

30 August 2002

Review of GP

I have worked as an employee GP intermittently for the last 8 years. I have two comments which may be relevant to the enquiry.

Firstly, as an employee, I was only paid for actual hours I was booked seeing patients. Any extra paperwork etc was unpaid, and my strong impression is that this would be fairly standard practice.

Secondly, practices vary greatly as to how they divide up incentive payments and often payments are not passed on to employees (as compared with partners and associates).

So when other GPs might get some payment for certain government paperwork, employees often do not. The unpaid work component to employee GPs is therefore potentially greater. An example from my experience is performing a clinical audit for the NPS for an incentive payment which goes to the practice.

I would also like to raise the issue of the privacy legislation. While this affects all businesses, and so is not listed in attachment C, it does have a particular impact in GP. (I have until recently worked in the RACGP QA&CPD Program and so have some experience of this). For example, as part of Quality Assurance requirements, GPs perform clinical audits on patient notes, to assess how well their level of care of a condition approximates best practice. The degree to which consent has to be obtained for this process has increased greatly with the advent of the privacy legislation, and this takes time. This has had an impact on people who design audits as well as GPs who undertake them. I am sure there are other impacts in areas like patient communication, taking history from a patient, dealing with requests for notes etc in which the impact of the privacy legislation may be greater for GPs than in other businesses. I think it would be worthwhile addressing this in your enquiry.

Yours sincerely

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