

Pharmacy dispensing in a rural or remote general practice

Where a rural or remote community does not have convenient and efficient access to Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) medicines from an approved pharmacy, a medical practitioner can apply to become a PBS approved supplier.

Eligibility to become a PBS approved supplier

To be eligible to become a PBS approved supplier, the medical practitioner must:

- be practising medicine in the area for which approval is being sought
- hold a current registration with the relevant state or territory medical board
- be willing to supply PBS medicines to any person in that area who presents a valid PBS prescription.

Applying to become a PBS approved supplier

To apply to become a PBS approved supplier, the medical practitioner must fill out the [application form to supply pharmaceutical benefits](#) and lodge it through the [PBS Approved Suppliers Portal](#).

Using a locum medical practitioner

With the approved medical practitioner's permission, a locum may use the medical practitioner's approval number to dispense.

The locum medical practitioner can use the approved medical practitioner's prescription forms by crossing out the existing prescriber's details and replacing them with their own, or use unpersonalised prescription forms with their prescriber details included.

When returning to the practice, the approved medical practitioner must sign the PBS claim form, which includes a declaration that items were supplied on their behalf. The PBS benefits will be paid to the approved medical practitioner's nominated bank account.

If the locum medical practitioner would like the PBS benefits paid to their own bank account, they must apply for their own temporary approval by lodging the [application form to supply pharmaceutical benefits](#).

Policies and procedures for practice staff

When dispensing PBS items, it is essential that practice staff adhere to clear policies and procedures, which should outline information about:

- monitoring expiration dates of medicines and the appropriate destruction of expired products
- safe and secure storage of medicines in accordance with local legislation
- record keeping of dispensed items, preferably within a dedicated software program
- quality controls to ensure the correct item, dosage and instructions are dispensed to the patient, including the medical practitioner sighting and signing off on all dispensed items.

Ordering PBS medicines for the practice

Depending on the location of the rural or remote practice, some of the PBS approved manufacturers/suppliers may not deliver to the area.

Before ordering PBS medicines, the dispensing practice should identify the most common pharmaceuticals required by patients in the area and contact the [approved manufacturers/suppliers](#) to establish an account and discuss delivery.

What if a pharmacy opens in the community?

If a pharmacy with approval to supply PBS medicines opens in the community or surrounding area, the approval granted to the medical practitioner will be cancelled.

Find out more about PBS approved suppliers

For more information about becoming a PBS approved supplier, visit the Department of Health website:

- www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/medical-practitioners
- www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/pharmaceutical-benefits-scheme-approved-supplier-guides-and-forms#medical