

Patient Assistance Travel Scheme

Information for Requesting Medical Practitioners

PATS provides assistance with travel and where applicable, accommodation costs to residents of the Northern Territory who are required to travel more than 200kms to the nearest specialist medical treatment. The Patient Assistance Travel Scheme is a contribution scheme and does not cover all travel and accommodation costs.

PATS REFERRAL PROCEDURES

Patients must be referred to the:

- **closest** resident or visiting specialist service (or otherwise using the principle of cost effectiveness) within the Northern Territory, or
- **nearest** appropriate interstate specialist when there is no specialist available in the Northern Territory.

IS MY PATIENT ELIGIBLE FOR ASSISTANCE?

The patient must:

- be a permanent resident of the Northern Territory;
- need to travel more than 200km one-way to obtain specialist medical treatment;
- be registered or eligible for registration by Medicare.

THE CLINICAL SPECIALITY REFERRED TO MUST:

- be eligible for assistance; and
- be the nearest available service.

WHAT ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE?

Patients and approved Escorts are eligible for travel and accommodation assistance, paid at the following rates:

<u>Accommodation</u>		<u>Travel</u>	
Commercial	\$35 per night	Air and Bus Travel	Paid at the lowest available discount fare
Private	\$10 per night	Private Vehicle (paid for up to 3 patients travelling together)	\$0.15 per km
<u>Ground Transport</u>	Reimbursement of \$40 per interstate trip		

Wherever possible, Patient Travel Clerks should make all travel and accommodation bookings for patients and approved Escorts.

Escorts

An Escort is a person over the age of 18 years who is regarded by the requesting Medical Practitioner, as an appropriate and responsible adult to meet a patient's needs, during the treatment period. An escort must be able to facilitate and/or participate directly in the patient's care including: assisting with basic requirements of life, significant language or cultural barriers, disabilities and assist to ensure the safe transportation of the patient. Escorts can be automatically approved for patients under 16 years of age and for patients travelling interstate for surgery or intensive therapies, e.g. radiation therapies, non surgical cancer treatments, cardiology and neurosurgery, (refer PATS Guidelines: www.nt.gov.au/health).

The Patient Risk Profiling Tool

The Patient Risk Profiling Tool (refer Department of Health and Families intranet website <http://internal.health.nt.gov.au/>), is designed to support clinical staff to identify the escort requirements and to determine the degree of risk associated with the travel of a patient to and from specialist health services and therefore allow for appropriate supports to be engaged to assist the patient across the entire journey.

How does my patient access PATS?

It is the responsibility of registered Medical Practitioners to explain the patient's the importance of attending medical appointment to their overall health care. Form HM52 – Patient Travel Request Form must be completed by the requesting Medical Practitioner and lodged at the nearest Patient Travel Office. It is important to note that lodgement of an application form does not in itself constitute approval.

Patient Travel Request Form – HM52

- Please complete all the relevant sections of the HM52 form as travel and/or accommodation cannot be approved until the form is fully completed;
- Wherever possible, specify the expected duration of treatment; and any special requirements regarding mode of transport with regard to the Patient's health status and mobility;
- *Intrastate* applications must be lodged no later than 7 days prior to date of patient's treatment *appointment*; and
- *Interstate* travel requests must be lodged no later than 21 days for patients from remote locations or 14 days for patients from major centres.

PATS Office Contacts

Darwin District	Alice Springs District	Katherine District	Gove District	Barkly District
Royal Darwin Hospital 08 8922 8135 08 8922 8134	Alice Springs Hospital 08 8951 7979 08 8951 7846	Katherine Hospital 08 8973 9206 08 8973 9213	Gove Hospital 08 8987 0540	Tennant Creek Hospital 08 8962 4262

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