



eHEALTH INCENTIVE » GUIDELINES

MARCH 2009

THESE GUIDELINES PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRACTICE INCENTIVES PROGRAM (PIP) eHEALTH INCENTIVE

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 eHEALTH INCENTIVE

The PIP eHealth Incentive aims to encourage practices to keep up to date with the latest developments in eHealth.

This incentive has been developed in consultation with the National E-Health Transition Authority (NEHTA), and aligns with the directions set out in the Australian Government's National eHealth Strategy.

As technology continues to emerge, practices will be able to securely exchange information such as discharge summaries, pathology reports and specialist reports electronically; send electronic referrals and pathology orders; and participate in prescribing electronically. Patient information sent and received electronically will also be able to be added directly into a patient's electronic health record.

The PIP eHealth Incentive will encourage the adoption of new eHealth technology as it becomes available to assist practices in improving administration processes and the quality of care provided to patients.

3. WHAT ARE THE PIP EHEALTH INCENTIVE PAYMENTS AND REQUIREMENTS?

The PIP eHealth Incentive payments are calculated at \$6.50 per Standardised Whole Patient Equivalent (SWPE) per year. Payments are capped at \$12,500 per quarter.

Payments are made by Medicare Australia to eligible practices as part of each quarterly PIP payment.

The PIP eHealth Incentive has three components. Practices must meet the requirements of each of the components to qualify for payments through this incentive.

To be eligible for the PIP eHealth Incentive, practices must:

1. have a secure messaging capability, which is provided by an eligible supplier;
2. have (or have applied for) a location/site Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) certificate for the practice and each practice branch, and ensure that each medical practitioner from the practice has (or has applied for) an individual PKI certificate; and
3. provide practitioners from the practice with access to a range of key electronic clinical resources.

These requirements are explained in more detail below.

REQUIREMENT 1 – SECURE MESSAGING CAPABILITY

In order to meet this requirement, practices must have a secure messaging capability that will allow patient clinical and medical information to be securely exchanged where possible.

The secure messaging capability may be provided as a direct extension to the practice management system, or indirectly via a separate messaging system.

eHEALTH INCENTIVE » GUIDELINES

The secure messaging capability must be provided by an eligible supplier. Practices will need to visit the NEHTA website at www.nehta.gov.au/pip-vendors to find out if the supplier of either their practice management system or their messaging service is an eligible supplier for the purpose of the PIP eHealth Incentive.

INFORMATION FOR SUPPLIERS:

The relevant NEHTA specifications are available from the NEHTA website at: www.nehta.gov.au/pip
Specifications and standards will be periodically released by NEHTA following industry consultation.

REQUIREMENT 2 – PKI CERTIFICATES FOR THE PRACTICE AND EACH PRACTITIONER

PKI is a combination of policies, procedures and technology that allows health providers to transfer information and images between computers safely and securely. Sending files using PKI means that only the intended recipient is able to read the file and providers can use PKI to electronically sign documents prior to sending.

NEHTA has endorsed PKI as the Australian standard for authentication in eHealth. PKI delivers the high level of security necessary and appropriate for transferring sensitive personal health information within the health sector. It is the same technology already used by practices to securely send claims to Medicare Australia electronically.

The use of PKI certificates is essential to ensure secure information exchange and to enable future developments in eHealth.

Location/site PKI certificates can be used by the practice for activities such as claiming and receiving test results. Individual PKI certificates will enable practitioners to electronically send referrals, and participate in electronic prescribing and electronic pathology ordering with the use of electronic signatures as these systems become available.

In order to meet this requirement, practices must have (or have applied for) a location/site PKI certificate. Practices with additional practice branches are required to have (or have applied for) a separate location/site PKI certificate for each practice branch.

Each medical practitioner working at the practice must also have (or have applied for) an individual PKI certificate. Locums are exempt from this requirement.

The PKI certificates should be used to securely send and/or receive information via the practice's messaging system where possible.

Location/site and individual PKI certificates are available at no cost from Medicare Australia.

MEDICARE AUSTRALIA :

Phone: 1800 700 199 (select option 3)

Website:

Registration forms for individual and location/site PKI certificates are available from the Medicare Australia website at:
www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/pkiforms

Further information on PKI is available at:
www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/pki

Practices will be considered to have met this requirement once they have applied to Medicare Australia for PKI certificates. Practices do not need to wait until they have actually received their certificates to begin qualifying for payments through the eHealth Incentive.

To maintain compliance with Requirement 2, new practitioners who do not already have a PKI certificate must apply to Medicare Australia for an individual PKI certificate within 14 calendar days of joining the practice.

REQUIREMENT 3 – ACCESS TO KEY ELECTRONIC CLINICAL RESOURCES

In order to meet this requirement, practices must provide all medical practitioners from the practice with access to the current editions of a range of key electronic clinical resources to improve the quality of prescribing, support quality care, and enhance health outcomes.

The practice must provide practitioners from the practice with access to:

- at least **one** key electronic clinical resource from **each** of the categories in Table 1 below (minimum of 3 resources in total); and
- at least **three** resources from **any** of the categories in Table 2 below.

eHEALTH INCENTIVE » GUIDELINES

The resources must be available on the computer desktop in the consulting room either on the hard drive, as a CD-ROM, or as a direct link to a website. Practitioners from the practice must be able to explain how they access and use the key electronic clinical resources.

Note: Resources included as part of the practice’s management system may not necessarily be the **current** edition. To meet Requirement 3, practices must provide access to the current edition of each electronic clinical resource.

Where possible, practices may wish to provide access to resources as a direct link to a website to ensure that practitioners are accessing the most up-to-date information available.

TABLE 1: KEY ELECTRONIC CLINICAL RESOURCES

Category	Examples
Concise, evidence-based guide to recommendations about patient management that covers all common disorders seen in general practice (latest edition)	e-Therapeutic Guidelines Complete
Formulary of medicines available in Australia that provides comparative drug information reflective of contemporary Australian general practice and is independent of pharmaceutical company involvement (latest edition)	Australian Medicines Handbook
Evidence-based guide to preventive activities in general practice which is relevant to the Australian population (latest edition)	RACGP: Guidelines for Preventive Activities in General Practice (known as the Red Book)

TABLE 2: OTHER ELECTRONIC CLINICAL RESOURCES

Category	Examples
Journal of evidence-based clinical care	Bandolier; Clinical Evidence
Clinical resources (latest editions)	Immunisation: Myths and Realities; The Australian Immunisation Handbook; Assessing Fitness to Drive
Regulatory resources (latest editions)	Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS); Pharmaceutical Benefits Schedule (PBS)

4. IS OUR PRACTICE ELIGIBLE FOR THE PIP eHEALTH INCENTIVE?

To be eligible for payments through the PIP eHealth Incentive, the practice must:

- participate in the PIP; and
- meet the requirements of each of the three components, as described in Section 3 above.

Payments are made to practices that have met the requirements of the eHealth Incentive for the entire preceding PIP payment quarter, and are assessed as being eligible at a ‘point in time’. The ‘point in time’ corresponds to the last day of the month prior to the next payment quarter. For example, in order to receive a payment in the August quarter, practices need to have met the requirements for all of May, June and July, and be assessed as eligible at the ‘point in time’ of 31 July.

For further information on how PIP payments are made, refer to the *PIP Guidelines*.

5. HOW DOES THE PRACTICE APPLY FOR THE PIP eHEALTH INCENTIVE?

Practices can apply for the PIP eHealth Incentive through Medicare Australia:

- at the time of joining the PIP, by completing the relevant parts of the *Practice Incentives Program and General Practice Immunisation Incentive* application form; or
- at any other time, by completing the *eHealth Incentive* application form.

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

eHEALTH INCENTIVE » GUIDELINES

6. WHAT ARE THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE PRACTICE?

The practice must:

- be able to substantiate its claims for payments, which may include evidence of: secure messaging capability; PKI certificates for (or application for) each individual medical practitioner working at the practice; a location/site PKI certificate for (or application for) the practice and each practice branch; and documentary evidence of the key electronic clinical resources maintained by the practice;
- provide information to Medicare Australia as part of its ongoing audit program to verify the practice meets PIP eligibility criteria;
- ensure the information provided to Medicare Australia is accurate; 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 on the practice's behalf, any changes to information submitted for PIP claims and payments.

7. 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. 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

Email: 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.