

General Practice in Aged Care Incentive: Thin Markets Grant Overview

Purpose of the Grant Opportunity

The objective of this grant is for targeted PHNs in areas of acute thin markets to:

- Identify existing regional gaps in the delivery of primary care services to RACH residents
- Work in collaboration with local RACHs, GPs and other providers, general practices and/or Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) and providers to design, implement and manage locally informed solutions addressing gaps

Funding Amount and Timing

The Government has committed \$10.4 million over 4 years from 2023/24 for this grant opportunity.

Analysis of MBS data has identified 18 PHNs containing areas of substantially thin markets that will be eligible for grant funding, including both metropolitan and non-metropolitan based organisations.

It is anticipated that the grant opportunity will be published as soon as possible pending the necessary government approval processes. Following this, the grant will be advertised on GrantConnect for a period of **four weeks**.

Application Process

Eligible PHNs **will be invited to apply** for funding, and can apply for **single year or multiyear funding**. Future grant rounds will be held annually, subject to available funding in subsequent years.

Proposals will be assessed by the department and funding will be allocated based on the strength of the proposal addressing the assessment criteria as follows:

- **Needs assessment** that demonstrates the acute thin market that exists in the PHN region
- **Proposed solution** addressing gaps including **itemised budget** (single or multiyear funding)
- **Description of the stakeholder engagement** that will be undertaken to develop / support the implementation of the model, such as ACCHS, community services, health professionals
- **Identification of the anticipated impact and outcomes** and how this will be measured
- **Linkages with other relevant government initiatives and programs**, such as aged care and rural and remote thin markets measures and trials

Consultation

The department has met with PHN representatives throughout the design of this grant, and has incorporated the following:

- Single or multiyear funding, to support longer term solutions; and
- Support of flexibility of funding options so funds can be used for solutions identified by PHNs as the most appropriate responses for local issues.

PHN roles and responsibilities

Funding can be used to support the most appropriate solution for local issues as identified by PHNs. Activities may include:

1. Design and Establishment Activities

- A needs analysis providing evidence for the existing gap in primary care services for RACH residents in your region
- Stakeholder engagement and collaboration to understand local contexts for low primary care servicing levels for RACH residents, including engagement with RACHs and RACH residents/resident representatives, primary care providers and primary care practices
- Establishment of collaborative arrangements with ACCHS, where appropriate, to support inclusion of First Nations expertise within the design and implementation of the local solution and suitability to First Nations patients and providers
- Development and maintenance of networks with primary care practices, GPs and other primary care providers and, if relevant, capacity building of practices and providers to support increased participation in GPACI
- Design, development and implementation of locally appropriate solution to address the impact of thin markets on access to primary care for RACH residents. Solutions may include but are not limited to:
 - Assisting with costs of visit coordination across multiple small practices
 - Building capacity of practices (including Nurse Practitioner-led practices) to deliver care via GPACI
 - Capacity building for GP practice and/or RACH technology and systems to better enable GPACI telehealth services
 - Assisting with costs for an out-of-region GP to do regular visits for RACH residents
- Development of linkages with other relevant programs that support the health and wellbeing of RACH residents
- Development and maintenance of governance arrangements
- Development of a comprehensive budget, including the administrative budget for the PHN as a portion of the grant

2. Program Management Activities

- Collect and maintain relevant program data and records, and monitor and report on development of solutions
- Refine development and/or implementation of solutions and share lessons learned
- Manage questions from local primary care practices, RACHs and residents about progress in development of thin market solutions
- Meet regularly with the department and GPACI program evaluators and provide regular reporting to the department on progress and issues
- Manage funding allocation to ensure PHN remains within available funding envelope, and
- Undertake compliance activities to ensure implemented solutions are appropriate and communicate any likely under / over-spends to the department.

Additional Supports for PHNs

Further support to the PHNs will be available from the department through the provision of:

- The GPACI Best Practice Guidance and Tools – a resource for key stakeholders such as GPs, practices, health professionals, ACCHS and RACHs that will be available to PHNs in July 2024. PHNs will also be invited to participate in the development of the resource.
- The GPACI GP Matching Grant Opportunity – funding to support all 31 PHNs to work in collaboration with local organisations to develop processes that match RACH residents with an appropriate preferred GP in MyMedicare where they do not currently have one. Funding is expected to begin in April 2024.
- GPACI PHN Operational Guidelines – this will provide guidance on the parameters of the activities that can be delivered by PHNs to support GPACI and provide standardisation across reporting requirements and data collection and minimise administrative duplication.
- Broader Strengthening Medicare funding measures also being implemented through the PHNs which will provide opportunities for close collaboration and shared objectives (i.e. identifying opportunities to harness other activities to achieve shared objectives such as practice support for MyMedicare and GPACI)