

Update



Joint Standing Committee on Rural Issues



ENHANCEMENTS TO LOCUM PROGRAMS

The Ministry of Health Services (MoHS) and the British Columbia Medical Association (BCMA) are pleased to announce changes to strengthen the Rural GP Locum Program (RGPLP) and the Rural Specialist Locum Program (RSLP). These changes are being made based upon the recommendation of the Joint Standing Committee on Rural Issues (JSC).

Background:

The JSC is a committee comprised of representatives of the MoHS and the BCMA including physicians in rural practice and Health Authorities. In accordance with the new Physician Master Agreement between the Government and the BCMA, the JSC was tasked with reviewing programs supporting physicians who live and practice in rural communities. The JSC conducted a comprehensive consultation process on changes that could further strengthen the attractiveness of living and practicing medicine in BC's rural communities.

Program Changes:

Based upon the input received, the JSC determined that enhancements to the RGPLP and RSLP programs were a priority. *Effective October 1st, 2008*, the following changes will be made to the programs:

- Compensate physicians providing GP locum services at different rates depending upon the degree of isolation of the community where they are working (\$750 - \$900 daily rate).
- Compensate GP Locums at higher rates when they provide locum relief services for rural physicians who are providing specific, core services needed by rural hospitals (general surgery, anaesthesia, ER, obstetrics \$50 - \$100 on top of daily rate).
- Provide more days of potential GP locum support for those physicians who are living and practicing in smaller and more vulnerable communities (28 up to 43 days).
- Increase the rate paid to Specialists who provide locum services to rural communities to address national, competitive pressures (\$1200 daily rate).
- Increase the potential number of days of locum relief for Specialists in rural communities to recognize the time they must spend in professional development activities (35 days).

The JSC believes these changes will help strengthen the ability to attract and retain physicians in rural practice in BC to meet the health care service needs of rural

communities. The JSC will continue to explore other changes that may further strengthen rural practice in the province.

For More Information:

For information on the changes to the RGPLP and RSLP, as well as information on **how to become a locum**, please visit the Ministry of Health Services website www.health.gov.bc.ca/pcb/rural.html and the BCMA website's member section www.bcma.org/committee/joint-standing-committee-rural-programs-jsc.

If you have detailed questions, you can contact the Physician Compensation Rural Practice Program at the BC Ministry of Health Services by telephone at 250-952-1104.

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