

## **Practice Incentives Program (PIP) and Workforce Incentive Program (WIP) Response to COVID-19 to support general practice**

In recognition that general practices, Aboriginal Medical Services and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations across the nation have been impacted by COVID-19, the Department of Health and Services Australia have undertaken work to implement a number of temporary measures under the Practice Incentives Program (PIP) and Workforce Incentive Program (WIP) to help ensure business continuity.

These measures are designed to make it easier for practices to continue to manage the impact of COVID-19 and to continue providing quality care to their communities.

This means that:

- The **PIP Quality Improvement (QI) Incentive** has been temporarily amended to provide greater support to general practice business continuity during this time. The new measure has resulted in a 100% increase (for two quarters) to the funding per Standard Whole Patient Equivalent (SWPE) rate received by practices participating under the PIP QI.
- Participating practices will now receive \$10 per SWPE (increased from \$5 per SWPE), and the quarterly payment cap has been raised from \$12,500 per quarter to \$25,000 per quarter.
- There is a requirement for practices to continue to offer face-to-face consultations as an eligibility requirement for the increased payments. This will be monitored through MBS claims data. It is expected that practices will remain open for face-to-face consultations for at least four hours per business day.
- In addition, for practices participating in the **PIPQI**, Primary Health Networks (PHNs) have been advised to inform the Department if a practice has been unable to submit their PIP Eligible Data Set data as a result of the impacts of COVID-19 on their practice. These practices will receive a PIP QI payment for the 1 February 2020 to 30 April 2020 quarter. Arrangements for the 1 May to 31 July quarter will continue to be monitored and advice provided as the COVID-19 response evolves.
- For practices participating in the **PIP Electronic Health (eHealth) Incentive**, pre-payment compliance arrangements will cease during this interim period and payments will be made to participating practices. Compliance (including post-payment compliance for the interim period) will resume once business arrangements return to normal during the recovery phase of the pandemic. Arrangements for the 1 May to 31 July quarter will also continue to be monitored and advice provided as the COVID-19 response evolves.
- For the Workforce Incentive Program (WIP) – Practice Stream, due to the transition from the Practice Nurse Incentive Program (PNIP) to the WIP, automatic payments based on last quarter's participation information will not be possible. Given this, practices can either:
  - submit a quarterly confirmation statement (by the due date of 30 April 2020) to receive their incentive payment on time; or
  - submit their quarterly confirmation statement after this date to receive their payment *approximately* two weeks after lodgement.

Most PIP payments will proceed automatically without a practice needing to perform any additional input aside from making MBS item claims – PIP incentives that are tied to MBS item claims will proceed as normal.

The Department recognises that COVID-19 may impact processes that practices undertake to ensure accreditation and/or are unable to access accreditation services through their accrediting organisation due to COVID-19. The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care has released advice which can be found [here](#).

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