



PROGRAM RULES

Regional Pharmacy Maintenance Allowance

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Australian Government

Department of Health and Aged Care

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REGIONAL PHARMACY MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE

1 INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the Program Rules governing the Regional Pharmacy Maintenance Allowance (RPMA) Program. This document must be read in conjunction with the *Pharmacy Programs Administrator's General Terms and Conditions* (General Terms). Definitions in the General Terms apply in these Program Rules.

RPMA is funded by the Department of Health and Aged Care (the Department). RPMA aims to maintain equitable and sustainable access to Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (RPBS) medicines, and pharmacy services for Patients in regional, rural and remote areas of Australia, through supporting the pharmacy network.

2 BACKGROUND

The RPMA was introduced under the Third Community Pharmacy Agreement. The monthly Allowance is paid to eligible proprietors of Pharmacies approved under Section 90 of the *National Health Act 1953*.

The Allowance is calculated annually, based on the remoteness of the Pharmacy according to the Modified Monash Model (MMM). Pharmacies located within MMM categories 3 – 7 are eligible for an allowance. Pharmacies with low prescription volumes in more remote areas receive the highest level of the Allowance.

3 PARTICIPATION

3.1 Community Pharmacy Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in the RPMA Program a Pharmacy must have:

- a. A Section 90 Pharmacy approval
- b. A prescription volume under the upper limit of the RPMA Payment Matrix, applicable to all pharmacies located within MMM 3 – 7 (noting that pharmacies in MMM 3 are only eligible for the base rate and not the variable component based on prescription volume). The latest version of the RPMA Payment Matrix can be found on the PPA website
- c. Opening hours, with a Registered Pharmacist in attendance for a minimum of:
 - 20 hours per week
 - 4 days each week
 - 48 weeks of each allowance year.

The Pharmacy must be located in one of the following MMM categories to be deemed eligible:

- MMM 3 – Inner Regional
- MMM 4 – Outer Regional
- MMM 5 – Rural
- MMM 6 – Remote
- MMM 7 – Very Remote

The MMM is effective for the Allowance year and any changes to the MMM categories will be included in the annual revision of the Allowance.

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Failure to maintain compliance with any or all of the above Eligibility Criteria may result in the Eligible Community Pharmacy being ineligible to participate in the RPMA Program.

3.2 Community Pharmacy Obligations

An Eligible Community Pharmacy must notify the Pharmacy Programs Administrator immediately when it becomes aware of any circumstance, event or fact that may affect eligibility to participate in the RPMA Program.

Eligible Community Pharmacies must notify the Pharmacy Programs Administrator within 14 days if their Section 90 number changes or becomes inactive, or their opening hours are to be reduced below the minimum hours stated in clause 2 of these Guidelines.

If the Pharmacy Programs Administrator is not notified of these changes within 14 days then the following may apply:

- a. Ongoing monthly payments may be suspended or cancelled; or
- b. Payments made since the reduction in opening hours may be recovered.

4 APPLYING FOR THE RPMA

Eligible Community Pharmacy Registration is available via the Pharmacy Programs Administrator [Portal](#) (the Portal).

An Eligible Community Pharmacy will not be registered until the Eligible Community Pharmacy receives an email notification from the Portal confirming the registration has been accepted.

Registration does not mean a pharmacy is eligible for payment. Pharmacies must also lodge an application for the Program, which will be individually assessed (see below).

4.1 Applying for the First Time

An Eligible Community Pharmacy applying for the RPMA for the first time is required to complete a new application via the [Portal](#).

Eligible Community Pharmacies will receive confirmation of accepted applications via the MAP email address provided during the registration process on the Portal. This process may take up to one month.

Eligible Community Pharmacies only need to apply for the RPMA once. Each financial year afterwards, the Community Pharmacies receiving the RPMA are required to submit a renewal that includes a re-certification of their eligibility. RPMA payment schedules are based on information in the application and renewal.

4.2 Annual Renewal

To continue receiving payments under the RPMA Program, a Community Pharmacy must submit an annual renewal that includes re-certification of eligibility. The renewal must be submitted via the [Portal](#) between 1 May and 14 June for the Allowance Year beginning the following 1 July.

If the RPMA Certification Statement is not submitted within the required timeframe then RPMA payments may be delayed or ceased.

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5 PAYMENTS

The RPMA is calculated each year from 1 July and paid monthly to Eligible Community Pharmacies, based on the RPMA Payment Matrix for that financial year. The current RPMA Payment Matrix is available on the [PPA website](#) and in Appendix A of this document.

Payments will be made into the bank account nominated during the registration process via the Portal.

To receive payments under the RPMA Program, the Eligible Community Pharmacy must:

- Meet the Community Pharmacy Eligibility Criteria detailed in clause 3; and
- Provide an RPMA Application or Certification Statement as detailed in clause 4, confirming that the Eligibility Criteria detailed in clause 3 has been met including:
 - The minimum agreed trading hours with a Registered Pharmacist in attendance were met
 - The Pharmacy will continue to meet the minimum agreed trading hours with a Registered Pharmacist in attendance for the next 12 months.

Payment records and remittance advices for each approved payment will be provided via the Portal.

If an Eligible Community Pharmacy fails to comply with the General Terms and/or these Program Rules, clause 5 of the General Terms will apply and the Pharmacy Programs Administrator and the Australian Government may at its discretion pursue debt recovery or reduce or withhold any future payments to that Eligible Community Pharmacy.

If the Pharmacy Programs Administrator seeks further information, clarification or substantiation, the Eligible Community Pharmacy agrees to respond within the time frame nominated by the Pharmacy Programs Administrator.

If the information provided by the Eligible Community Pharmacy does not satisfy the Pharmacy Programs Administrator they are not obliged to make a payment.

6 EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

If a Pharmacy does not meet one or more of the Community Pharmacy Eligibility Criteria detailed in clause 3, the Pharmacy owner may write to the Pharmacy Programs Administrator for an assessment of eligibility under exceptional circumstances. The assessment of the application will be jointly undertaken between the Pharmacy Programs Administrator and the Department and will be based on how appropriate the services are for the community.

Pharmacies that are approved under exceptional circumstances will receive a percentage of the 'standard' payment for the appropriate MMM category, determined by the agreed terms of the exceptional circumstance (for example: reduced opening hours).

An RPMA Application or Annual Renewal rejection due to a change in an Eligible Community Pharmacy's circumstances such as a script volume or MMM category is not considered an exceptional circumstance.

Any request for consideration as an exceptional circumstance must be sent to support@ppaonline.com.au and contain sufficient justification to support the request.

7 AUDIT AND COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

Service Providers must retain full and true records 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 Department (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 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 Department 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.

8 RESOURCES

RPMA Program resources are available for download from the [PPA website](#).