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Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme

IPTAAS is a transport and accommodation subsidy scheme that helps people cover some of the costs of visits to specialist medical treatment not available in their local area. IPTAAS is provided by NSW Health as part of their obligation to provide health care services for everyone in NSW.

You are eligible for IPTAAS if you are:

- an Australian citizen and a permanent resident of NSW or Lord Howe Island
- referred by a recognised, accredited medical practitioner for specialist treatment
- needing to travel more than 100 km (one way) from home to treatment or needing to travel more than 200 km cumulative to treatment in one week
- a carer who has been certified as being medically necessary by the medical practitioner or specialist

You are not eligible for IPTAAS if:

- you live within 100 km of appropriate treatment and are referred to that centre and do not travel more than 200 km in one week
- you have had your costs covered by another agency (e.g. DVA, employer schemes, workers compensation, other insurance claim)
- you travel by ambulance, air ambulance, other emergency transport or inter-facility transfer – you can still make a claim for other costs incurred
- you use community transport to get to treatment
- you are participating in a clinical trial



IPTAAS is not means tested.

tip

If your medical condition means you have to fly to treatment, then your medical practitioner needs to mark this on your IPTAAS application form in Section B, Question 7 and contact the Health Transport Unit to get a prior approval number.

Do I have to pay anything?

IPTAAS will not fully cover your costs. Patients must contribute \$40 per claim to the cost of accommodation and travel to treatment. Pension and health care card holders don't have to pay this charge. Once subsidies reach \$1000 in one year, co contributions will also be waived for the remainder of the year.

Up-front financial assistance

If you have a pension or health care card, you can apply for assistance paying for the up-front costs associated with travel while having treatment, rather than incurring the costs then seeking reimbursement later. When your appointments have been confirmed, you will need to contact your local Health Transport Unit, www.health.nsw.gov.au/initiatives/iptaas/offices.asp.



Private health insurance

If you have private health insurance, you must claim the maximum benefit available under your cover before applying for IPTAAS. The private health insurance benefit for transport and accommodation is usually not more than \$500 per person per year.

What does IPTAAS cover?

Types of travel/accommodation	Reimbursement
public transport	cost of an economy ticket (less GST + booking fee)
private motor vehicle use	19c/km
taxis	one visit, \$20; 2–7 day visit, \$40; 8–14 day visit, \$80; 15+ day visit, \$160
air travel	only considered with prior approval from health transport unit by medical practitioner/treating specialist
accommodation (per night/per room)	\$43 – single \$60 – double
community transport	none
additional private accommodation allowance (pension/health care card holders only)	\$140 per week

Interstate treatment

If you are a NSW resident and you need to travel interstate to access specialist medical treatment, you are still eligible for IPTAAS assistance if you meet the general eligibility criteria.

Waiting lists

There are sometimes waiting lists for specialist treatment, especially in country areas. If your closest specialist has a waiting list, you may be able to claim an IPTAAS reimbursement for part of the cost of travel and accommodation needed to see specialists further away from your home. A health professional will need to vouch that there is a significant medical advantage in doing so.



The IPTAAS Application Form

The application form is divided into four sections.

Section	Completed by	When
A	you	before treatment
B	referring medical practitioner	when you are referred
C	treating specialist/registrars	when you arrive at your destination
D	you	after travel

Remember to take your IPTAAS form with you whenever you have an appointment and ask your health professional to fill it in.

Accommodation “Bulk Billing” form

If you will be staying away from home for some time and you stay in a hospital-allied accommodation facility, the facility may be able to “bulk bill” IPTAAS for the cost of your stay. If you have a pension or health care card, bulk billing may apply after 3 days stay. If you don’t hold one of these cards, your stay must be greater than 28 days for bulk billing to apply. You will need to pay for your first 2 nights accommodation upfront. The manager of the accommodation facility can help you apply to IPTAAS for bulk billing approval. You will need to lodge your form with IPTAAS when you get home, otherwise the accommodation lodge will not get paid.



Where to get help and information

For information about IPTAAS and other services contact your local Health Transport Unit, www.health.nsw.gov.au/pubs/2009/pdf/information_guide_for_patients_and_their_carers.pdf or the social worker at your local or destination treatment centre.

The Supplementary Travel Diary

The Supplementary Travel Diary is used for ongoing treatment. This form is available only through the Health Transport Unit and should be used to log the costs incurred for a single block of treatment. Your medical practitioner can indicate that treatment will occur in a block by completing start and end dates. Reimbursements are made at the end of the treatment block and your referral is valid for 12 months.

Advance Payment Request Form

If you hold a pension or health care card and are unable to afford the upfront costs of transport to treatment, you can use the Advanced Payment Request Form to apply for advanced payments for rail, bus, private car and flights.