



**National
Association for
Medical
Deputising
Australia Ltd**

Definition of a Medical Deputising Service

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Preamble:

An organisation will be deemed to meet this Definition of a Medical Deputising Service if it is accredited to the current Royal Australian College of General Practitioners Standards for General Practice, including supplementary materials for after hours care services (as determined by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners from time to time) AND is accredited to confirm it meets all the additional criteria set out below.

Definition

1. A Practice Principal is a registered medical practitioner (vocationally recognised or not, full-time or part-time), who undertakes the continuing care of patients in a medical practice. The Practice Principal has a responsibility to arrange comprehensive care of patients 24 hours a day and engages the MDS.
2. A Medical Deputising Service is an organization which directly arranges for medical practitioners to provide after hours medical services to patients of Practice Principals during the absence of, and at the request of, the Practice Principals.
3. A Medical Deputising Service is a means whereby a Practice Principal may externally contract the after hours components of both continuous access to care and continuity of care to practice patients
4. A Medical Deputising Service utilises facilities and processes which ensure continuous access to care and continuity of patient care.
5. A Medical Deputising Service comprises a physical facility which incorporates a control / communications / operations capacity, administrative services and, where applicable, a clinic.
6. A Medical Deputising Service must provide home visits and may also provide clinic and telephone triage / medical advice services. Medical Deputising Services must ensure that they are always in a position to provide home visits as required for significant medical reasons or as requested by Practice Principals, throughout the entire after hours period.
7. A Medical Deputising Service responds to patient or principal-initiated calls only and must not provide planned or routine patient services unless agreed with the patient's principal practitioner.
8. A Medical Deputising Service must not schedule appointments beyond the after hours period in which the patient request was received.
9. A Medical Deputising Service is required to operate and provide uninterrupted access to care, including home visits, for the whole of the after hours period. The defined after hours periods that must be covered by the Medical Deputising Service are: any time outside 8am - 6pm on weekdays and all day weekends and public holidays. A Medical Deputising Service must demonstrate that consultations and visits are provided during the unsociable hours from 11pm till 7am.



10. In providing complementary care on behalf of local, daytime general practice, a Medical Deputising Service must be independent of any individual or group of general practice(s). Medical Deputising Service premises must not be co-located with a general practice.
11. As Medical Deputising Services do not offer comprehensive GP care, direct advertising to encourage patients to use Medical Deputising Services for 'routine' or convenience purposes, thereby compromising their access to the full range of GP services, is prohibited.
12. A Medical Deputising Service must have a control / communications / operations capacity which must be operational within its premises during the majority of the defined after hours period.
13. A Medical Deputising Service which contracts out part of its control / communications / operations function may only do so to an MDS accredited control / communications / operations service.
14. The control / communications / operations room must, during the after hours period, be staffed by personnel appropriately trained in telephone triage, to guarantee maintenance of accreditation standards and ensure the appropriate management of urgent cases.
15. A Medical Deputising Service must have telephones attended 24 hours per day by trained staff so the Principals can access the service to communicate special patient information and facilitate continuity of care at all times.

Synopsis:

To confirm the organisations' status as an MDS in accordance with this definition the MDS must complete the statutory declaration relevant to the state or territory in which it practices as shown in appendix A.

This statutory declaration together with the accreditation certificate (that the MDS meets the RACGP standards for General Practice, including supplementary materials for after hours care services) forms the evidentiary basis of meeting this definition.