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**TITLE :** **BOARDERS****DISTRIBUTION:** **ALL PUBLIC HOSPITALS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

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### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this bulletin is to describe the reporting requirements for boarders.

### **2. Background**

A boarder is a person who receives food and/or accommodation but for whom the hospital does not accept responsibility for treatment and/or care. A boarder is not an admitted patient, however the hospital should register boarders.

There are larger numbers of boarders in remote and isolated areas in Western Australia because of the significant distance between the residence and the nearest hospital.

### **3. Types of Boarders**

There are many circumstances under which a health service is required to provide accommodation and meals to individuals who do not require admission to a hospital. The more frequent circumstances are listed below.

- 3.1 In some circumstances the need to have a boarder in hospital with a patient is necessary for the well being of the patient. In these cases the treating medical officer documents that the sick person (patient) is accompanied by an 'essential boarder.' Examples of essential boarders would be a breast fed infant of a sick mother or the breast feeding mother of a sick infant.
- 3.2 In remote parts of the State there may be the need for a patient to be accompanied by a family member who may not be able to obtain accommodation elsewhere. This is more likely in areas where the patient lives a considerable distance from the hospital.
- 3.3 There are circumstances when clients may be able to attend visiting medical officers appointments or follow up treatments or appointments more easily if accommodated at the hospital as a boarder. These include appointments early in the day when the home may be a great distance from the hospital.
- 3.4 Limited air flight and public road/train schedules to some remote areas may mean that patients travelling to, or returning from, a regional or city hospital may need to be accommodated at a hospital before or after receiving treatment. If accommodation but no treatment is provided these patients are classified as boarders.

- 3.5 In some cases the presence of a family member staying at the hospital as a boarder may assist both the care of the patient during the hospital stay and ensure that the patient is able to be discharged at the appropriate time. The hospital stay may be better managed by the presence of a boarder during the hospital stay to ensure there is no delay before discharge from the hospital.
- 3.6 In remote areas of the State during the peak tourist season, accommodation is limited and expensive. There may be the need for the hospital to provide accommodation to a person travelling with a sick tourist if no accommodation is available elsewhere. In some instances, the treatment and care of a sick overseas visitor may be assisted if accompanied by a boarder who speaks the language of the patient.
- 3.7 In cases of extremely ill patients or terminal illness, members of the family may wish to be present at the hospital during the critical period. The treating medical officer may decide that the presence of some family members as boarders will be of benefit to the patient.
- 3.8 Patients who stay overnight for dialysis or similar treatment which would normally be provided as a sameday or non-admitted occasion of service are classified as boarders.

#### **4. Guidelines for the Registration of Boarders**

Documenting the presence of boarders should follow these guidelines.

- Boarders should be registered only. They are not classified as admitted patients.
- Where applicable, the clinician should record that it is necessary for the hospital to accommodate the person as an essential boarder. For example, there should be documentation in the case of the breast feeding mother of a sick baby or the breast fed baby of a sick adult.
- In transit patients who may be accommodated at the hospital while awaiting transportation to either another health care facility or to their home may be registered as boarders if they do not meet the admission criteria to be an admitted patient.
- If a patient who is in transit does not meet the admission criteria, and while registered as a boarder requires minor treatment or investigation which would normally be performed as a non-admitted patient service, this treatment should be recorded as an occasion of service and does not alter the patient's status as a boarder.
- In most circumstances there should only be one carer accompanying a patient as a boarder. The exceptional circumstances may include a mother who is breast-feeding two infants.
- Family members may be accommodated as boarders in the case of terminal illness or extremely sick patients if the treating medical officer considers that it will assist the care of the patient.

- Babies aged 10 days and over, accompanying their mothers will be registered as boarders unless they are receiving clinical care in their own right.
- People accompanying a sick person can only be classified as boarders if they stay overnight. Hotel services such as meals and a bed must be provided.

**Note 1 :**

**There are two different ICD-10-AM codes for boarder:**

**Z76.3 Healthy person accompanying sick person – eg; breastfed baby;**

**Z76.4 Other boarder in health-care facility – eg; person who requires treatment but does not meet the criteria for admission to hospital – example, person undergoing peritoneal dialysis treatment.**

**SUPERSEDED**