

What is a Distribution Priority Area?

The Distribution Priority Area (DPA) classification identifies locations where access to doctors is not sufficient for the needs of the community.

How the DPA classification is determined

The DPA classification is determined by gender and age demographics as well as the socio-economic status of patients living in the area.

An area is automatically classified as a DPA when it is:

- classified MM 5 to MM 7 under the Modified Monash Model (MMM)
- located in the Northern Territory.

A location is also considered a DPA when the health service level does not meet a service benchmark for the population. The DPA benchmark for general practitioners is set at MM 2 where it is identified that access to medical services can be limited, take longer and cost more.

The DPA classification methodology is fixed for three year periods. Each community is reviewed annually to determine its DPA status. It is important that rural general practices consider the DPA status of their practice/community before employing a medical practitioner with DPA obligations.

About the Modified Monash Model (MMM)

The Modified Monash Model (MMM) is used to classify geographical areas according to remoteness and town size. Cities and metropolitan areas are classified MM 1 and rural, remote and very remote areas are classified MM 2 to MM 7.

How the DPA classification is applied

General practitioners

Workforce programs apply the DPA classification to redirect or recruit general practitioners to work in MM 2 to MM 7 locations where communities have below benchmark access to medical services.

International medical graduates (IMGs) who are general practitioners are required to work in DPA locations to access Medicare billing under [Section 19AB](#) of the [Health Insurance Act 1973](#).

Bonded Doctors

The Bonded Medical Program provides Commonwealth support for students to complete a medical degree in return for a commitment to practice in a DPA location for a specified period.

While completing their return-of-service obligations, bonded doctors are able to access the Medicare Benefits Schedule.

View or search for DPA locations

To view locations classified as a DPA or to check the Modified Monash Model (MMM) classification for a particular area, visit the [Health Workforce Locator](#).

You can use this helpful online tool to search by address or via the map feature.

Further information

To find out more about the Distribution Priority Area (DPA) classification, visit the [Australian Government Department of Health website](#).

Whilst all care has been taken in preparing this document, this information is a guide only and subject to change without notice.