

INFORMATION DEFGRAM NO 135/2011

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AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE FAMILY HEALTH TRIAL— INTRODUCTION OF REVISED MODEL

1. The provision of basic healthcare to the dependants of permanent Australian Defence Force (ADF) members and Reservists on Continuous Full-time Service is an initiative of the Commonwealth Government as identified in 'Labor's Plan for Defence' November 2007.
2. The ADF Family Health (ADFFH) Trial provides payments to enable access to basic healthcare by eligible ADF dependants. The trial is currently underway in the following locations:
 - a. **Western Australia**—Derby, Broome, Kununurra, Karratha, Port Hedland, Carnarvon, Tom Price, Newman and Exmouth.
 - b. **Northern Territory**—Darwin, Nhulunbuy, Katherine and Alice Springs.
 - c. **Queensland**—Cairns, Weipa, Mt Isa, Thursday Island, Tully and Townsville.
 - d. **New South Wales**—Singleton.
 - e. **Victoria**—Sale and Puckapunyal.
3. In June 2010, Defence conducted a Mid-program Evaluation of the trial which used a range of measures including feedback from both families and medical practices to inform the evaluation.
4. Information gathered from the Evaluation highlighted the following:
 - a. families overwhelming support the Government initiative to provide healthcare to ADF families and would like to see it expanded nationwide;
 - b. families wanted choice as to which medical provider they attend, they did not want to be restricted to attending only those medical practitioners registered to participate in the trial;
 - c. families requested that the dental benefit to be expanded to include a range of allied health services; and
 - d. families felt that the registration and claims reimbursement process could be simplified.
5. While not all findings can be accommodated during the trial period, all of the results have been considered and will contribute to the final trial evaluation.
6. The findings from the Evaluation were presented to the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, The Hon Warren Snowdon who agreed to the implementation of a revised model for eligible families in the trial locations mentioned above.
7. The revised ADFFH model will commence on 01 April 2011, and will have the following features:
 - a. there will be one medical model for all trial locations;
 - b. eligible ADF dependants will be free to access trial benefits from any medical practice within Australia. Eligible medical services accessed outside of the trial region (ie if dependants are on holidays) will now be eligible for reimbursement;
 - c. there will no longer be a requirement for medical practitioners to register for participation in the trial;
 - d. the range of eligible medical items will be extended to include all Medicare Benefit Schedule (MBS) Item Numbers provided for in a General Practice setting (including services provided by a practice nurse);

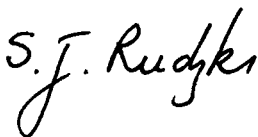
- e. eligible ADF dependants will be required to pay the medical practitioner's normal fee at the time of consultation, claim the MBS rebate from Medicare Australia and then claim reimbursement of the full gap (difference between practitioner's fee and MBS rebate) through the ADFFH Trial;
 - f. there is no limit to the number of medical claims able to be made;
 - g. bulk billed services will not attract fringe benefit tax (FBT);
 - h. only those medical services that dependants choose to submit for 'gap' reimbursement will attract FBT;
 - i. existing dental benefits will be extended to include other non-cosmetic, Goods and Services Tax free allied health services (such as optometry, physiotherapy etc) up to a capped limit per dependant, per calendar year; and
 - j. reduction of the administrative burden relating to ADF dependant registration for participation in the trial. From 01 April it will no longer be necessary for ADF families to provide Medicare details to the ADFFH team to register for the trial.
8. An open procurement process has resulted in a contract with Navy Health Ltd to provide medical and allied health claims processing and administration for the remainder of the ADFFH Trial.
9. Eligible ADF dependants currently registered for the trial will not need to re-register and will soon receive new cards in the mail.
10. ADFFH Staff have attended Defence Community Organisation Welcome Days in trial locations and have welcomed the opportunity to meet face to face with ADF members and their families. The feedback received at these events is appreciated. Further feedback can be provided to adf.dependanthealth@defence.gov.au if required.
11. Further information on eligibility, conditions of participation and updates on the ADFFH Trial can be found at the following websites:

Intranet:

<http://intranet.defence.gov.au/vcdf/sites/adfdephealth/>

Internet:

http://www.defence.gov.au/health/Dependant_Healthcare/i-healthcare.htm



Stephan Rudzki

Director-General Strategic Health Coordination
Vice Chief of the Defence Force Group

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Contact Officer:

Terry Evans

Assistant Director ADF Family Health
Telephone: (02) 6266 4900