
TITLE : AGED CARE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**DISTRIBUTION:** ALL PUBLIC HOSPITALS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

1. Purpose

The core objective of the Aged Care Assessment Program (ACAP) is to comprehensively assess the needs of frail older people to facilitate access to available care services appropriate to their needs. In meeting this objective, Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACATs) also determine eligibility for Commonwealth subsidised residential aged care, Community Aged Care Packages and some flexible care services, including Extended Aged Care at Home (EACH).

The aims of the ACAP are to:

- Ensure that older people with special needs have equitable access to ACATs.
- Ensure that access to ACAT services is based on need.
- Prevent premature or inappropriate admission to residential care facilities.
- Help frail older people living in the community.
- Facilitate access to the combination of services that best meets the needs of assessed clients.
- Ensure assessments of the care needs of frail older persons are comprehensive, incorporating the restorative, physical, medical, psychological, cultural and social dimensions of care need.
- Involve clients and their carers, and other service providers in the assessment and care planning process.
- Promote the coordination of aged care and other support services to improve the appropriateness and range of care services available to frail older people.
- Optimise assessment services provided within available resources.

2. Background

The ACAP is a Commonwealth Government initiative initially introduced in the 1983-84 Budget as the *Geriatric Assessment Program*.

The Commonwealth provides grants to the States and Territories to operate ACATs and Evaluation Units. The Commonwealth provides most of the direct funding for the teams. The State and Territories also provide infrastructure and the broader health system within which the teams operate.

The Commonwealth funds are provided to support “assessment” services and not to provide “treatment/rehabilitation” services for the aged. The funds assist in providing “frontline” general assessment staff plus clerical support, identified training, data collection, information and publicity and some major equipment items such as computers.

The ACATs operate within Commonwealth Legislation, policy and guidelines. These include:

- The Aged Care Act 1997
- Commonwealth Aged Care Assessment Program Operational Guidelines 2002 which outlines the policy for implementation for the program, roles, responsibilities and central principles of implementation of the assessment teams.
- Aged Care Assessment and Approval Guidelines (April 1999), which provides guidelines for approving care recipients for residential, community or flexible care.
- Aged Care Assessment Program Financial Guidelines (August 1997)

3. Funding

The Commonwealth provides recurrent ACAP funding to the state based on the total aged population 70+. It determines the specific base funding allocation for each individual ACAT within the state. Program funds are indexed annually and the indexation is included in base level funds approved each year. In cooperation with the Commonwealth the State administers the funding to each team and manages the program. Commonwealth funding is not based on the total number of assessments undertaken by an ACAT.

A block payment is also received from the Commonwealth for ACAT training. The Department of Health determines the amount of non-recurrent training funds to be allocated each year to each team.

ACAT funding allocated to each team must be used for ACAP purposes only and acquitted separately as per Commonwealth conditions of grant.

4. Reporting

Minimum Data Set (MDS) reporting requirements by ACATs are a condition of grant between the Commonwealth and State. The ACATs must report their assessment activities in line with the ACAP Data Dictionary Version 1.0 2002. These data are collated and analysed by the Evaluation Unit.

The objectives of the ACAP MDS are to provide ACAP program managers, Commonwealth and State, access to data for policy and program development, strategic planning and performance monitoring. For the ACATs, the MDS will assist in providing quality services to clients by facilitating internal management and local regional planning and coordinated service delivery and facilitate consistency and comparability across ACATs and the health and community sector.

For further information please refer to “*Aged Care Assessment Program Data Dictionary Version 1.0 2002*.”