

31 July 2015

**RACGP STANDARDS FOR GENERAL PRACTICES (4TH EDITION) FACT SHEET**

**AFTER HOURS CARE**

**Background**

The RACGP believes that patients value an ongoing relationship with a GP which is built on trust, and which provides continuous, comprehensive and coordinated medical care throughout the 24 hour period.

As such, the 4th edition of the RACGP *Standards for general practices* (the Standards) require accredited general practices to ensure that their patients are able to access care outside normal opening hours in order to meet Criterion 1.1.4 of the Standards.

**Issue**

Various changes to Government arrangements for the planning and funding of after-hours care over the last 24 months has caused uncertainty amongst our members. This is both in relation to their ability to deliver after-hours care and their ability to subsequently meet their requirements under the Standards.

**Response**

In response to this, the RACGP has updated Criterion 1.1.4 of the Standards as below.

**Criterion 1.1.4** Care outside normal opening hours

Our practice ensures safe and reasonable arrangements for medical care for patients outside our normal opening hours.

Indicators

- ▶ A. Practices are aware of the arrangements in place for their patients to access after-hours care.
- ▶ B. Practices have processes in place to alert their patients to these arrangements.

The RACGP envisages that general practices may be able to demonstrate that they meet Indicator A of this Criterion as follows:

- Practices have knowledge of the arrangements for their patients to access care outside normal opening hours that have been planned and funded within their region and are able to explain these arrangements to the accreditation surveyor.
- Practices have been funded to deliver after hours care and can provide details of the arrangements they have in place to their accreditation surveyor.



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- Practices are delivering their own after hours care for their patients, regardless of funding arrangements, or ensuring that their patients have access to after hours care and are able to provide details of the arrangements they have in place to their accreditation surveyor.

The RACGP envisages that general practices may be able to demonstrate that they have processes in place to alert their patients to out-of-hours arrangements through one or more of the following:

- an appropriate out-of-hours message on the practice telephone describing these arrangements
- relevant information available on their website, practice leaflets and new patient information pack
- a sign visible from outside the practice outlining these arrangements.