

VMO ESSENTIALS

VMOs in the Public Hospital System: the basics

Q. Who is a Visiting Medical Officer (VMO)?

A. A VMO is a medical practitioner appointed under a service to provide services as a visiting practitioner for monetary remuneration for or on behalf of a Local Health District.

Q. Who is an Honorary Medical Officer (HMO)?

A. An HMO is a medical practitioner appointed under an honorary contract to provide services as a visiting practitioner for or on behalf of a Local Health District. There is no monetary remuneration paid for the provision of services to an HMO.

Q. What is a VMO Service Contract?

A. A service contract is an agreement between the VMO or the VMO's practice company and the LHD which specifies the services to be provided.

Q. Can I contract through a practice company?

A. You may contract through a practice company if you wish to do so.

Q. What are the different kinds of service contracts?

A. There are three types of VMO Contracts: Sessional, Fee-for-Service and Honorary. Under a Sessional Contract a VMO is remunerated by reference to an hourly rate or rates for medical services provided to the Local Health District. Under a Fee-for-Service Contract a VMO is remunerated for medical services provided by

reference to Commonwealth Medicare Benefits Schedule.

An Honorary Contract is a service contract under which the medical practitioner does not receive any monetary compensation for services provided.

Q. Should I have a written Service Contract?

A. Yes, you must have a written service contract in place.

Q. What is a TMF Contract of Liability Coverage?

A. VMOs are eligible for Treasury Managed Fund professional indemnity cover when providing services to public patients, and under some arrangements, to private patients. A VMO must sign a VMO service contract and a TMF Contract of Liability Coverage in order to rely on the cover.

Q. How long is a VMO appointment term?

A. A VMO can be appointed under a contract for a term of no longer than 5 years. In exceptional cases, approval may be given for a longer term (up to 10 years).

Q. What is a quinquennium?

A. Each five year appointment term is commonly referred to as a quinquennium. A VMO may be appointed at the commencement of a quinquennium or during a quinquennium. If appointed during a quinquennium, the VMO will be appointed for the balance of the 5 year term.

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Q. What if I want to terminate the contract before the end of the five year term?

A. A service contract can be terminated by providing three months' notice to the Local Health District.

Q. Am I entitled to re-appointment at the end of the appointment term?

A. As a VMO you are eligible for, but not entitled to, re-appointment.

Q. Will my VMO position be advertised at the end of the term?

A. The Chief Executive of the Local Health District has a discretion to reappoint you as a VMO without advertising the position if:

- you have completed a Level 2 review in the penultimate year of your appointment term and your performance is determined to be satisfactory; and
- your role and responsibilities remain largely unchanged since the time of original appointment.

There is no positive obligation on a Local Health District not to advertise.

Q. Can I be temporarily appointed as a VMO?

A. Yes, temporary appointments can be made without the need to advertise the vacancy where the appointment is for a period not exceeding three months. A temporary appointment may be extended for one further single three-month period.

Q: What is a PRNIP agreement?

A. A Privately Referred Non-Inpatient (PRNIP) Agreement is an agreement under which a VMO provides out-patient services to patients and bulk bills those patients for the services provided. The VMO pays a licence fee to the Local Health District under these arrangements.

A VMO cannot be required to sign a PRNIP Agreement but may decide to do so.



If you have any questions in relation to this document or the issues raised, please contact our **Workplace Relations Team on 02 9439 8822 or email workplace@amansw.com.au**