

Question on Notice
No. 796
Asked on 23 May 2006

DR DOUGLAS asked the Minister for Health (MR ROBERTSON) –

QUESTION:

- (1) Apart from identified charity cases from overseas countries, have any Queensland public hospitals entered into agreements with any overseas countries, overseas insurance companies, overseas institutions or overseas medical centres; if so, who are the parties to each agreement?
- (2) Are overseas patients only paying a flat hospital bed rate or are services such as radiology and pathology charged separately?
- (3) How many beds are assigned to overseas patients for each public hospital in Queensland?

ANSWER:

- (1) Queensland Public hospitals do not enter into agreements with overseas countries for public hospital services.

The Australian Government has established Reciprocal Health Care Agreements (RHCA's) with a number of countries. RHCA's are bilateral treaties providing visitors from either country with access to the host country's public health system on a similar basis as residents of that country. Agreements apply to permanent residents of the other countries, not necessarily to citizens of such countries.

Currently Australia holds RHCA's with the following countries: New Zealand, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Malta, Italy, Norway, Republic of Ireland, and Kingdom of Norway.

Overseas patients are only able to access health services under RHCA's in Australia if their treatment is deemed to be "immediately necessary". This means any ill-health or injury which occurs while they are in Australia and requires treatment before they return home. The agreements do not cover the treatment of persons visiting Australia for the purpose of receiving treatment.

These agreements are negotiated and managed by the Commonwealth Government Department of Health and Ageing.

- (2) People covered under RHCA's are eligible for Medicare, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, and treatment as a public patient in a public hospital on the same basis as an Australian resident. There are no additional charges for RHCA patients for pathology, radiology or pharmaceuticals. There are however, charges raised for pharmaceuticals dispensed on discharge from hospital.

If the overseas patient is ineligible for Medicare (eg. patients not covered by a RHCA) then the following fees listed in the *Health Services Regulation 2002* will apply.

Type of Patient	Current Fee as at 25 May 2006
Admitted ineligible public - acute care	\$951.50*
Admitted ineligible public - same day	\$804.00*
Admitted ineligible private - acute care	\$820.00*
Admitted ineligible private - same day	\$567.00*
Admitted ineligible public or private - rehabilitation	\$494.00*
Admitted ineligible public or private – long stay	\$377.00*
Admitted ineligible - Intensive Care Unit	\$3,055.50*
Admitted ineligible - Coronary Care Unit	\$1,924.00*
Admitted ineligible - Operating Room < 1 hour	\$597.00
Admitted ineligible - Operating Room > 1 hour	\$1,501.50
Non-admitted ineligible public - per occasion of service	\$63.00
Non-admitted ineligible public - per emergency occasion of service	\$168.00
Non-admitted ineligible public - imaging	100% MBS
Non-admitted ineligible public – pathology per request	\$63.00

* *Daily Accommodation Fee*

- (3) There is no preset determination of bed numbers for overseas patients in public hospitals.