

## RDASA contracts negotiation update – December 2011

The Rural Doctors Association Executive and Committee have met this week to discuss the offer of 30 November 2011 from Country Health SALHN in regards to the conditions for rural GPs and their Fee for Service Agreement negotiation.

At this stage the offer is unacceptable to RDASA. We intend to negotiate further on the following items:

RDASA proposes that there be some alterations to the wording in SARMFA on definition 3.7.1 in relation to a level 3 triage patient.

RDASA believes that these patients are emergency patients, many of whom require admission. The financial responsibility for the billing of these patients should be through Country Health SA and not through the Medicare system.

There was a great deal of discussion during negotiation in regards to the Medicare agreement and the relationship between the Emergency Departments and the provision of services to patients. RDASA believes that the level 3 triage patients are not routine GP type patients that would be normally managed in a consulting room. These patients should have hospital facilities, monitoring hospital equipment and nursing care to ensure a safe working practice and obtain the best quality outcome in these emergency situations. It will also allow patients being triaged at CHSALHN sites being given clear financial advice, which is not possible under the current offer.

The on-call offer which is currently proposed is not acceptable to RDASA and we will suggest that the weekday on-call rate be \$350.00 per 24 hours and the weekend/public holiday Friday to Sunday be set at \$750.00.

In addition, eligibility for on-call payments does not specify how often a doctor should be on an on-call roster to qualify for the proposed remuneration differential as proposed by CHSALHN.

RDASA also rejects the proposal that the in-patient remuneration is dependent on doctors being on an on-call roster and this has been ratified by the RDASA committee.

RDASA is adamant that the issue of admitting privileges being linked to being on the on-call roster is unacceptable. RDASA is concerned that this will lead to a reduction in GPs willing to admit and care for their hospital patients and provide secondary level care in their rural community. RDASA requires further discussion and clear clarification in regards to this issue.

There are additional items that will also require clarification and negotiation:

- Definition of the telephone call payment
- The sessional payment of \$1600.00 per 24 hours
- Hospital initiated calls during practice
- Meeting rate
- EPAS payments
- Eligibility for on-call payments and fee for service payments for locums

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