

Bayside Medicare Local After Hours Program underway with a general practice survey....[click here for more detail](#)

One of the first tasks for the new Bayside Medicare Local is to identify and address gaps in the local after hours service provision offered by primary care services in the catchment and to develop a plan to begin to address those gaps.

The first steps will be to undertake a mapping project of all the current after hours services offered across Bayside Medicare Local and identify priority gaps in after hours care. Consequently over the next two weeks you will receive a request to provide data for the mapping project via a brief after hours survey. Please take the time to complete this survey as it will underpin the geo-spatial maps which will be used to provide evidence of gaps in after hours care.

You will also have an opportunity through planned forums and public meetings to have input into planning the most appropriate model for addressing the gaps in local after hour care provision. We will seek input from all the stakeholders. including members of the community (including both frequent and non-frequent users of health services), local general practices, Local Hospital Networks, state governments, lead clinician groups, existing after hours service providers including medical deputising services, neighbouring Medicare Locals and other health professionals and services within the region.

Following consultation with all these groups a plan will be submitted for approval to the Department of Health and Ageing for the next 18 months that:

- addresses priority gaps in current after hours care
- has input from all key stakeholders (as above)
- has strategies to raise consumer awareness of after hours service availability
- has strategies to coordinate with local hospital services;
- is committed to ensuring that the afterhours services support adherence to the Guiding Principles¹ of accessible care and effective care including appropriate feedback to the usual medical provider
- links local after hours services with healthdirect Australia[®] After hours GP Line (from March 2012 in Victoria)

It is vital that local GPs remain fully engaged with this development to ensure that any changes to the provision of afterhour's services is both coordinated with general practice and adequately resourced to negate any additional workforce burden.

For more information and further details please contact Kerry Hollier at khollier@baysidemedicarelocal.com.au or request her to contact you though the Division.

¹ Guiding Principles - Medicare Locals Guidelines for after hours primary care responsibilities until 30 June 2013 Section 1.11 page 9-11