



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Health**

# AFTER HOURS OTHER MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS PROGRAM GUIDELINES

January 2019





# AFTER HOURS OTHER MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS PROGRAM

## Important Notice:

From 1 January 2019, the After Hours Other Medical Practitioners Program (AHOMPs Program) will not be accepting new applications to join the Program.

The AHOMPs Program will cease on 30 June 2023. Medical practitioners who are already on the AHOMPs Program can continue in the Program and can access A1 Medicare rebates until 30 June 2023.

These Guidelines have effect from 1 January 2019.

## 1. Introduction

The intent of the AHOMPs program is to recognise the value of after-hours services provided by non-vocationally recognised general practitioners. The AHOMPs Program provides access to higher A1 Medicare rebates for non-vocationally recognised medical practitioners to provide quality after-hours general practice services through an accredited general practice or an accredited Medical Deputising Service (MDS).

The AHOMPs Program is administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS) through Medicare on behalf of the Department of Health, in accordance with these Guidelines. All decisions under the Program are made by senior and executive officers in the Department of Health who are authorised by the Minister (Authorised Persons).

## 2. Eligibility

To be eligible for this Program persons must:

- be a participant in an Other Medical Practitioners (OMPs) program on or after 1 January 2019;
- be registered as a medical practitioner with the Medical Board of Australia;
- be a non-vocationally recognised medical practitioner and not hold fellowship of a general practice college;
- be eligible to claim Medicare benefits;
- provide after-hours general practice services through an accredited general practice or an accredited medical deputising service;
- commit to achieving fellowship of either the RACGP or ACRRM within 6 years of commencing the AHOMPs Program.

### **3. Transferring between Programs**

All OMPs programs were closed to new participants on 1 January 2019. Medical practitioners participating in another OMPs program before 1 January 2019 can apply to join the AHOMPs Program, noting that all OMPs programs will cease on 30 June 2023. Applications to transfer between OMPs programs will be assessed against the eligibility requirements of the relevant program.

OMPs programs are:

- Medicare Plus for Other Medical Practitioners Program (MOMPs Program)
- Rural Other Medical Practitioners Program (ROMPs Program)
- After Hours Other Medical Practitioners Program (AHOMPs Program)
- Outer Metropolitan Other Medical Practitioners Program (OMOMPs Program)

### **4. Eligible Locations**

To be an eligible location for the AHOMPs Program, a location must be either a general practice or a Medical Deputising Service (MDS) that holds accreditation from one of the Australian Government nominated accreditation bodies.

The current Australian Government nominated accreditation bodies are Australian General Practice Accreditation Limited (AGPAL) and Quality Practice Accreditation Pty Ltd (QPA). These bodies accredit service providers against the Royal Australian College of General Practitioner (RACGP) standards for general practice.

A general practice must have a full certificate of accreditation from either AGPAL or QPA before it can be considered an eligible location for the AHOMPs Program.

A MDS must have a full certificate of accreditation from either AGPAL or QPA before being considered for the AHOMPs Program. As part of the accreditation process, a MDS will be required to demonstrate that it:

- provides after-hours deputised services to patients (i.e. at the request of the patient's normal general practitioner);
- operates for the entirety of the after-hours period, defined below; and
- meets minimum standards for providing clinical supervision and support to non-vocationally recognised medical practitioners, including prospective AHOMPs Program participants.

### **5. Definition of After-Hours**

For the purposes of the AHOMPs Program, after-hours are defined as between 6pm and 8am on weekdays, before 8am and from 12pm on Saturday, all day Sunday and public holidays. Participants cannot claim GP after-hours MBS items for consultations or attendances they perform outside of these specified hours.

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## 6. Claimable item numbers

This section identifies the MBS items under which a medical practitioner can claim for Medicare-eligible services as a general practitioner during the defined after-hours period.

Program participants should note that items for non-urgent after-hours consultations provided in consulting rooms may only be claimed from 8pm on weekdays, from 1pm on Saturdays and all day on Sundays and public holidays.

Participants should also note that urgent item 588 may only be claimed if they are employed by an accredited general practice or MDS that is located in an eligible regional or remote area.

Eligible areas in relation to claiming item 588 have been determined using the Modified Monash Model (MMM). The MMM is a classification system that categorises metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas on the basis of both geographical remoteness and town size.

Areas that have a Modified Monash classification of 3 to 7 are considered to be eligible for claiming item 588. The Modified Monash classification of each Australian street address is provided on the [DoctorConnect website](#).

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**Table 1 - After hours MBS items, relevant period and eligible claimant**

Item Group	Group A11 – Urgent After-Hours Attendance					Group A22 – Non-Urgent after-hours in consulting rooms	Group A22 – Non-urgent after-hours at a place other than consulting rooms	
Item(s)	585	588	591	594	599	5000, 5020, 5040, 5060	5003, 5010, 5023, 5028, 5043, 5049, 5063, 5067	
Eligible period Monday to Friday	7am -8am 6pm -11pm					11pm-7am	Before 8am After 8pm	Before 8am After 6pm
Eligible period Saturday	7am-8am 12 noon – 11pm					11pm-7am	Before 8 am or After 1pm	Before 8 am or After 12 noon
Eligible period Sunday/ Public Holidays	7am-11pm					11pm-7am	All day (24 hours)	All day (24 hours)
Eligible Claimant	Participant employed by accredited general practice	Participants in MMM 3 to 7	Participant employed by accredited MDS in MMM 1 or 2	All	All	All*	All	
Ineligible claimant	Participant employed by accredited MDS	Participants in MMM 1 or 2	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	
Eligible professional services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visiting services; or</li> <li>• Consulting room attendance meeting item 585(c)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visiting services; or</li> <li>• Consulting room attendance meeting 588(c)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visiting services; or</li> <li>• Consulting room attendance meeting 591(c)</li> </ul>	Additional patients consulted as part of the same attendance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visiting services; or</li> <li>• Consulting room attendance meeting 599(b)</li> </ul>	All	All	

\* AMDS Program participants are restricted from claiming MBS items for in clinic attendances performed at service locations that have not been approved by Health under the AMDS Program Deed of Agreement process. The AHOMPs Program MBS benefits for eligible in-clinic services do not remove AMDS Program restrictions on performing services at unapproved general practices. Further information can be obtained by emailing: [AMDS@health.gov.au](mailto:AMDS@health.gov.au).

## **7. Pathway to Fellowship of RACGP or ACRRM**

It is a requirement that all participants on the AHOMPs Program must obtain FRACGP or FACRRM within six years of registration under this Program. If a participant has not achieved fellowship in this timeframe, eligibility for the AHOMPs Program will cease.

If extenuating circumstances exist, the six year threshold may be extended annually up to a maximum of a further four years.

## **8. Authorised Person's Discretion**

The Authorised Person for the AHOMPs Program will have full discretion to make decisions on all matters relating to the administration of the Program, including but not limited to approval of locations and medical practitioners.

## **9. Application Process**

Application forms for the AHOMPs Program are available on [the Department of Health website](#). Applicants should return completed application forms to DHS-Medicare by emailing: [PROVIDER.REGISTRATION@humanservices.gov.au](mailto:PROVIDER.REGISTRATION@humanservices.gov.au).

DHS is responsible for assessing applications for the AHOMPs Program and registering successful applicants.

Complete application forms will be processed within 21 days of receipt.

DHS will advise successful applicants by letter of approval and the commencement date of their registration on the program by letter of approval.

The applicant is responsible for ensuring that DHS has registered them for the AHOMPs Program at an approved service location before they attempt to claim relevant after-hours attendance MBS items. Eligibility to access Medicare rebates will not be backdated.

The Department of Health and DHS take no responsibility for medical practitioners who improperly commence practice or commence billing at the higher A1 Medicare rebate prior to receiving approval from DHS.

Practitioners who are registered at a location that operates during business hours cannot provide services in accordance with the AHOMPs Program outside of the after-hours period as defined in these Guidelines.

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## **10. Change of Details**

Participants must complete a new application form each time there is any change to their details, including when they require DHS-Medicare to assess a new accredited general practice or MDS.

Participants are required to notify DHS within 14 days if they no longer intend to provide after-hours services under the AHOMP Program.

## **11. Termination of a Participant in Program**

The Authorised Person may terminate the participation of a medical practitioner if they consider that a medical practitioner is not meeting the obligations of the Program. The Authorised Person will notify the participant regarding the termination and will provide the participant an opportunity to appeal this decision.

Participants may become ineligible for the Program for the following reasons:

- achieving either the FRACGP or FACRRM qualification and thereby no longer meeting the definition of an eligible AHOMPs Program participant;
- their practice location failing to remain accredited with one of the current Australian Government nominated accreditation bodies;
- the Department of Health or DHS determines the participant is no longer on the pathway to achieving either FRACGP or FACRRM; and/or
- the general practice or MDS ceases operation.

## **12. AHOMPs Program Eligibility Periods and Extensions**

Requests from participants wishing to extend participation on the AHOMPs Program beyond the initial 6 year period must be submitted in writing to the Department of Health.

Participants who have completed the initial 6 year period of registration for the AHOMPs Program may be granted an annual extension to their registration by the Department of Health for a maximum of four years. Participation in the AHOMPs Program is limited to a maximum period of ten years from initial registration on the Program.

Participants may apply for extensions on the grounds of extenuating circumstances. Extenuating circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- failure to successfully complete the Fellowship examination, requiring additional time to re-sit components of the examination; or
  - a delay in receiving confirmation of Fellowship after successfully completing the examination; or
  - illness or unforeseen personal circumstances that require rescheduling the examination.
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Requests for extensions are assessed according to evidence that can demonstrate the participant's progress towards achieving either the FRACGP or FACRRM qualification.

Requests to extend AHOMPs Program participation must be sent to: [OMPs@health.gov.au](mailto:OMPs@health.gov.au). Extension requests must include the following information:

- the reason for requesting the extension;
- evidence of medical practitioner's progress towards attaining either the FRACGP or FACRRM qualification, including;
  - assessment of the medical practitioner's general practice experience provided by either the RACGP or the ACRRM within six months of the AHOMPs Program extension request;
  - confirmation of enrolment in assessments for either the FRACGP or FACRRM qualification; and
  - a copy of prior assessment results;
- the full name and address of each general practice or MDS that is the subject of the extension request;
- documentation confirming that each requested general practice and/or MDS location is accredited with an Australian Government nominated accreditation body; and
- other relevant information or documentation to support the medical practitioner's extension request.

Each request for extension will be assessed on its own merit. Applications for extensions are generally processed in date order and within 28 working days of receipt of a full and complete application.

**Applications for extensions beyond 30 June 2023 will not be considered**

**The program will cease entirely on 30 June 2023. No participants will be extended beyond this date.**

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## 14. Program Contact Details

### Department of Health

To obtain further information regarding the program or apply for an extension, contact: [OMPs@health.gov.au](mailto:OMPs@health.gov.au)

### Department of Human Services - Medicare

To obtain application forms, payment information and advice, or to determine areas of workforce shortage eligibility, contact the Department of Human Services – Medicare by emailing: [PROVIDER.REGISTRATION@humanservices.gov.au](mailto:PROVIDER.REGISTRATION@humanservices.gov.au)

**For further information regarding continuing professional development contact:**

### **The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners**

RACGP National Office

100 Wellington Parade

East Melbourne, VIC, 3002

Ph: 1800 472 247

[The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners](http://www.racgp.org.au) (www.racgp.org.au)

OR

### **The Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine**

ACRRM

GPO Box 2507

Brisbane, QLD, 4000

Ph: 1800 223 226

[Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine](http://www.acrrm.org.au) (www.acrrm.org.au)

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