

Practice Assist

Section 19AA and 3GA Programs



What is Section 19AA?

Section 19AA of the Health Insurance Act 1973 (the Act) determines who can bill patients under Medicare.

Under section 19AA, doctors who are permanent residents or Australian citizens will be able to access a Medicare provider number once they are:

- recognised as a Fellow by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)
- recognised as a Fellow by the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM)
- recognised as a Fellow by an Australian specialist college
- on an approved 3GA program

Workforce and training programs

Medical practitioners who do not have fellowship can apply for an approved 3GA program that will provide access to a Medicare provider number and billing whilst working towards fellowship.

International Medical Graduates (IMGs) and temporary residents may also be eligible to participate in 3GA programs, but will need to satisfy the requirements of Section 19AB of the Act, or qualify for a 19AB exemption.

The following 3GA programs will enable access to a Medicare provider number and billing:

Pre-Fellowship Program

The Pre-Fellowship Program supports non-vocationally recognised (nonVR) doctors to gain general practice experience in rural and remote communities prior to joining a college fellowship pathway.

PFP placements must be completed in a distribution priority area (DPA) and may be classified as Modified Monash Model (MMM) MM1 in outer metro locations, through to MM 7. Placements at an Aboriginal Medical Services or an Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Service are also eligible locations.

PFP is a two-year program that requires participants to make at least one application to a fellowship program each year through either of the general practice colleges (RACGP or ACRRM).

Participants are required to complete “The foundation of general practice” training modules within three months of joining the program. Further financial support is offered towards supervision and learning and development for IMG doctors on limited registration.

RACGP Fellowship Support Program

The RACGP Fellowship Support Program (FSP) is a self-funded education and training program to support doctors with general practice experience on their journey to Fellowship of RACGP (FRACGP)

It includes self-directed learning, in-practice learning, and workplace-based assessments for feedback and progress monitoring. Registrars work in accredited training practices under supervision.

There are two application rounds per year and training must be completed in accredited RACGP training facilities within MM 2 – MM7 locations.

RACGP Practice Experience Program Specialist Stream

The RACGP Practice Experience Program Specialist Stream (PEP Specialist) is a fellowship training program for international medical graduates (IMGs) with a recognised overseas specialist qualification who wish to qualify for Fellowship of the RACGP (FRACGP).

Applications for the 6-month PEP Specialist program are open on a rolling basis. However, it may take up to 18 months to complete the program, depending on when it is commenced.

Placements must be undertaken in practices in MM2 – MM7 locations.

ACRRM Independent Pathway

The ACRRM Independent Pathway is a self-funded training pathway with a structured and supported education program, developed and delivered by fellows of ACRRM.

Training placements are undertaken in an ACRRM accredited locations in MM 2 to MM 7 areas.

The ACRRM Independent Pathway is a four-year training program and leads to Fellowship of ACRRM (FACRRM).

Australian General Practice Training Program

The Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) program provides 1500 Government-funded places for registrars to complete supervised GP training.

AGPT is run Australia-wide and registrars are able to select either a general or rural pathway in their application. If a rural pathway is selected the registrar is required to work at least 12 months in an MM 2 to MM7 location.

Participants can join AGPT with either ACRRM or RACGP (or both) to complete fellowship training, although only one program will receive government support.

Remote Vocational Training Scheme

The Remote Vocational Training Scheme is vocational training program for medical practitioners who are already working in an eligible location. The program provides access to Medicare billing whilst completing fellowship with RACGP or ACRRM.

The three-to-four-year program enables doctors to complete training in a remote location classified MM 4 to MM 7, or at an Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Service located in MM 2 to MM 7.

Approved Medical Deputising Services Program

The Approved Medical Deputising Services program aims to provide valuable general practice experience for nonVR doctors by allowing them to work after-hours in supervised deputised positions. Through this program doctors are eligible to bill for some Medicare items, and are expected to actively work towards fellowship of either RACGP or ACRRM.

This is a two year program, with requests for extensions considered on an annual basis for up to a maximum 10 years.

3GA programs closed to new applicants

More Doctors for Rural Australia Program (MDRAP) The Rural Locum Relief Program, Special Approved Placements Program and Temporary Resident Other Medical Practitioners Program are now closed to new applicants, however current participants can still access a Medicare number under Section 19AA.

Further information

To find out more about Section 19AA and approved 3GA programs, contact Rural Health West Permanent Recruitment by calling 08 6389 4500 or emailing recruit@ruralhealthwest.com.au.

