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Provider No. 0188572B

**WARREN DISTRICT FAMILY
MEDICAL PRACTICE**

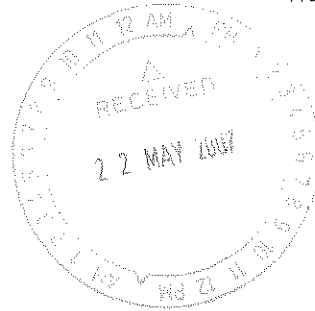
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15.05.2007

Senator Judith Adams
Department of the Senate
P O Box 6100, Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Senator Adams,

Re: Patient Assisted Travel Scheme

I consider the present system to be much inferior to the previous system whereby patients were given a form by their general practitioner, which they took to the local hospital and then received their form to take to the Specialist.

This new system came in in August 2004 and I enclose a copy of the Goebbels type communication, from the South West Area Health Service, who believed the changes were an opportunity to reduce the levels of stress, frustration and anxiety that the patients had.

I believe it was certainly far preferable when the patients' applications were handled locally.

The present system is intolerant of patients continuing with Perth based Specialists whom they have been seeing for many years, and tries to insist they see Bunbury Specialists. Bunbury, being closer than Perth, but less appointments available as many of the specialists only visit there from their Perth base.

I believe the present system penalises rural patients.

Yours faithfully,

Dr James H H Bowie

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J.H.H. Bowie', written over a vertical line that extends from the text above.



Department of Health
Government of Western Australia

South West Area Health Service
Area Office

Your ref:

Our ref:

Enquiries: 9754 0515

CHANGES TO THE PATIENT ASSISTED TRAVEL SCHEME (PATS)

EFFECTIVE AS OF AUGUST 2004

The South West Area Health Service (SWAHS) has decided to make fundamental changes to the processes involved in managing PATS applications from the 1st August. The motivation for these changes has been the level of complaint from consumers.

With the cooperation of General Practitioners and Specialists there is an opportunity to reduce the levels of stress, frustration and anxiety that patients sometimes experience in accessing the PATS scheme. Given that patients are often distressed by their medical diagnosis, any improvements we can make to assist patients should be greatly appreciated.

To implement the new processes SWAHS has established a PATS Call Centre for South West residents.

The changes are:

- Once a patient is referred to a Specialist the doctor's staff can contact the Call Centre by telephoning (**1800 823 131**). Alternatively fax (**9427 90 11**) or email with the patient's name and contact details and the doctor's provider number. The patient will then ring the Call Centre on 1800 number and have the PATS application completed over the phone. At the same time eligibility of Specialist Services and the patient for PATS can be determined and the patient informed.
- Once registration has been completed PATS Call Centre staff will initiate accommodation and transport arrangements for those patient for whom such arrangements are necessary.
- All arrangements will then be confirmed with the patient via mail and a blue form will be included for the specialist to complete once the consultation has taken place.
- Patients will have the opportunity to have their subsidy under PATS paid directly into their account thereby reducing delays and in some cases financial hardship.

If you have any queries they can be directed to Michael Bradley, Project Manager on 9754 0515.

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