts of the Practice Incentives Program and General Practice Immunisation Incentive application form, available from Medicare Australia.

The authorised contact person for the practice is required to complete and sign the relevant parts of the application form.

### 7. WHAT ARE THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE PRACTICE?

The practice must:

- check their PIP quarterly statements, to be aware of the expected number of PIP QPI activities that must be completed in order to be eligible for the payment;
- ensure that practice GPs have provided the NPS with contact information using the relevant forms;
- provide accurate information to the NPS on recognised activities undertaken by GPs of the practice;
- ensure Medicare Australia has accurate details of all GPs in the practice by 30 April each year;
- be able to substantiate its claim for payment, which may include documentary evidence of the completion of recognised quality prescribing activities undertaken by each GP;
- provide information to Medicare Australia as part of its ongoing audit program to verify the practice meets PIP eligibility criteria; and
- notify Medicare Australia in writing within 14 calendar days of any changes that may affect its eligibility for PIP payments.

On joining the PIP, a practice must nominate a PIP contact person from the practice, who will be required to verify any changes to information submitted for PIP claims and payments on the practice's behalf.

### 8. IS THERE AN APPEALS PROCESS?

The PIP has an established appeals process. To appeal any decision made in regard to PIP eligibility or payments, the practice must write to Medicare Australia within 28 calendar days of receiving notice of the decision it would like reviewed.



## QUALITY PRESCRIBING INCENTIVE » GUIDELINES

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Medicare Australia will review its decision and advise the practice in writing of the outcome.

Advice on further avenues of appeal is available from Medicare Australia.

### **MORE INFORMATION:**

Web: [www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/pip](http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/pip)

Email: [pip@medicareaustralia.gov.au](mailto:pip@medicareaustralia.gov.au)

Phone: 1800 222 032\*

Hours of operation are between  
8:30 am – 5:00 pm  
Australian Central Standard Time

\*Call charges apply from mobile and pay phones only.

*These Guidelines are for information purposes only. While it is presently intended that the Commonwealth will make payments as set out in these Guidelines, the making of payments is a matter in the sole discretion of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth may alter arrangements for the Practice Incentives Program at any time and without notice.*

*The Commonwealth does not accept any legal liability or responsibility for any injury, loss or damage incurred by the use of, reliance on, or interpretation of the information provided in these Guidelines.*