
TITLE : AGED CARE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM: DEMENTIA SUPPORT FOR ASSESSMENT (DSA)

DISTRIBUTION: RURAL AND REMOTE PUBLIC HOSPITALS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

1. Purpose

The Dementia Support for Assessment (DSA) Program aims to assist Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACATs) in rural and remote areas to maintain their capacity to undertake assessments of people with dementia.

2. Background

In 1992 the Commonwealth Aged Care Assessment Program (ACAP) Officials initiated the development of the National Action Plan for Dementia Care. This was a five-year plan to address the growing training needs of ACATs in assessment, treatment and support of people with dementia and their carers. A dementia kit was provided with extensive training workshops provided by the Sir James McCusker Training Foundation. The action plan finished in June 1997.

The DSA commenced 1st July 1997 as a direct result of this plan to enable continued training and professional development and support of ACATs. A recurrent Commonwealth funding grant was provided to help people with dementia and their carers obtain more accurate diagnosis, assessment of care needs and more appropriate and timely treatment care and support.

Since its inception the DSA funding in WA has been used for two primary statewide projects. These are:

- **Project One** “to provide specialist health professional support to WA rural centres for the diagnosis and assessment of care needed of people with dementia”.
- **Project Two** “visits to WA rural centres to conduct training regarding the diagnosis and treatment of, and developing care options for, people with dementia who prefer to live in rural and remote communities”.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Currently the DSA funding is used to employ professional staff identified as DSA Coordinators for their ACAT region. As members of the ACAT, the coordinators undertake

as part of their roles the following:

- Be site coordinator for the use of Telehealth technology and to promote the utilisation of Telehealth and the use of appropriate protocols and procedures for the assessment of people with dementia within the specific ACAT region.
- Identify specific training needs for their team and region relating to dementia care, assessment, treatment, the ongoing care management of people with dementia and the use of Telehealth technology.
- Develop and provide, where appropriate, education, support and advice for ACATs in dementia assessment and in the ongoing care management of people with dementia.
- Liaise and network with specialist medical, allied health and specialist services regarding dementia assessment towards improving the care outcomes for the clients and their families and carers.
- Where appropriate, undertake assessments of people with dementia.

4. Reporting

Services are to be contracted and reported separately with the rural and remote Health Services.