

## Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme - How do I apply?

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### Description:

*How do I go about getting assistance?*

*When you have been referred to a specialist medical service you will need to ask your doctor to apply to your local hospital for transport and accommodation subsidies on your behalf. If your doctor expects you to be making a number of visits you can request assistance for the series of trips up to four weeks in advance.*

*Your doctor will fill out an application form for you to take to your local hospital. This form will provide the hospital with the information necessary to make a decision about the subsidies for which you may qualify.*

*You will then have to take the form to the travel clerk (or other nominated person) at your local hospital. This will enable the travel clerk to check all the details on your form and ask for any other information that might be necessary. Presenting the form in person will avoid delays that might result from the form being filled out incorrectly. However, if you live a long way from your hospital you may be able to arrange to send the form by mail or fax and talk to the travel clerk by phone.*

*A medical officer at the hospital will be responsible for reviewing your application and for deciding what subsidies are available to you. When you make your application to the hospital, you are also giving consent for the medical officer to obtain any relevant medical information to assist them to make a decision about your claim.*

*If you have provided enough information, you can expect the hospital to give you a decision within two working days (Monday to Friday) after they receive your application. If more information is required by the hospital before they can make a decision you will be informed of this within two working days after your application has been received.*

*Your local hospital will decide to pay your transport and accommodation subsidies by either booking and paying for your transport and accommodation directly, or by reimbursing the relevant amount of your costs when you can provide them with receipts. You can expect payments to be made and accounts to be settled within 30 days.*

### Practical Advice

Can I apply for transport and accommodation subsidies after I have travelled?

Except in very extraordinary circumstances subsidies can only be paid when you have applied for them and have had your application approved before you travel.

Exceptions

If your doctor did not inform you that you were required to apply for the Scheme before you travelled, you can ask for your application to be assessed retrospectively.

- You must do this within one month after travelling and such a request will only be considered once. In these circumstances the hospital will contact your doctor to confirm that you were not informed.
- Unfortunately, under these conditions, you can only be provided with the amount of assistance that you would have received if the application had been made in the correct way.

If you have asked for a decision to be reviewed, and you have been unable to wait for the outcome of the review before you started your trip, in this case, if the review returns a decision in your favour your application will then be approved retrospectively.

What if I travel alone and then find that I need help after I arrive?

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If your specialist finds that you need help after you arrive for treatment, they can request assistance from someone to join you. In this case, all of the usual conditions and procedures for requesting subsidies will still apply. (ie. The request must be approved by your local hospital before travel)

How much assistance can I receive?

### Accommodation

Your local hospital will decide whether to arrange your accommodation for you or to reimburse you for your accommodation expenses. If the hospital reimburses your expenses, they will contribute up to \$30 per person per night, for you and your approved escort, if you stay in commercial accommodation. If you choose to stay with friends or relatives your hospital will contribute \$10 per person per night.

### Your Contribution

- Unless you qualify under Schedule IV, you are required to contribute the first four nights of accommodation per financial year.
- If you choose to stay at accommodation that costs more than \$30 per person you will have to pay the difference.
- You will have to cover the cost of meals and any other expenses such as telephone calls

Accommodation subsidies will only be paid for the minimum period you are required to be away from home for medical reasons. Unless otherwise approved on medical grounds, one night's accommodation can be subsidised while you are travelling if you are required to drive for more than 600 kilometres or eight hours.

If you are away from home for a long time, your need for accommodation subsidies will be reviewed every month.

### Transport

Your local hospital will decide whether to arrange your transport for you or to reimburse your travel expenses. Your local hospital will subsidise your approved transport costs. Unless otherwise approved on medical grounds, they will cover the cost of the cheapest form of public transport available. Transport costs will be covered from the transport terminal (airport, bus station or train station) in the town where your local public hospital is located to the transport terminal in the town or city to which you are travelling.

Alternatively, if you wish to travel by car the cost of your trip will be subsidised at a rate of 15 cents per kilometre. This will be calculated by road from the post office (general post office) nearest to the medical facility you will be attending. If your approved escort travels with you in the car, the subsidy remains unchanged (ie 15 cents per kilometre) If you wish, you may travel by a form of transport that is more expensive than what is approved, but your transport subsidy will not be increased.

In the unfortunate case of requiring return transport for a deceased person, relatives will be provided with a subsidy equivalent to a full economy airfare, to the nearest airport to the deceased person's normal place of residence. Relatives can spend that subsidy on whatever form of transport is required.

### Your contribution

- If you are travelling by public transport, you will need to cover the cost of travelling between the airport, train station or bus station and your accommodation or the health facility you will be attending.
- If you are travelling by private motor vehicle, subsidies will be calculated from post office to post office, so you will need to cover any additional costs associated with your motor vehicle.

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When will I have to return home?

When you travel to a medical service you will need to return as soon as practicable after the completion of your treatment (eg. as soon as a flight is available), unless prior approval is granted for special circumstances. Otherwise, you will not be able to make use of your transport subsidy.

What if I need someone else to travel with me?

Your doctor will explain the details of your case to your local hospital. A medical officer at the hospital will be responsible for deciding whether you need to be accompanied by someone when you travel. They will look for the following conditions:

- Will you be unable to look after yourself where you are going?
- will someone be needed to participate (or be trained to participate) in your physical care or rehabilitation?
- Is there anyone where you are going that can assist you in these ways?

NOTE: A subsidy will always be provided for an escort to accompany a patient who has not yet reached their 17th birthday. A subsidy will always be provided for an escort to accompany a patient who requires oxygen, sedation, or parenteral analgesia (pain killers given by injection).

It is important that you are as comfortable as possible when you travel, but transport and accommodation subsidies for people to escort you can only be approved if they are absolutely necessary for your medical treatment. In many circumstances the person who travels with a patient will need to have medical or nursing qualifications.

You may take as many people with you as you wish, but transport and accommodation subsidies can only be provided for the minimum number of escorts that are absolutely necessary for your medical treatment to be effective. If escort assistance is approved, it will usually be for only one other person to travel with you.

Similarly, accommodation subsidies can only be provided for someone to accompany you for as long as they are necessary. If your escort is no longer absolutely necessary for your medical treatment to be effective, their accommodation subsidy will cease.

### Other Resources

Related Factsheets

- [Who is eligible?](#)
- [How do I apply?](#)
- [How do I make a complaint?](#)
- [PTSS - Schedules](#)
- [PTSS - Application Form](#)

### Footnotes

Further information can be obtained from the [Integrated Patient Transport Unit's](#) website.