



Australian Government

Medicare Australia

Practice Incentives Program

Asthma Incentive Guidelines – August 2011

Contents

Introduction	1
Definition of a GP	1
The Practice Incentives Program Asthma Incentive	1
What are the Practice Incentives Program Asthma Incentive payments and requirements?	2
Sign-on payment	2
Service Incentive Payment	2
Is our practice/GP eligible for the Practice Incentives Program Asthma Incentive?	3
How does the practice/GP apply for the Practice Incentives Program Asthma Incentive?	3
What are the obligations of the practice?	3
Is there an appeals process?	4
More information	4

Introduction

The Practice Incentives Program (PIP) aims to encourage continuing improvements in general practice through financial incentives to support quality care, and improve access and health outcomes for patients. To be eligible to participate in the PIP, a practice must be accredited, or registered for accreditation, against the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) *Standards for general practices*. Practices must achieve full accreditation within 12 months of joining the PIP and maintain full accreditation thereafter.

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 GPs to provide increased and continuing services in Commonwealth-funded Residential Aged Care Facilities
- to support best practice management of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients with chronic disease.

The PIP is administered by Medicare Australia on behalf of the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA).

Definition of a GP

For the purposes of the PIP, GPs include general practitioners and/or non-specialist medical practitioners, known as other medical practitioners, who provide non-referred services and are not GPs. General practitioners include Fellows of the RACGP and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM), vocationally registered general practitioners and medical practitioners undertaking approved training.

The Practice Incentives Program Asthma Incentive

The PIP Asthma Incentive aims to encourage GPs to better manage the clinical care of people with moderate to severe asthma.

Generally, patients must meet the following criteria to be assessed as having moderate to severe asthma:

- symptoms on most days, OR
- use of preventative medication, OR
- bronchodilator use at least three times per week, OR
- hospital attendance or admission following an acute exacerbation of asthma.

What are the Practice Incentives Program Asthma Incentive payments and requirements?

The PIP Asthma Incentive has two components, which are summarised in Table 1 and explained in more detail below.

Table 1: payments and requirements of the Practice Incentives Program Asthma Incentive

Component	Payment	Activity required for payment
Sign-on Payment	\$0.25 per SWPE*	One-off payment to practices that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• use a patient register, and a recall and reminder system• agree to use the asthma cycle of care• agree to have their details forwarded to appropriate bodies (see sign-on payment).
Service Incentive Payment	\$100 per patient per year	Payment to GPs for each completed cycle of care for patients with moderate to severe asthma.

* Standardised Whole Patient Equivalent (SWPE) is used to measure practice size and includes a weighting factor for the age and gender of patients. As a guide, the average full-time GP has a SWPE value of around 1000 SWPEs annually.

Sign-on payment

A one-off sign-on payment of \$0.25 per SWPE is made to practices that register for the PIP Asthma Incentive. The payment is made to practices in the next quarterly payment following sign-on.

To sign on for the PIP Asthma Incentive, practices are required to:

- register for the PIP Asthma Incentive (see How does the practice/GP apply for the Practice Incentives Program Asthma Incentive?)
- maintain a patient register, and a recall and reminder system, for their patients with moderate to severe asthma
- agree to implement a cycle of care for their patients with moderate to severe asthma
- agree to have their practice details provided to the National Asthma Council Australia, Australian General Practice Network, Divisions of General Practice or State Based Organisations so they can receive information about the asthma cycle of care.

The register and the recall and reminder system must:

- include a list of all known patients with asthma attending the practice, including the patient's name, an identifier (e.g. the practice's patient reference number) and contact details
- be kept active.

The registers can be electronic or paper based and can be held either at the practice or at the local Division of General Practice. If a division-based register is used, patient consent is required.

Service Incentive Payment

A Service Incentive Payment (SIP) of \$100 per year is paid to GPs for each cycle of care completed for a patient with moderate to severe asthma. GPs must be working at a PIP practice that is signed on for the PIP Asthma Incentive (see above). The SIPs are paid quarterly.

The asthma cycle of care for a patient with moderate to severe asthma must be delivered within a 12 month period and include the three steps of assessment, planning and review. The assessment and planning steps can be conducted in one consultation, if practicable.

At a minimum, the asthma cycle of care must include:

- at least two asthma related consultations within 12 months for a patient with moderate to severe asthma
- at least one of these consultations (the review consultation) to have been planned at a previous consultation
- documented diagnosis and assessment of the patient's level of asthma control and severity of asthma
- review of the patient's use of, and access to, asthma related medication and devices
- provision to the patient of a written asthma action plan (if the patient is unable to use a written asthma action plan - discussion with the patient about an alternative method of providing an asthma action plan, and documentation of the discussion in the patient's medical record)
- provision of asthma self-management education to the patient
- a review of the written or documented asthma action plan.

Is our practice/GP eligible for the Practice Incentives Program Asthma Incentive?

To be eligible for the sign-on payment of the PIP Asthma Incentive, the practice must:

- participate in the PIP
- meet the requirements of the sign-on payment as described above.

To be eligible for SIPs, the GP must:

- work in a PIP practice that is signed on for the PIP Asthma Incentive
- complete an asthma cycle of care for patients with moderate to severe asthma, as described above.

How does the practice/GP apply for the Practice Incentives Program Asthma Incentive?

Claiming a sign-on payment

Practices can apply for the PIP Asthma Incentive sign-on payment, through Medicare Australia, by completing:

- the relevant parts of the Practice Incentives Program and General Practice Immunisation Incentive application form at the time of joining the PIP, or
- the Cervical Screening, Asthma and Diabetes Incentives application form if the practice is already registered for the PIP.

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

Claiming a SIP

GPs must use one of the following asthma specific Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) attendance item numbers (from Group A18 or A19 of the MBS) when the minimum requirements of the asthma cycle of care have been completed for a patient with moderate to severe asthma: 2546, 2547, 2552, 2553, 2558, 2559, 2664, 2666, 2668, 2673, 2675 or 2677.

Use of these items will inform Medicare Australia that the requirements of the asthma cycle of care have been met and automatically trigger a SIP. The SIP is in addition to the consultation fee. The patient rebate (or direct bill payment) for the Asthma Incentive MBS attendance items is the same as for the usual MBS attendance items.

All other consultations should be billed using the usual MBS attendance items with the exception of the consultation that completes the asthma cycle of care.

For more information on the use and billing of MBS attendance items call the Medicare Provider Enquiry Line on **132 150**.

If Medicare Australia does not have the banking details of the GP, a SIP Banking Details form will be automatically generated and sent to the GP's main PIP practice location after the SIP calculation process has occurred. The GP is required to complete the SIP Banking Details form and return it to Medicare Australia to receive their initial payment. Once banking details have been registered with Medicare Australia, all future SIPs will be paid directly into the nominated bank account.

What are the obligations of the practice?

The practice must:

- be able to substantiate its claims for payments, which may include evidence of its patient register, and recall and reminder system, and the completion of cycles of care for patients with moderate to severe asthma
- provide information to Medicare Australia as part of its ongoing audit program to verify that the practice meets the PIP eligibility requirements
- make sure information provided to Medicare Australia is accurate
- advise Medicare Australia in writing, of any changes to practice arrangements by the relevant 'point in time' date or within 14 calendar days, whichever date is earliest. Refer to the *Practice Incentives Program Guidelines* for more information.

On joining the PIP, the practice must nominate an authorised contact person(s), who will be required to verify on the practice's behalf, any changes to information submitted for PIP claims and payments.

Is there an appeals process?

The PIP has an established appeals process. To request a review of a decision, the authorised contact person or the owners of the practice must write to Medicare Australia within 28 calendar days of the date on the notice of the decision they would like reviewed. Medicare Australia will review its decision and advise the practice in writing of the outcome.

Advice on more avenues of appeal is available from Medicare Australia.

More information

For more information about the PIP Asthma Incentive email pip@medicareaustralia.gov.au or go to www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/pip or call **1800 222 032** (call charges may apply) between 8.30 am to 5.00 pm Australian Central Standard Time (ACST), Monday to Friday.

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 at 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.