



Tasmanian General Practice Divisions Ltd
Rural Workforce Support

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Mrs Helen Owens
GP Compliance Costs
Productivity Commission
Locked Bag 2
Collins Street East Post Office
Melbourne Vic 8003

Dear Mrs Owens

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on general practice compliance costs. Due to the short time frame to report back, we were unable to undertake a detailed and exhaustive survey of the rural GPs in Tasmania, so any comments below are anecdotal, general and brief. The most interesting and repeated theme in response was the costs of maintaining vocational registration with the HIC, and that is detailed below.

Not surprisingly, the most common response to the request for information was, "You want me to spend my time adding up and listing the time I spend complying with the Government?" There is a jaded and cynical feeling among GPs that compliance requirements will only get tighter, longer, wider, deeper, more complex and less relevant to the practice of medicine. In the face of this response, I can only encourage you to persevere so that you are able to highlight what the GPs are feeling in precise figures.

Naturally, as each practitioner works in a slightly different manner, their responses were varied, and sometimes contradictory. For example, with regard to Centrelink and the Department of Family and Community Services forms, one estimated that it cost up to \$15,000.00 per year to comply, while others indicated that completing the forms constituted part of the consultation and therefore did not result in a loss of income.

Where there were general agreements they were:

- PIP Paperwork, up to \$9,000 per year
 - Upgrading of computer equipment and training of staff – up to \$6,000 per year
 - Teaching of students – under compensated by 50% across the year.
- NPS – Authority prescribing and generating scripts, up to \$3,000.00 (though some recoup this cost through charging a prescription fee)

- Audits - up to \$1,000
- Accreditation - \$300 per year
- Maintaining VR status. For rural GPs, nearly all CME in a peer context involves travel. The Divisions provide the most readily available CME activities, but they are inevitably held in an urban centre. To maintain VR a GP must gain 130 CME and PD points per triennium. This is worked out at an average of 3 points per hour. An average rural GP in Tasmania will need to travel one hour each way to access the event, so it effectively works out at 1 point per hour spent in a one hour CME activity. At \$100 per hour, this works out at \$43,000 per year for a rural GP to maintain VR. Allowing for the difference in urban and rural costs, it costs a rural GP \$20,000 more to maintain their status.

There were a number of other items which were not across the board and so I have not included them in this response.

I hope it is of use in your study.

Should you have any questions regarding the attached, feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Peter Barns
Manager
Rural Workforce Support