Effective April 1, 2013, the 2012 PSA (Appendix D, item 4.2) expanded the requirements of after-hours coverage for large groups consisting of 10 or more physicians (“enhanced after hours”). After-hours requirements and associated exemptions in place prior to the implementation of enhanced after hours continue to remain in effect.

Northern and rural Family Health Network (FHN) and Family Health Organization (FHO) groups who require 50% of its physicians to maintain active in-patient hospital privileges are exempt from the enhanced after-hours requirements.

The Primary Health Care Subcommittee (“PHCS”) has recently developed exemption criteria solely for the enhanced after-hours requirement. Groups may submit a written proposal to the PHCS Co-Chairs requesting that the Ministry waive enhanced after-hours on account of the group being able to demonstrate one or more of the following conditions:

• 50% or more of the group’s physicians provide one or more of the following:

(a) regular care of hospital in-patients
(b) hospital on call coverage
(c) care to patients in nursing homes / LTC, including on call coverage
(d) are coroners
(e) care to patients in hospices or a palliative care unit, including on call coverage
• Physicians who are on leave (i.e. maternity/paternity, disability, sabbatical) and are unable to secure locum coverage shall not count towards the group membership total for the purposes of enhanced after hours requirements. The physician and/or group must be able to demonstrate recruitment efforts made to secure a locum for continuity of comprehensive care to the patient roster of the departed group member.

Important note: Exemptions are not automatic with reference to the above criterion. Only groups that submit a written proposal will be considered for an exemption. PHCS may use its discretion to request additional information to facilitate a proper review. Further all exemptions are temporary (for up to one year) and must be renewed each calendar year (or earlier) based on group circumstances.

Written proposals should be mailed to the following Ministry address:

Blended Models Unit
1075 Bay Street, 9th Floor
Toronto ON M5S 2B1

Questions or concerns regarding this process can be directed to either the Ministry at 1-866-766-0266 or the Ontario Medical Association at 1-800-268-7215/psc@oma.org