



Government of Western Australia
WA Country Health Service

South West
PEMBERTON NORTHCLIFFE
HOME & COMMUNITY CARE

Fax

TO: Ms LAUREN MESTI
STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC Admin
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
PERTH 6000

FROM: Sonia HYRA

DATE: 15.5.14

MESSAGE:

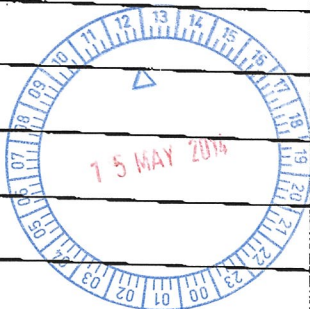
Tel: (08) 9776 6605 Fax: (08) 9776 7268

FAX No: (08) 9222 7805

TEL No: (08)

PAGES (Including cover page):

COMMENT ON PATS IN RURAL AREAS OF THE SOUTH
WEST



28.4.2014

ATTENTION

**Ms Lauren Mesiti
Standing Committee on Public Administration
Parliament House
Perth 6000**

Dear Ms Mesiti

Patient Assisted Travel Scheme

**Home and Community Care - Transports from the Northcliffe Pemberton Area
and the problems we encounter.**

We are based in Northcliffe, 200 kms (400 km return trip) away from the Bunbury and Busselton area which are the nearest towns to provide specialists in ophthalmology, cardiology, anaesthesia, oncology, radiology, orthotics, prosthetics, respiratory physicians, urology, dermatology, rheumatology, endocrinology, haematology, neurology, ear nose and throat, and surgeons. Many of our aged clients have multiple health issues and have to travel a long way to attend their appointments in these towns.

Client confusion starts when applying for the PATS form, some clients cannot understand that they need to get a doctor's referral to be eligible, especially if they need to approach their GP and not the doctor they maybe seeing, even when the process is explained to them.

HACC only provides funding up to 99 kms, we therefore collect our HACC fee and also the client's Patient Assisted Travel Scheme cheque to help cover the remaining costs. The cheque rate varies depending on where the client lives, and has not increased very much, although fuel prices have gone up considerably in the last 5 years. The PATS cheque amount we receive is \$58.88 from clients in Northcliffe and \$51.84 from Pemberton clients. We are based in Northcliffe so if we transport a client from Pemberton to Bunbury and return we only get \$51.48 and still have to drive back to Northcliffe.

A big problem can be with HACC client's that need to stay overnight after day surgery. As PATS will only provide one cheque per appointment/procedure. HACC does not provide funding for staff to stay overnight, therefore, we cannot collect the client the next day unless he is prepared to pay for the HACC fee and the PATS cheque out of his own pocket. HACC clients can get stuck in Bunbury, usually with the option of catching a coach home or relying on friends or family to pick them up.

Another problem we encounter is that cheques are sometimes sent to the clients although we attach a note that asks that the payment be sent to us. We then have to find out where the cheque has gone, (ring PATS), and then contact the client. People get confused as payment is sent under a Medicare Health Solutions Telehealth Pty Ltd cheque that does not say it's a PATS payment and without details of appointment details or date. If clients have major health issues and have seen several different doctors, over a few weeks, they get very confused with all the different payments they receive. I also believe there is a push by PATS to have the cheques sent out to clients only. This would mean that the client would still have to give their cheque payment to us. The client would have to organise the sending of the PATS form, then put that money in their bank account, and then come in and see us to pay for their trip. This would mean a huge amount of work for our clients, some of which are already confused with the process. It would also mean that our workload would increase trying to track down these payments.

I am glad that you want to improve the PATS system and I hope my comments can help you to achieve this.

Your sincerely

Sonia Hycza
Pemberton Northcliffe Health Service
Home and Community Care Coordinator