General Medical Units are advised a consolidated fees Schedule has been printed and is being distributed to all general medical units for immediate use. The new Schedule accurately reflects the present arrangements agreed to between the Minister for Health and the WA Branch of the Australian Medical Association under the agreement covering the "Provision of Visiting Medical Services in Non Teaching Public Hospitals in Western Australia".

Units will be aware the present Agreement is due to expire on 31 December 1991. Negotiations have commenced on a new Agreement which, hopefully, will be agreed and formalised prior to the expiration of the present agreement.

It is believed the issue of a consolidated fees schedule will effectively overcome the present difficulties being experienced by general medical units in ascertaining the correct fee for medical services rendered to public patients in public hospitals. It is emphasised that the W.A.P.H.F.S. as amended from time to time, is the definitive document for determining all fees paid to medical practitioners under the present fee for service arrangements. As such, the Commonwealth Medicare Benefit Schedule has no relevance when determining fees under the current Agreement.

The consolidated Schedule incorporates detailed explanatory notes in interpreting and applying the fees schedule. Units are asked to ensure staff responsible for the payment of doctors accounts are fully informed of the guidelines and the parameters under which the Fees Schedule is to operate.

Given the present trend to regionalisation, in time it is expected all enquiries concerning the day to day operations of the Fees Schedule will be directed to the Regional Office of the relevant Regional Director to address and resolve.

In the meantime any concerns or requests for clarification on the Consolidated (W.A.P.H.F.S.) Schedule should be directed to Mr Chas Leahy, Senior Policy Officer, on telephone (09) 222 2492.

Michael M Daube
ACTING COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH