

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Conlan to Minister for Health

1. What is the current policy in regard to women utilising the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme in order to undertake IVF treatment.

Patient Assistance Travel Scheme (PATS) assists Northern Territory residents to access a range of essential specialist medical/surgical services where these services are not available locally or from a visiting service.

PATS provides assistance with travel and where applicable, accommodation costs to residents of the Northern Territory who are required to travel more than 200kms to the nearest specialist medical treatment. However, PATS is a contribution scheme and is not intended to cover all travel and accommodation costs.

In 2003, a special ruling regarding eligibility for IVF treatment

The ruling is as follows (extracted from **Patient Assistance Travel Scheme (PATS) Guidelines** revised June 2008 Version 1)

5.3 Invitro-Fertilisation (IVF)

Patients Receiving IVF treatment and other assisted reproductive treatments are eligible for assistance subject to the following criteria:

- The female partner is below the upper age limit set at 43 years of age.
- Eligibility will cease following the first successful live birth.

There is no automatic entitlement for the partner to travel as an escort and guidelines for escort travel must apply. The partner will only be approved when it is a requirement for the program. The partner may qualify when he visits the specialist for his initial consult and investigation (as a patient), and for one visit per cycle of treatment (as a patient).

Intrastate.

Approval will be given for intrastate travel for all IVF treatment and other assisted reproductive treatment.

Interstate.

The maximum entitlement per patient and partner is three interstate trips per year for the purpose of "pre implantation genetic diagnosis" only.

2. When was the policy introduced

April 2003

3. How does this policy differ from any previous policy on the use of the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme for women seeking IVF treatment and if so, what were those p[revious policies

It has not been possible to locate prior policies.

4. If there is a formal policy document, would the Minister please provide me with a copy.

The formal policy with regards current patient eligibility for IVF under PATS can be found in section 5.3 of the PATS Guidelines (see attachment)

5. How many women accessed the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme in order to undertake IVF treatment in each of the following years:

2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 (year to 30 November 2009)

Data for 2005/06 was not able to be extracted and data for 2009/10 has not been calculated at this point in time. Available data is reported below.

Year	Royal Darwin Hospital	Alice Springs Hospital	Gove Hospital	Tennant Creek Hospital	Katherine Hospital
2006/07	6	14	12	2	7
2007/08	12	20	2	3	2
2008/09	5	23	10	2	8

6. Can a woman access the PATS if they have previously utilised the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme for:

- a) Successful IVF treatments leading to the birth of a single child or multiple birth, if not, why not; and

The current ruling is that once a live birth has been achieved, eligibility for PATS for further IVF treatment ceases.

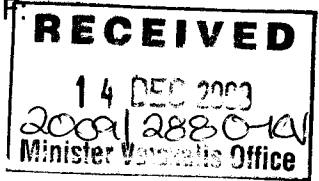
- b) Unsuccessful IVF treatments, if not, why not.

The current ruling is that providing the female partner is below the upper age limit set at 43 years of age, approval will be given for intrastate travel for all IVF treatment and other assisted reproductive treatment until a live birth is achieved, and interstate travel to a maximum entitlement per patient an partner for three trips per year for the purpose of "pre implantation genetic diagnosis" only.

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Legislative Assembly Written Question Number 74

MIN REF:



DIRECTED TO : MINISTER FOR HEALTH

ASKED BY : Mr Matthew Conlan, Member for Greatorex

SUBJECT : Patient Assisted Travel Scheme – IVF Treatment

DATE REFERRED TO MINISTER'S OFFICE : 11/12/09

REFERRED TO : Department of Health and Families

Please note that, once approved, answers to Written Questions are provided in electronic form to the Legislative Assembly and are published in Hansard. Hansard is published in a black & white Word format. Answers are to be provided in this format please. If it is considered a more complex format is necessary to answer the Question, please discuss this with Cabinet Office prior to finalising the answer.

PART A: Action Officer and Division Head to complete

It is recommended that the attached answer be provided.

Name: ROBYN CAMILL Title: A/DEP CHIEF EXEC.

Signature: [Signature] Date: 24/12/09

Endorsed by Branch/Division Head: [Signature] Date: 24/12/09

PART B: Chief Executive to complete

I support the above recommendation.

Signature: [Signature] Date: 30/12/09

A CHIEF EXECUTIVE

PART C: Minister's Approval

I approve the submission of the attached answer in my name.

Signature: [Signature] Date: 05 JAN 2010

PART D: Concluding Steps

1. Minister's office to return original documents to agency.
2. Agency to scan and email signed cover sheet and answer along with Word copy of answer to Cabinet Office (please use 'DCM Cabinet Office' group email address). Cabinet Office is responsible for recording the response and onforwarding the answer to the Legislative Assembly.