

After Hours Services - Criteria For Deputising Services

2002

1. Formal mechanisms for accrediting deputising services to ensure that high standards are maintained and that the public is adequately served, should be developed in each State.
2. Preferably, a deputising medical service should be a co-operative of locally practising doctors who themselves supply out-of-hours services on a roster basis.
3. Alternatively, such a co-operative may employ suitably experienced medical practitioners.
4. Where neither of the above types of organisation is available, a commercial deputising service may be acceptable provided its staff is supervised by a medical practitioner of experience.
5. A deputising service should restrict its area of operations so that deputising doctors do not have to travel unrealistic distances and patients may be seen without unreasonable delay. There must be an adequate number of doctors and other staff to provide prompt, effective and continuous service throughout the hours of operation.
6. Where practicable, a deputising service should provide central premises to which mobile patients may be referred for examination and treatment, including minor surgical and casualty procedures.
7. Deputising services should not have listed telephone numbers. Patient access should be via the practices of the doctors using the service by means of pre-recorded telephone messages or other devices.
8. Urgently needed care should not be denied by deputising services to patients of non-user doctors or patients who have no regular doctor.
9. Deputising services should keep detailed clinical records and promptly advise subscribers to any services provided to their patients.
10. Subscribers to deputising services should be reasonably available for telephone consultation with deputising doctors, who should endeavour so to consult wherever circumstances merit.
11. Deputising doctors should be registered medical practitioners of at least two years standing and preferably have general practitioner experience.
12. Deputising doctors must be covered by indemnity insurance and insurance against injuries or disabilities arising from their duties. They must have adequate transport, an efficient communication system and be properly remunerated.

Reproduction and distribution of AMA position statements is permitted provided the AMA is acknowledged and that the position statement is faithfully reproduced noting the year at the top of the document.