

PATIENT FUNDING ACCESS

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1. Purpose

This policy aims to facilitate the timely, accountable and transparent administration of public funding for patients in need of ABMDR services.

This policy covers ABMDR services, funding administration and patients' criteria to access funding.

2. Scope

Patient services and associated funding available through ABMDR, includes:

- 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 (ISP)
- Tissue typing for unrelated Australian donors funded under state tissue typing laboratory funding
- Cord blood units from Australian cord blood banks under funding provided by the Commonwealth

Patient-donor match lists are available from ABMDR free of charge.

This policy does not cover:

- Australian patients being treated in hospitals overseas
- Services and funding administered by hospitals including patient specific tissue typing and procurement of Hematopoietic progenitor cells (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.

3. Responsibilities

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

- Complying with this policy by confirming funding is approved before services are requested
- Processing any funding applications in the order received
- Collecting, using and keeping personal information collected in accordance with Australian Privacy Act 1988

Hospital staff are responsible for checking that patients are appropriately funded, for services requested.

State Search Coordinators are responsible to reconcile payments with services provided.

4. Access to ABMDR services and funding

4.1. General eligibility criteria

All patients must meet the following 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

Additional criteria are required for patients to access ABMDR international search and HPC procurement services. Information about funding for these services is available under section 5 in this policy.

4.2. Medicare eligibility criteria

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

The criteria below are applicable to patients 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 agreement with the Commonwealth.

- Hold a current Medicare card:
 - Confirmation of a valid Medicare card is used to determine patient 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
 - The transplant hospital is liable for meeting costs for ABMDR services and funding received by patients who are not eligible for Medicare unless another funding source is agreed. Examples of alternate funding sources might be charities, government funding outside health and patient self-funding. ABMDR may require pre-payment for these patients and will be given 'self-funded' status
- 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,
 - 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'

The patient must have alternative funding to access ABMDR services if they are not eligible for Medicare.

5. Access to international searches program funding

The objective of the International Searches Program (ISP) is to provide reasonable funding to individual patients in need of an HPC transplant who have been unsuccessful in identifying a donor within Australia.

Eligible patients can be funded under this program for the following services:

1. Identification and tissue typing of a potentially compatible family member (consanguineous, blood relative) residing outside Australia, or
2. 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

The table below list the items funded under ISP program

5.1. Available funding

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

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
Total	\$12,000	

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.

Refer to Appendix A for list of items funded under international searches program (ISP)

5.2. Application through MatchPoint

All applications for International Searches Program (ISP) must be submitted through MatchPoint. The application for ISP is initiated using the 'Application for ABMDR services' form.

Refer to these documents on how to use MatchPoint to apply for ISP for patients

- MatchPoint and ISP guide – Referral hospitals
- MatchPoint and ISP guide – Search Coordinator
- MatchPoint and ISP guide – Transplant Coordinator
- MatchPoint user guide

5.3. Eligibility criteria

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

Stage	Funding	Specific eligibility requirements	Approval process
Initial funding	Family funding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The patient is accepted for transplant by an ABMDR recognised family transplant hospital in Australia, and 2. The patient's family members (consanguineous relatives) residing in Australia are excluded as potential compatible donors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient's Transplant Coordinator at the transplant hospital • Search Coordinator associated with the transplant hospital
	Unrelated funding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The patient is accepted for transplant by an ABMDR accredited unrelated transplant hospital in Australia, and 2. A search of the ABMDR for Australian donors has been conducted for the patient without success. 	
Additional funding	International searches funding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Initial funding has been granted and is exhausted or is likely to be exhausted, and 4. Further international testing is justified to find a donor for a patient. There must be clinical and HLA-indicated reasons provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient's Transplant Clinician at the transplant hospital • Tissue typing laboratory manager associated with the patient's transplant hospital • ABMDR Chief Executive Officer
Exceptional funding	International searches funding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Initial and additional funding has been granted has been exhausted or is likely to be exhausted, and 6. There are valid clinical and HLA-indicated reasons provided for requiring further searching and testing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of the transplant program at the patient's treatment hospital • Director of the Tissue typing laboratory associated with the patient's transplant hospital • ABMDR Chief Executive Officer

Appendix A. Items funded under international searches program (ISP)

- HLA typing
- NIMA typing
- KIR typing
- Verification typing
- Blood sample collection at verification typing stage
- Infectious disease marker testing of donor at verification typing stage, or prior to work-up request
- Infectious disease marker testing of cord blood unit prior to shipment request
- ABO blood grouping and Rh blood typing
- Full blood count
- 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 required for selection purposes not covered above that are clinically indicated by specific patient, donor or CBU criteria

Services procured: after a formal request for donor workup; or a CBU shipment request has been submitted; 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	Funding available for tissue typing
Australian family donor search	Funded by state government
International family donor search	International Search Program <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initial funding 2. Additional funding 3. Exceptional funding
Unrelated Australian donor search	Funded by state government
Unrelated Australian CBU search	Funding administered by ABMDR under agreement with the Commonwealth
Unrelated international donor search	International Search Program <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initial funding 2. Additional funding 3. Exceptional funding

Appendix C. Forms in MatchPoint

This form is available in MatchPoint application.

Document Number	Title
ABMDR-FRM-OPS-43	Patient Application for Access to Services and Funding

Appendix D. References and Associated Documents

Document Number	Title
ABMDR-SOP-IS-18	MatchPoint and ISP guide – referral hospitals
ABMDR-SOP-IS-19	MatchPoint and ISP guide – Search Coordinator
ABMDR-SOP-IS-20	MatchPoint and ISP guide – Transplant Coordinator
ABMDR-REF-IS-1	MatchPoint user guide

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