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Extension of Southern Inland Health Initiative welcomed

Rural Health West welcomes the news that regional Western Australia is set to benefit from continued funding for medical services as part of \$150 million investment under the Western Australian Governments' Royalties for Regions Southern Inland Health Initiative.

The program, which commenced in 2011 will continue for another three years and is fully funded to June 2017.

This initiative provides financial incentives for general practitioners practising in the designated areas to join the emergency department roster at the local hospital, improving access to medical practitioners and 24 hour emergency services for rural communities.

"This was a positive initiative that has resulted in an additional 24 general practitioners being recruited to these areas of need. It is an important initiative for the southern inland region, as it has increased access to GPs services and has encouraged greater participation in emergency department rosters, ensuring the workload is spread evenly," said Belinda Bailey, Chief Executive Officer of Rural health West.

In a recent analysis conducted by Rural Health West there has been an absolute improvement of retention rates (27%) for doctors working in communities within the Initiative catchment area. Overall these results are extremely positive for rural communities, many of those traditionally being the most difficult to attract and retain doctors.

Rural doctors who are part of the program will be contacted by WA Country Health Service to negotiate ongoing arrangements, as well as to gather feedback regarding the current initiatives.

ENDS

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As the leading rural health workforce agency for Western Australia, Rural Health West is a not-for-profit organisation funded by the State and Commonwealth Governments responsible for the recruitment and retention of a highly skilled sustainable health workforce to meet the needs to rural and remote Western Australians communities.