



Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program *update*

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Issue 1

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Access MHNIP forms:
www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/providers
 then click on
Incentives & allowances >
Mental health nurse incentive program

Enquiry line:

National number: **1800 222 032****

TTY: **1800 552 152**** (hearing impaired)

TIS: **131 450*** (translation service)

* Call charges apply.

** Call charges apply from mobile and pay phones only

Change to the Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program payment schedule

The Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program is intended to offer the maximum benefit for all participating organisations. For this reason we are changing the payment schedule that applies to incentive payments under the program.

From 15 July 2008, applications received will be paid by Medicare Australia by the end of the following month. This means a claim received on 8 August 2008 will be paid by the end of September 2008. You will be able to claim for sessions up to six months old under the new payment arrangements.

Payments received up until 14 July 2008 will constitute the quarter 4 payment for the 2007 financial year—the last quarterly payment to be made. The quarter 4 payment will be made to organisations by 28 July 2008. You can also apply for quarter 3 payments that have not already been claimed.

In April 2008 we developed a new form that allows organisations to apply for payments on a monthly basis. For copies of this form, visit our website **www.medicareaustralia.gov.au** then follow the links **For health professionals>Incentives and allowances>Mental health nurse incentive program** and download a copy.

Expansion of the Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program

Shared employment arrangements under the Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program, announced on 18 April 2008 by Nicola Roxon MP, Minister for Health and Ageing, will allow sharing of mental health nursing resources between state and territory health organisations and participating practices.

Under this arrangement, state and territory health organisations make available the services of mental health nurses to participating practices on a fee for service basis. These nurses will remain employees of the state and territory governments.

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Shared employment activities will help increase the efficiency and appropriateness of services offered under the Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program. Specific benefits include:

- improved working relationships between general practices and state and territory health services
- improved continuity of care for patients, including those with a dual diagnosis
- improved post-discharge services through greater general practitioner collaboration in discharge planning
- increases in the establishment of the program in areas of minimal workforce by offering more flexible and secure working arrangements for mental health nurses.

Monitoring arrangements to ensure that patients continue to be seen by the right mental health service at the right time will be developed in consultation with states and territories.

For more information, please contact Nursing and Rural Services Section at the Department of Health and Ageing on **02 6289 5468**.

Mental Health Nurse Credential

From 1 January 2009, eligible organisations must use a credentialed mental health nurse. Mental health nursing is a specialised branch of nursing and nurses will be required to hold a Mental Health Nurse credential with the Australian College of Mental Health Nursing (ACMHN) to participate in the Mental Health Nurse Incentive program.

Being a credentialed mental health nurse is not the same as being a member of the ACMHN. To be awarded a credential from the ACMHN, there is a set of criteria to address.

The ACMHN is able to provide access to a network of nurses who are credentialed, including nurses working with the Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program.

The process of credentialing takes approximately six to eight weeks to complete, and it is recommended that in order to meet the deadline of 31 December 2008, applications should be received no later than mid November.

The ACMHN welcomes enquiries in relation to credentialing and is able to provide assistance with completing applications.

Information and application forms can be obtained from the Australian College of Mental Health Nursing website, **www.acmhn.org** or by calling the College on **1300 667 079** or **02 6285 1078**.

Hints and Tips—Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program

- Please submit your claims on a regular basis to Medicare Australia, either weekly or fortnightly. This helps us to appropriately assess claims and contact you if necessary to clarify information without impacting on timely payments.
- It is important that you supply correct details on your claim payment application forms—if patient or provider details are incorrect, your payment may be rejected.
- Remember to keep records supporting the claims you make to Medicare Australia along with copies of your claims. Medicare Australia is obliged to review a number of participants in the program each year to ensure compliance to program rules.

Need Credentialling?

The Australian College of Mental Health Nurses can help you.

All nurses participating in the Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program need to be credentialed before 1 January 2009.

Visit **www.acmhn.org** or call **1300 667 079** today