

## Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme - What is it?

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### Description:

The Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme has been put in place to help Queenslanders access specialist medical services, which are not available in their local area. Where these specialist services are not available within 50 kilometres of the nearest public hospital, the Scheme offers assistance by providing a contribution towards the cost of transport and accommodation. Queensland Health administers the Scheme through its network of public hospitals.

When a patient requires assistance with either the demands of treatment, or the demands of living away from home, the Scheme can sometimes also provide a contribution towards the cost of transport and accommodation for an escort.

You should be aware that the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme provides a subsidy only, and does not cover all of the costs associated with travel.

What sorts of services can I be assisted to attend?

Transport and accommodation subsidies can only be provided for travel to and return from certain eligible services. Generally, this Scheme is concerned with improving access to services provided by medical specialist. With some exceptions, eligible services are those which satisfy all of the following criteria:

- The type of service is "essential" and is not listed as "excluded" (see the fact sheet of schedules).
- The service must be recommended by a medical practitioner as necessary for your health. (That is, you must have a medical referral to the service.)
- The service is not available within 50 kilometres of your nearest public hospital. (For the purposes of this Scheme is your responsibility to be able to get to your nearest public hospital. Please also note the exception listed below is in relation to accommodation subsidies only).
- The service must be the closest service of its type.

### Exceptions

Exceptions can be made to the above criteria in the following circumstances:

#### Accommodation only

- If your treatment requires that you be accommodated closer to the treatment facility than you normally live, you can be provided with a subsidy towards your accommodation costs.

#### Alternative medical staff for recommending treatment

- In remote areas a "remote area nurse" can recommend that attending a service is necessary for your health.
- Dental services listed in schedule I can be recommended by a dentist.
- The services of an eye specialist (ophthalmologist) can be recommended by an optometrist.

#### Emergency travel to a service

If you have been taken to a medical service in an emergency situation you can be assisted to return home so long as the service is more than 50 kilometres from your nearest public hospital. In this case you may also be provided with accommodation assistance even though the service may not be the closest of its kind. This applies within Queensland only. If you have travelled interstate for work or holiday purposes, you will not be able to claim travel or accommodation assistance for emergency medical care, or to return home to Queensland. It is strongly recommended that you take out insurance to cover emergency situations if you are travelling outside Queensland.

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### *Seeing Your Regular Specialist*

*You may have been visiting a particular specialist but another similar service has been established closer to your nearest public hospital. If this is the case, transport and accommodation subsidies can still be approved for one additional visit to your original specialist. This is only allowed if your doctor believes it is necessary so that a transfer from your previous specialist to your to your new service can be arranged.*

### *Availability of Support*

*Sometimes travelling to a medical service that is further away can be less expensive because an escort may not be required or you may be able to stay in private accommodation. If this is the case, it is possible for you to be provided with assistance to travel to a more distant medical service so that you can make use of the support of family and friends that may live there but not at a closer location.*

*In some circumstances you will need to travel for your initial treatment but follow up services (such as checking your progress or checking the condition of surgical wounds) can be provided locally. Requests to travel for follow up services will be considered in their own right and will not be approved if they can be provided locally.*

*Provided you have a referral from a medical practitioner you can attend any specialist medical service you wish. However, transport and accommodation subsidies can only be paid if you are attending a service that is eligible under the Scheme guidelines. If you choose to attend a service that is not eligible under these guidelines, then no subsidies can be provided.*

### *Related Factsheets*

- *Who is eligible?*
- *How do I apply?*
- *How do I make a complaint?*
- *PTSS - Schedules*
- *PTSS - Application Form*