

## PATIENT FUNDING ACCESS POLICY

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## 1. Purpose

This purpose of the policy is to define ABMDR services, funding administered and to set out the requirements for patients to access these. It is to facilitate the timely, accountable and transparent administration of public funding for patients in need of ABMDR services.

## 2. Scope

This policy outlines patient funding available for accessing services and funding through ABMDR:

- tissue typing for family member (consanguineous relatives) donors living overseas funded under International Searches Program (ISP)
- tissue typing for unrelated international donors and cord blood units (CBUs) funded under the International Searches Program
- tissue typing for unrelated Australian donors funded under state tissue typing laboratory funding
- cord blood units from Australian cord blood banks funded under the National Cord Blood Collection Network program

Items available under the ISP are described in Appendix A. Patient-donor match lists are available from ABMDR free of charge.

This policy does not cover:

- services and funding administered by hospitals including tissue typing and procurement of HPC from Australian family members
- HPC procurement and transport from international registries or family donor travel to Australia for collection services. This is funded by the Commonwealth under the Bone Marrow Transplant Program.
- Australian patients being treated in hospitals overseas

## 3. Responsibilities

All ABMDR staff and ABMDR network organisation staff are responsible for:

- complying with this policy, confirming funding before services are requested
- processing any funding applications in the order received
- collecting, using and keeping personal information collected in accordance with the law, i.e. the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

Hospital staff are responsible for checking that patients are appropriately funded for services requested. State Search Coordinators are to reconcile payments with services provided.

## **4. Eligibility to access ABMDR services and funding**

### **4.1. General eligibility**

All patients must meet all these eligibility criteria to access ABMDR services:

1. Patient is accepted by a transplant physician for HPC transplant in an accredited Australian hospital as treatment for their condition
2. HPC transplant is accepted as an evidence-based treatment for the patient's condition
3. patient meets Medicare eligibility criteria as described in 4.2 or have alternative funding as explained in 4.3

Additional criteria are required for patients to access ABMDR international search and HPC procurement services. Funding for these services is available under the International Searches Program described in section 6.

### **4.2. Medicare eligibility**

Patients must meet all the following Medicare eligibility criteria to access ABMDR services and funding programs unless alternative funding is provided:

- hold a current Medicare card
- reside in Australia legally and have no time limitation on their allowed residence in Australia
- is not any of the following:
  - a foreign diplomat or family member thereof,
  - a person covered by a reciprocal health care agreement who is issued with a special Medicare card endorsed with the words "Reciprocal Health Care", or
  - a person whose Medicare eligibility is restricted and is issued with a Medicare card endorsed with the word "Visitor".

#### **Medicare card as eligibility criteria**

Checking whether the patient holds a Medicare card is used to determine eligibility for ABMDR services and funding under various programs. The funding does not come from Medicare, that is, the patient's Medicare account is not charged. Department of Veterans' Affairs cards and Department of Defence cards cannot be used in place of a Medicare card.

### **4.3. Patients that are not Medicare eligible**

The transplant hospital is liable for meeting costs for ABMDR services and funding for patients who are not eligible for Medicare, unless another funding source is agreed. Examples of funding sources are the transplant hospital, charities, government funding outside health and patient self-funding. ABMDR may require pre-payment for these patients and will be given 'self-funded' status.

## 5. Access to Australian cord blood units

Patients must meet the ABMDR service and funding eligibility criteria as outlined in section 4 to be granted access to testing and procurement of cord blood units from an ABMDR accredited cord blood bank. ABMDR administers funding for cord blood units under the National Cord Blood Collection Network program.

## 6. Access to International Searches Program funding

### 6.1. Objective

The objective of the International Searches Program is to provide reasonable funding to individual patients in need of a HPC transplant who have been unsuccessful in identifying donors in Australia. Eligible patients can be funded under this Program for the following services:

- a. identification and tissue typing of a potentially compatible family member (consanguineous, blood relative) residing outside Australia, or
- b. identification and tissue typing of potentially compatible unrelated donors or cord blood units registered on international HPC registers or cord blood banks if a family member donor cannot be found.

### 6.2. Available funding under International Searches Program

#### Maximum funding allocation per patient

The maximum funding per patient under the International Searches Program is \$12,000 per patient. This funding limit is to be published on the ABMDR website. If a patient requires more than one transplant, the funding allocation from the first transplant still applies.

#### Funding amounts and access

The funding per patient is allocated in stages. The funding amounts available at each stage are detailed in Table 1.

Stage	Funding per stage	Cumulative funding at each stage
Initial funding	\$6,000	\$6,000
Additional funding	\$3,000	\$9,000
Exceptional funding	\$3,000	\$12,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,000</b>	

*Table 1: International Search Program funding*

Funds for family and unrelated searching are available from the same funding pool, however, eligibility requirements are different so funding applications need to be made separately. Initial funding is the first amount of funding that can be accessed. Once exhausted, additional and then exceptional funding can be sought and these apply to both family and unrelated searches.

### **6.3. General ISP eligibility criteria**

Patients must meet the ABMDR service and funding eligibility criteria as outlined in section 4 to be granted funding under the International Searches Program. Additionally, the patient must not have previously received financial assistance under this program.

### **6.4. Initial funding eligibility criteria**

A patient is eligible for initial funding under the International Searches Program if the general criteria above are met (section 6.3) and either the specific criteria for either family funding or unrelated funding below are met.

The application must be approved by both:

1. a representative of the transplant hospital who has been authorised by the director of the transplant program to confirm that the patient has been accepted for transplant at the hospital, and
2. an authorised representative of the ABMDR-accredited tissue typing centre associated with the transplant hospital, who can confirm the status of the patient's search.

A separate application must be submitted for family funding and unrelated funding.

The following forms must be completed:

- 'Patient funding application – Medicare eligible patient (only to be completed once per patient)
- Application for initial funding – international family donor search
- Application for initial funding – international unrelated donor search

#### **Specific eligibility requirements for family funding**

1. The patient must have been accepted for transplant by an ABMDR recognised family transplant hospital in Australia, and
2. The patient's family members (consanguineous relatives) residing in Australia must have been excluded as potential compatible donors.

#### **Specific eligibility requirements for unrelated funding**

1. The patient must have been accepted for transplant by an ABMDR accredited unrelated transplant hospital in Australia, and
2. A search of the ABMDR for Australian donors must have been conducted on behalf of the patient, without success.

### **6.5. Additional funding eligibility criteria**

A patient is eligible for additional funding under the International Searches Program if these criteria are met:

1. initial funding has been validly granted, has been exhausted or is likely to be exhausted, and
2. there are valid clinical and HLA-indicated reasons for requiring further searching and testing.

The application must clearly document the reasons for requiring additional funding (preferably referring to the patient's HLA typing and or/ specific clinical requirement and be approved by the following:

1. the patient's treating clinician at the transplant hospital,
2. an authorised representative of the ABMDR-accredited tissue typing centre associated with the transplant hospital, who can confirm the status of the patient's search, and
3. the ABMDR National Executive Officer or delegate.

The following forms must be completed:

- Application for additional funding – international searches program

### **6.6. Exceptional funding eligibility criteria**

A patient is eligible for additional funding under the International Searches Program if these criteria are met:

1. initial and additional funding has been validly granted, has been exhausted or is likely to be exhausted, and
2. there are valid clinical and HLA-indicated reasons for requiring further searching and testing.

The application must clearly document a valid clinical reason for expending exceptional funds and a valid reason based on HLA data and/or specific clinical requirement for requiring further international search funding, and be approved by the following:

1. the Director of the transplant program at the hospital where the patient is being treated,
2. the Director of the ABMDR-accredited tissue typing centre associated with the transplant hospital, and
3. the ABMDR National Executive Officer or delegate.

The following forms must be completed:

- Application for exceptional funding - international searches program

## **Appendix A. Items funded under International Searches Program**

Items that can be funded under the International Searches Program:

- HLA typing
- NIMA typing
- KIR typing
- Verification typing
- Blood sample collection at verification typing stage
- IDM testing of donor at verification typing stage, or prior to work up request
- IDM testing of cord blood unit prior to shipment request
- Freight of sample at verification typing stage
- Search activation fees
- CBU reservation for testing
- Provision and freight of DNA sample from CBU
- Other tests on donors or CBUs for selection purposes not covered above that are clinically indicated by specific patient, donor or CBU criteria

Note that services procured after donor or CBU selection are not covered by ISP.

## Appendix B. Funding by type of donor search

Funding options available to patients meeting eligibility specified in section 4 are outlined in the table below.

Type of donor search	ABMDR funding available for tissue typing	ABMDR funding available for HPC procurement
Australian family donor search	N/A – funding is not available from ABMDR	N/A – funding is not available from ABMDR
International family donor search	International Search Program <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Initial funding</li> <li>2. Additional funding</li> <li>3. Exceptional funding</li> </ol>	N/A – funding is not available from ABMDR and is available from the Commonwealth Bone Marrow Transplant Program
Unrelated Australian donor search	Tissue typing is funded by state government	HPC(marrow) and HPC(apheresis) collections are funded by state government hospitals.
Unrelated Australian CBU search	Tissue typing is funded by the National Cord Blood Collection Network through ABMDR.	Cord blood units funded by the National Cord Blood Collection Network administered by ABMDR.
Unrelated international donor search	International Search Program <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Initial funding</li> <li>2. Additional funding</li> <li>3. Exceptional funding</li> </ol>	N/A – funding is not available from ABMDR and is available from the Commonwealth Bone Marrow Transplant Program

## Appendix C. Forms and Records

Form Number	Title
ABMDR-FRM-OP-PAT-01	Funding application form – Medicare eligible patient
ABMDR-FRM-OP-PAT-02	Application for initial funding – international family donor search
ABMDR-FRM-OP-PAT-03	Application for initial funding – international unrelated donor search
ABMDR-FRM-OP-PAT-04	Application for additional funding – international searches program
ABMDR-FRM-OP-PAT-05	Application for exceptional funding - international searches program

## Appendix D. Abbreviations and Definitions

Word	Abbreviation/Definition
Cord blood unit	CBU
Family member	Consanguineous, blood relative

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