

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,  
P.O. BOX 5013,  
WELLINGTON.

28 August 1970.

## CLINICAL SERVICES LETTER NO. 100

### TO MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

Dear Doctor,

#### INCENTIVES TO RURAL PRACTICE

Doctors practising in rural areas now have a number of significant advantages over their urban colleagues.

These are:

(a) *Rural Practice Bonus*

It amounts to:

- (i) Ten percent of the medical benefit payable in respect of general medical services.
- (ii) Twenty-five percent of the rural doctor's GMS mileage fees.

(b) *Assistance in Employment of Registered Nurses*

Rural doctors employing registered nurses in a paramedical capacity are entitled to the following assistance:

- (i) For services provided by the nurse at the doctor's surgery—

A 50 percent subsidy towards the nurse's remuneration, up to a maximum subsidy of \$25 weekly.

- (ii) For domiciliary services—

Seventy-five cents per visit for services provided at the patient's home, plus GMS mileage where it is normally payable to the doctor.

(c) *Subsidy for Employment of Locum Tenens*

A 50 percent subsidy towards the cost of employing a locum tenens, with a limit of subsidy of \$100 in any one year.

(d) *Telephone Consultations*

The GMS benefit of 35 cents for telephone consultations has been extended to consultations in all designated rural areas where patients are located 10 miles or further from the nearest doctor.

(e) *Housing and Surgery Accommodation*

Loan finance may be granted by Government at concessional rates to local authorities prepared to provide housing and surgery accommodation for rural doctors.

*Rural Practice Grants*

A grant totalling \$3,300 is payable to junior medical officers who enter private practice in a rural area on or after 1 January 1970, providing:

- (i) The applicant has complied with the conditions governing a post-graduate study grant and would otherwise be eligible for the grant of \$1,650 payable to those who enter private practice in lieu of post-graduate study.
- (ii) A minimum period of 2 years' service is given as a private practitioner in a designated rural area.

*The Practice Nurse*

The Working Party on Rural Medical Services had this to say about the employment of registered nurses:

"It would be foolish to draw upon one sorely taxed branch of the medical services in order to remedy shortage in another. This is not our intention. Estimates vary, but it is believed that in an average rural practice there are often several registered nurses, many of them married, who are not employed at present, some of whom would be glad to accept an appointment with the local doctor. For what we envisage, careful selection is essential, but we believe that most doctors should be able to find a suitable practice nurse locally without drawing on those already employed."

Preliminary reports indicate that those doctors who now employ practice nurses are satisfied that they have amply proved their value to both patients and doctors. The practice nurse should be regarded as an extension of the doctor. Her function is to relieve him of tasks which he has been undertaking, which could be done equally well (or even better) by the nurse, so giving the doctor more time for work which only he can do.

N.B.: "Rural practice" in the above means practice in an area designated for this purpose by the Minister of Health. (See Clinical Services Letter No. 94, dated 30 January 1970.)

Yours faithfully,



(A. W. S. Thompson)  
Director,



(A. H. Paul)  
Deputy Director,

Division of Clinical Services.