



Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme

IPTAAS is a transport and accommodation subsidy scheme that financially assists people to access specialist medical treatment when it is 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 medical treatment
- needing to travel at least 100 km (one way) from home to attend treatment
- 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 100kms of appropriate treatment and are referred to that centre
- 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 are participating in a clinical trial
- you use community transport to get to treatment.



IPTAAS is not means tested.



Does the medical condition mean you have to fly to treatment? If the answer is yes 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.

Personal contributions

IPTAAS is not a full subsidy scheme and patients are also required to contribute to the cost of accommodation and travel to treatment. Patients must pay a \$40 contribution per trip each time they make a claim. Pension and health care card holders are exempt from this charge.

Up front financial assistance

If you are the holder of a pension or health care card you can apply for assistance with the up-front costs associated with travel and accommodation while seeking treatment, rather than incurring the costs then seeking reimbursement later. You will need to contact your local Health Transport Unit (<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/initiatives/iptaas/offices.asp>) when your appointments have been confirmed.



Private health insurance

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

Benefits payable under IPTAAS

Types of travel/accommodation	Reimbursement
Public transport	Cost of an economy ticket (less GST)
Private motor vehicle use	15c/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)	\$33 – single per night \$46 – double per night
Community transport	None
Additional private accommodation allowance (pension/health care card holders only)	\$30 per week

Interstate treatment

If you need to travel interstate to access specialist medical treatment. You are still eligible for assistance if you are eligible under the general criteria.

Waiting lists

There are sometimes waiting lists for specialist treatment, especially in country areas. If a waiting list exists at your closest specialist, you may be able to claim 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	Prior to 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. This means that you will only have to pay for the first two nights’ accommodation up front. Concession card holders do not have to pay anything up front. The manager of the accommodation facility will help you to 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**: http://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 can be used where your treatment is ongoing. 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 accommodation and transport to treatment, you can use the Advanced Payment Request Form to apply for advanced payments for rail, bus, private car, flights and accommodation.