





GPs4RuralDocs

Doctors and health practitioners, like anyone else, need to look after their own health. Rural Doctors Foundation pilot program **GPs4RuralDocs** seeks to prioritise the health and wellbeing of rural and remote health practitioners.

The program has been designed to provide quality continuity of care to rural health practitioners in select rural and remote communities who often experience limited options to access independent and confidential general practice care.

Through this program, the Treating GP will visit your town on a regular basis throughout the year to provide face-to-face care with telehealth services in between visits enabling you to establish an ongoing clinical relationship. It is important to establish this relationship with an independent GP, even when your health is good. The GPs 4 rural docs program offers rural health practitioners this opportunity.

Independent care from a GP reduces the need to rely on other practitioners (such as family or those you work with) for prescriptions, investigations and referrals. The intention of this program is to support positive self-care practices by health practitioners living in rural

“Your personal and health information will be stored at the GP’s practice outside of town.”

and remote communities.

Between visits, patients of the **GP’s4RuralDocs** program will be able to arrange a telehealth consultation to continue their care, or to address a new health issue that arises as appropriate.

High quality care

The GP service is delivered by Treating GPs experienced in rural practice who are passionate about improving the health and wellbeing and are trained in caring for health practitioners.

With a deep understanding of the challenges rural practitioners experience when working in rural and remote communities where access to independent care is often difficult to get, our doctors are committed to providing the highest continuity of primary care within your town.

Patient confidentiality

Your consultation with the Treating GP will be confidential. Personal health information and clinical records will remain with the Treating GP. Your health information will be stored at the GP’s practice outside of the town – this is separate from the practice (the Host Practice)

that the Treating GP is visiting. Because you may be attending the Host Practice in person, clinicians and staff at the Host Practice will be aware of who you are as they will be greeting you at the practice, but they cannot access your medical records. Rural Doctors Foundation will not hold information about the care you are receiving through the **GP’s4RuralDocs** program.

Patient information

As a new patient of the service, you will be asked to complete a comprehensive medical history form when making your appointment with the Treating GP. Where time allows, you are asked to email the completed form to the Treating GP at least one week before the first appointment. In the event this is not possible, you can bring the completed form to your appointment. This medical history will be stored in as part of the clinical health record with the Treating GP at his primary practice out of town.

The Consultation

This program acknowledges as a health practitioner you have excellent health literacy.

“Your face-to-face appointments will be held in town.”

As a patient receiving care as part of this program you will be cared for as a ‘normal patient.’ During your consultation, the Treating GP will explain the consultation including any investigations and care management plans.

Due to the nature of this service, there will be some limitations to the types of procedures that the Treating GP will be able to arrange for you when in town for the face-to-face consultations.

Initial consultation

Your initial consultation will be booked as a long consultation (1 hour) to allow time for you to get acquainted with the doctor, to review your health information and receive a comprehensive health check. During this consultation it is important to flag any specific concerns early in the consultation.

The Treating GP may recommend some investigations for you. Feel free to discuss the planned investigations with your doctor and ask any questions.

Ongoing care and accessing test results

The GP will advise you about their recommendation for follow up. This will vary depending on the health issues.

If you are awaiting test results, the Treating GP will receive results directly, review these results and file them in your patient record, ensuring appropriate follow up is arranged. Sometimes follow up may require a telehealth call before your next face-to-face appointment. The Treating GP will explain how to arrange this.

While the **GPs4RuralDocs** program aims to provide a comprehensive service, the sessions available are limited. If you become acutely unwell between the Treating GP visits to your town, then you will need to seek treatment from the existing local health facilities, such as the local hospital, where a proper clinical examination can be done to support the diagnosis and management.

Booking your appointment

You can book an in-town face-face appointments with the visiting Treating GP directly online. Upon completing your appointment booking you will receive an email confirming the details of your appointment.

First-time patients will need to fill in a Patient Registration Form and return the completed form to the GP via email at least one week before the scheduled appointment.

Consultation fees

GPs4RuralDocs program believes in ensuring the highest quality of care is provided to support the health needs of rural health practitioners. The Treating GP works independently and will determine their consultation fees. These may be privately billed, or bulk billed.

These arrangements will be discussed between yourself and the GP at the time of your consultation.

Evaluation

As the **GPs4RuralDocs** is a pilot program, Rural Doctors Foundation will be evaluating the program to assess its impact on the health and wellbeing of rural health practitioners. This will involve asking all participants including the Treating GPs, local Host Practice, and patients to evaluate their experience with the program. It is not about your personal health issues or care received.

Your participation in the program will remain anonymous. Rural Doctors Foundation will be gathering this information through de-identified surveys ensuring that the information collected is anonymous. Any health information gathered will be of a general nature and will not include any specific diagnoses or personal information. The information will not be provided to the GP or local Host Practice.

The Foundation will use this collated data to improve the service and assist with advocacy for future funding.

“Your GP will discuss with you the best way to follow up the results.”

Accessing the patient evaluation survey

At the end of your consultation, the Treating GP will provide you with a QR Code where you can download the short survey. We encourage you to help us by completing this survey to support the continuation and expansion of this important program.

Rural Doctors Foundation is committed

With successful implementation and support for the pilot program, Rural Doctors Foundation is wanting to continue the program and increase its scope and reach to more health practitioners living in rural and remote communities.

Rural Doctors Foundation provides and funds the logistical support required for the program. The Treating GP delivering the GP service is a registered and independent practitioner contracted by Rural Doctors Foundation to provide GP services. The Treating GP is responsible for the delivery of clinical care and management of all patient records and billings.

Want to learn more?

For more information about Rural Doctors Foundation's **GPs4RuralDocs program** please contact us on (07) 3039 0011 or email at info@ruraldoctorsfoundation.org.au



To learn more about how you can support this vital program, contact us on
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