



**Pharmacy Programs  
Administrator**

# PROGRAM RULES

## Emergency Locum Service

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Australian Government

Department of Health and Aged Care

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Community Pharmacy Agreement.



**EMERGENCY LOCUM SERVICE**

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## EMERGENCY LOCUM SERVICE

### 1 INTRODUCTION

**This document outlines the Program Rules governing the Emergency Locum Service (ELS) Program. This document must be read in conjunction with the *Pharmacy Programs Administrator General Terms and Conditions (General Terms)*. Definitions in the General Terms apply in these Program Rules.**

The Emergency Locum Service is an initiative of the Rural Pharmacy Workforce Program (RPWP). The RPWP is designed to strengthen and support the rural pharmacy workforce, and in turn provide increased access to quality pharmacy services for consumers residing in rural and remote regions of Australia.

RPWP is part of the suite of Rural Support Programs funded under the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement to support targeted Programs and services that improve access to Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) medicines and services for people living in rural and remote regions of Australia.

### 2 BACKGROUND

ELS supports Community Pharmacies in rural and remote areas through direct access to Pharmacist locums in emergency situations. Locums are deployed at short notice, generally in under 24 hours, to provide relief in urgent and emergency situations.

The primary aim of the ELS is to alleviate the hardships faced by Community Pharmacies based in rural and remote communities in accessing locum services. It provides for locum services to Community Pharmacies who are faced with an emergency situation that will affect the provision of pharmacy services to the community.

The ELS Program assists Community Pharmacies by funding up to \$2,500 (GST exclusive) to contribute towards the travel costs between the locum's home and the Community Pharmacy location. The cost of Pharmacist locum wages are not covered.

The ELS Program is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Emergency locum placements are for a minimum of one day and a maximum of seven consecutive days.

### 3 ELIGIBILITY

#### 3.1 Pharmacy Eligibility

To be eligible for the purposes of the ELS Program, applicants must:

- Be a Community Pharmacy;
- Be located in a rural or remote location, which is defined as a Modified Monash category MM3 - MM7, according to the Modified Monash Model (MMM); and
- Be unable to undertake dispensing duties or to fully and effectively operate the Pharmacy due to an emergency situation as defined by these Program Rules.

#### 3.2 Emergency Eligibility

An emergency situation is defined as any situation that means the Pharmacist is unable to undertake dispensing duties or fully operate the Pharmacy, with little or no notice, that arises due to:



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- Illness or injury
- The need to seek urgent medical care or treatment
- A family emergency involving:
  - Illness or injury of an immediate family member or dependent relative.
  - Bereavement due to a death of a member of immediate family.

## 4 APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants who meet the Eligibility Criteria must submit a completed official application form and attach all required documentation in order to be considered, including documentation to support the nature of the emergency. Applicants are responsible for:

- Providing sufficient information on the application form to determine eligibility and recruit a suitable locum
- Accepting the locum Pharmacist offered
- Organising and paying the wages and accommodation costs of the locum for the duration of the placement.

In cases where the nature of the emergency situation prevents completion of the application form, this requirement may be waived, and the form lodged within ten working days of the original request for assistance, in which case a fax advice and/or email will constitute an interim application form.

There is no limit on the number of times a Community Pharmacy may access the ELS Program, subject to availability of funds.

### 4.1 Supporting Documentation

Valid forms of supporting documentation include:

- A medical certificate, preferred in emergency situations due to unforeseen illness;
- A Death Certificate; or
- A Commonwealth statutory declaration for all other emergency situations. Please note a statutory declaration must not be made before a Pharmacist employed by the applicant's Pharmacy.

For further clarification about valid forms of supporting documentation and when these must be provided, please refer to the FAQs on the [PPA website](#).

## 5 IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The ELS Program is limited on the basis of available funds. Lodging an application does not guarantee access to the ELS Program. Consequently, Community Pharmacies satisfying the Eligibility Criteria will not necessarily receive access to the ELS Program.

The Pharmacy Programs Administrator (PPA) may provide the Australian Government with information about the assessment and usage of the ELS Program and about any issues that may arise in relation to an application.

A link to the application form may be obtained from the [ELS website](#) or the [PPA website](#).



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## **6 AUDIT AND COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS**

Service Providers must retain full and true records (including all patient consent forms) in relation to the provision of services for not less than seven years after the claim for payment. Such records must be kept in a manner that permits them to be conveniently and properly audited, and enables the amounts claimed as well as the services provided under the General Terms and these Program Rules to be determined. Service Providers may be subject to audits by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care (or its representative) to ensure that the General Terms and these Program Rules have been complied with, and must provide all and any records requested as part of such audit(s).

Service Providers must also ensure that they are using current documents when obtaining information or consent from patients. Service Providers that wrongfully or incorrectly receive support and/or do not meet the requirements set out in the General Terms and these Program Rules may be subject to compliance action (as determined by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care or Pharmacy Programs Administrator) and repayment may be required. Under section 137.1 of the Criminal Code, giving false and misleading information is a serious offence. If an audit/compliance action is to be conducted, Service Providers will be required to produce documentation within a specified time frame.



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