
TITLE : PATIENT ASSISTED TRAVEL SCHEME (PATS)

DISTRIBUTION: ALL COUNTRY PUBLIC HOSPITALS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA PLUS PEEL

1. Purpose

The purpose of this bulletin is to clarify the management and administration responsibilities for PATS

2. Background

The purpose of PATS is to assist permanent country residents to access the nearest specialist medical services. PATS provides a subsidy towards the cost of travel and accommodation for patients and, if necessary, an escort. PATS subsidies are for:

- people who need to travel more than 100kms (one way) to attend specialist medical appointments; or
- a 'safety net' arrangement for people on oncology and dialysis treatment living between 70 and 100kms away from the place of service; or
- patients who have been transferred or evacuated to a hospital away from their home town. PATS assists with the costs of the return journey following discharge.

Assistance can take the form of the provision of support towards the cost of transport and/or accommodation only. *PATS does not offer assistance towards cost of meals or other expenses.*

3. PATS Guidelines

The PATS Guidelines have been revised effective from 1 July 2002 following a review of the scheme that took place in 2001.

The aim of the guidelines is to facilitate consistency in the application of the guidelines. The guidelines cannot cover every circumstance, therefore a common sense approach should be applied in consideration of special circumstances, using the purpose of the scheme as a guide.

Country Services Regional Directors will be informed of any changes to these guidelines and up-to-date guidelines will be maintained on the Department of Health website, Holii.

4. Data Collection

PATS data are recorded on a specifically designed software program (PATS 2001). IT support is provided by Infoheath. All Health Services should use the current version of this software to ensure consistency of data collection.

5. Reporting

Country health services should report monthly expenditure against the SFP Schedule One targets, and they should provide six monthly reports on PATS usage as detailed in the PATS Guidelines. The six monthly reports should be provided within 8 weeks of the end of each reporting period.

6. Financial recording

Advice regarding use of account codes for recording PATS expenditure is being sought in order to provide consistency across country health regions. The new account codes to assist in the compilation of consistent and accurate PATS expenditure details and it is therefore important that Health Services use these in their reporting.