



Patient Transport Assistance Procedure

Effective: 19 April 2016

1. Guiding Principles

The Busselton Health Campus (BHC) may assist eligible patients with transport. This can be through assistance with public transport, community based transport, taxis, or patient transport ambulances.

It is important to remember that it is **not** the responsibility of the BHC to provide transport however BHC can assist those patients with an identified need.

Outcome

If it is identified (following review and assessment) that a patient has difficulty accessing transport following treatment to return back to their home address, the BHC may look to assist the patient to return home using the most appropriate mode of transport both for the needs of the patient, and to limit the financial burden to the health service.

2. Procedure

Outcome

Any patient who has been assessed as meeting the eligibility criteria will receive BHC assistance to return home.

Key Points / Steps and Method

Before using BHC funded transport, the health care worker is to address the following:

- Is the patient independent with transport (own vehicle or public transport)?
- Does the patient have family or friends who can assist with transport?
- Is the patient eligible for other external transport services e.g. Home and Community Care (HACC) transport, Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) transport, subsidised taxi vouchers?
- Is there a medical reason for transport assistance? Is there genuine financial hardship?
- Did the patient arrive in an ambulance and have no support or finance to return home?

If the patient meets the eligibility criteria above for financial assistance from the BHC with transport, it will then be important to determine which mode of transport is most appropriate.

Local bus ticket

In hours, the senior registered nurse (SRN) may contact the Executive Assistant (EA) for the Operations Manager BHC to arrange payment for a local bus ticket after completion of the Patient Transport Eligibility Checklist. The EA is to contact the bus operator to prepay for a ticket over the phone. Out of hours, contact the Operations Manager.

The patient must be able to access public transport (consider physical and safety factors). Bus routes and times must be suitable. If no bus is available, consider a taxi voucher.

Document in the patient medical record.

Regional coach ticket

If the patient requires a coach or train ticket outside of the Busselton city area, Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS) should be considered in the first instance. If unable to assist (for example outside of business hours), rural train or bus tickets must be purchased online via a credit card payment. Approval must be sought from the Operations Manager or Coordinator of Nursing and Midwifery, and the ticket purchased by the Operations Manager EA.

Outcome

If a patient has been assessed as meeting the eligibility criteria they will have a taxi voucher issued to them in order for them to return home.

Key Points / Steps and Method

The PATS should be considered for rural patients who are suitable prior to requesting a taxi voucher. PATS is not currently available over the weekend or after hours.

Taxi vouchers can be given to patients who comply with the eligibility criteria **only** if they are **not** suitable for the public transport option, i.e. public transport is unavailable and the patient does not have access to other transport options.

The staff member must complete the Patient Transport Eligibility Checklist to determine eligibility.

On completion of the checklist, the staff member checks the distance to be travelled. If the distance is greater than 50km, the South West Executive member on-call must be contacted to approve the taxi voucher. If the distance is less than 50km, the staff member contacts the Hospital Coordinator or the Clinical Nurse Manager for the area to arrange for a taxi voucher to be issued.

When issuing a taxi voucher, record the following information on the taxi voucher butt / acquittance sheet:

- Taxi voucher number
- Patient's Unique Medical Record Number (UMRN)
- Ward/Unit location
- Ward/Unit cost centre
- Address of destination – no deviation
- Issuing staff member's name and designation.

The ward/unit staff member is to arrange for the taxi to collect the patient. Document in the patient's medical record. Consider if a maxi-taxi is required for wheelchair access. If an infant or child is travelling in a taxi a request for a child restraint **must** be made.

If a patient is attending an outpatient appointment or day surgery procedure, the patient is to cover the cost of transport both ways unless they meet the eligibility criteria outlined above and have been assessed accordingly. If they meet the criteria, the same process is to be followed as for inpatients.

Remember - using a taxi is costly for the hospital and therefore is always be considered as the last resort.

Inpatient Ambulance Including Patient Flights

Personnel able to perform: senior registered nurse (Tier 6) / Medical Practitioner.

Outcome

If it is identified (following review and assessment) that a patient has difficulty accessing transport following treatment at the BHC to return back to their home address, the BHC is to look to assist the patient to return home using the most appropriate mode of transport for the needs of the patient, and to limit the financial burden on the health service.

This includes the use of external services e.g. St John Ambulance (SJA), PATS, DVA etc.

Key Points / Steps and Method

The cost of patient ambulance transport (SJA) is generally the responsibility of the sending health service

The BHC is required to cover the cost of the ambulance for a transfer to another health care facility when BHC cannot provide the procedure / treatment required.

NB: If the patient is transferred from a country hospital to our Emergency Department this is classified as an inter-hospital transfer.

Refer to the WACHS [PATS intranet page](#).

The patient is required to pay the cost of the transport if it is deemed as non-essential transfer e.g. transfer to residential care, or patient chooses to be treated elsewhere when could have been treated at the BHC. All Western Australian aged pensioners have access to primary ambulance services free of charge; and all other senior citizens over the age of 65 pay only 50 per cent of the normal cost of both emergency and urgent ambulance transport.

If the patient is responsible for the cost, the person booking transport must clearly advise patient of their obligations.

Assistance for payment may be available if patient has a DVA (gold card) or private health cover. Details are to be gathered by staff member booking the transport.

The ward clerk or nurse is to complete the appropriate SJA transport forms and book the transport. Forms are to be filed in the patient's medical record. The circumstances and rationale for the use of ambulance transport must be fully documented in the patient's medical record.

Ambulance transport may be given and paid for by BHC in other circumstances at the discretion of BHC Executive

3. Definitions

Eligible patient	Patients who may be eligible for assistance are those with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- financial difficulties (must have valid health care card)- are brought in by ambulance with no other means of return home- medical reason for transport- unsupported patients who require supervised transport
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4. Roles and Responsibilities

All Staff are required to work within policies and guidelines to make sure that WACHS is a safe, equitable and positive place to be.

5. Compliance

It is a requirement of the WA Health Code of Conduct that employees “comply with all state government policies, standards and Australian laws and understand and comply with all WA Health business, administration and operational directives and policies”. Failure to comply may constitute suspected misconduct under the [WA Health Misconduct and Discipline Policy](#).

6. Evaluation

This procedure is to be reviewed every two years by the Coordinator of Nursing and Midwifery (Administration).

7. References

Department of Health [Ambulance Services for Seniors](#)

WACHS [Patient Assisted Travel Scheme](#)

Royal Perth Hospital Policies and Procedures - [Transport – Hospital and Voluntary](#)

Swan Kalamunda Health Service - [Patient Transport](#) (SPE003)

Bess Home and Community Care - [Transport](#)

8. Related Policy Documents

WACHS [Authorities, Delegations and Directions Schedule 2013](#) section 47. Issue of Cabcharge vouchers / etickets.

WACHS [Determining the Mode of Transport and Requirement of a Clinical Escort for Interhospital Patient Transfer Guideline](#) 2011

9. Related Policies

Department of Health [Health Accounting Manual](#) – (seven page) section 507
Cabcharge Facilities (actual document page 138)

Department of Health [Operational Directive OD 0552/14 Mandatory providers of road based inter hospital patient transport services for Department of Health Hospital Sites and Nursing Posts.](#)

10. Appendices

Appendix 1 - [Patient Transport Eligibility Criteria – Staff Checklist](#)

**This document can be made available in alternative formats
on request for a person with a disability**

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Appendix 1 - Patient Transport Eligibility Criteria – Staff Checklist

Eligibility Criteria Questions	Yes / No
1. Is the patient independent with transport (own vehicle or public transport)?	
2. Do they have family or friends that can assist with transport?	
3. Are they eligible for other external transport services e.g. HACC transport, DVA transport, subsidised taxi vouchers?	
4. Is there a medical reason for transport assistance?	
5. Is there genuine financial hardship (do they have a valid health care card)?	
6. Did the patient arrive in an ambulance and have no support or finance to return home?	

Does the patient meet any of the eligibility criteria above for financial assistance from the BHC with transport?

What mode of transport is most appropriate to meet their needs?

If eligible for Taxi Vouch take this form to Allocations for voucher.

Remember to complete all relevant details on Taxi Voucher.