

## Question on Notice

No. 1225

Asked on 11 October 2023

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

### QUESTION

With reference to the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme (PTSS)—

Will the Minister advise (a) the full name of the entity that administers the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme (PTSS), (b) the total amount spent on the PTSS last financial year (reported separately by the amount paid in actual subsidies as against the amount expended for the cost of administering the scheme) and (c) why already approved patients are required to attend at their GPs simply to obtain a new referral each and every time they need to see their treating specialist?

### ANSWER

The PTSS is administered by the 16 Hospital and Health Services (HHSs) across the State. Each HHS manages the administration of its PTSS applications within its aggregate funding allocation using existing staffing and resources. The Government's PTSS budget allocation is utilised only for the subsidies available to patients.

The cost to administer the PTSS varies between HHSs on a daily basis depending on the local roles, responsibilities and demand experienced at each individual facility. It is therefore not possible to provide the separate administrative costs of the scheme. Moreover, HHSs do not generally report their expenditure on the administration of the PTSS as a discrete budgetary item.

Queensland Health is currently conducting a review of the administration of the PTSS, with a particular focus on ways the current framework can be streamlined for both patients and HHSs.

Further, as part of the 2023-24 State Budget, the Queensland Government has provided an additional \$70.3 million funding over four years to increase the existing Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme (PTSS) concession rates.

Commencing on 1 July 2023, the Queensland Government is also funding the full cost of repatriation of deceased eligible PTSS patients on PTSS-related travel to their Queensland place of residence or their Queensland Traditional Homelands or their Queensland First Nations Country.

Noting that PTSS expenditure is routinely reported at Estimates and in Parliament exclusive of any costs for administering the scheme, the total amount of PTSS subsidies paid last financial year 2022-23, split by the type of subsidy paid, is as detailed below:

<b>All Hospital and Health Services PTSS Subsidies Paid</b>	<b>2022-2023 \$</b>
PTSS Patient Accommodation	13,830,937
PTSS Patient Airfares	23,779,265
PTSS Patient Rail Fares	1,262,245
PTSS Patient Mileage	20,044,312
PTSS Patient Bus Fares	1,203,451
PTSS Escort Accommodation	14,273,590
PTSS Escort Airfares	9,122,134
PTSS Escort Rail Fares	52,785
PTSS Escort Mileage	619,375
PTSS Escort Bus Fares	152,256
<b>Total PTSS Expenditure</b>	<b>\$84,340,348</b>

Source: DSS Data using PTSS GL codes

Approved travel referrals for PTSS are valid for a period of 12 months, or for as long as the specialist referral is valid, whichever is the longer period. PTSS patients travelling for treatment for the same condition over that period are not required to attend their GP for a new referral, or reapply for PTSS approval, unless there are changes to a patient's circumstances. For example, a patient may not initially require an escort, but changes in the patient's condition or treatment may later require the support of an escort.

I am advised that in accordance with the PTSS Guidelines, PTSS patients are required to submit a new application and travel referral for each different specialty referral, as each condition may require specific needs for travel.

The health and wellbeing of patients is integral to the PTSS decision making process and this information is essential to enable the HHSs to provide timely and holistic support to our PTSS patients.