



OPERATIONAL DIRECTIVE

Enquiries to: Dr Justin Waring

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Subject: **Fees and Charges related to the Diagnosis and Management of Tuberculosis and Leprosy**

This operational directive advises Health Services that patients must not incur any financial cost for the investigation of possible tuberculosis (TB) or leprosy, or the management and treatment of proven TB or leprosy.

A key strategy in the control of chronic infectious mycobacterial diseases (TB and Leprosy) is the prompt and effective free treatment. Ensuring that there is no financial barrier to investigation or treatment of these infections enables attendance and compliance, and thereby reduces the risk of delayed diagnosis or poorly treated infection, and therefore transmission within the community.

This policy is in line with the *National Strategic Plan for TB in Australia: Beyond 2000* [National Tuberculosis Advisory Committee].

All fees and charges associated with TB and Leprosy management are to be waived by the Health Service managing the care of the client. These include, but are not exclusive of, radiology, pathology, pharmacy and inpatient charges.

All Public Hospital Pharmacies are required to provide drugs used for the treatment of TB or leprosy free of any charge to the patient. The treating physician should annotate prescriptions to indicate that the drugs are for the treatment of TB and Leprosy, and should therefore be dispensed free of charge.

Accounts for tests or inpatient charges in patients suspected of, or diagnosed with TB or Leprosy, should be waived. This policy especially applies to patients that are not Medicare eligible. Patients that receive accounts for these services should be advised to not pay them, and the treating physician should apply to the Director of Clinical Services in the relevant Health Service for the account to be waived.

Patients may be referred to the Tuberculosis Control Program for free investigation, drug therapy or management for TB and Leprosy.

All enquiries regarding Fees and Charges related Tuberculosis and Leprosy can be directed to the Tuberculosis Control Program on 9219 3222.

Dr Peter Flett
DIRECTOR GENERAL
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