

Question on Notice

No. 1115

Asked on 14 September 2023

MR S BENNETT ASKED MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

Will the Minister confirm (a) reports that there are delays of up to three months at present between the issuing and reimbursement of PTSS funding, (b) the cause of any delays and (c) what actions are being taken to fix delays?

ANSWER

The Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme (PTSS) is administered by the Hospital and Health Services (HHSs), through funding allocated by the Department of Health, and in accordance with the PTSS Guidelines.

I note that all HHSs can book air, bus, ferry or rail fares for patients and their escorts to access these transport options. Booking through the HHS alleviates the need for patients to outlay travel costs or rely on waiting for a subsidy.

Approved commercial accommodation subsidies can also be paid directly to the accommodation provider by the approving public hospital facility; again, assisting patients with outlay costs.

As such, I encourage all Queenslanders who are travelling to access healthcare to ask their relevant HHS to book their travel directly.

Where patients choose to book their travel independently and claim reimbursement through the HHS, the HHS must then assess and process their claim.

Reimbursement processing times depend on a range of factors including the time taken for patients to provide fulsome and correct information required for the HHS to appropriately assess and process their claim; unplanned staff absences; and increased demand and activity for PTSS across Queensland. The volume of claims received by each HHS is managed and processed within fixed staffing resources.

Please be advised that HHSs are conducting local reviews to identify and implement service improvements. Some of the initiatives adopted include centralisation of PTSS functions to gain efficiencies with processing, recruitment of additional staff and enhanced monitoring of processing timeframes to proactively manage the administration of PTSS.

As I advised during the 2023-24 Estimates Hearings, the Department is in the process of investigating how to streamline processes within the scheme thereby reducing any confusion being experienced by patients.

Our top priority is to ensure the process is as simple as possible for patients at what is often a stressful time in their lives.