

Contents

| | |
|--|---|
| 1. Scope | 1 |
| 2. What is the Emergency Treatment Fund? | 1 |
| 3. Who is eligible to receive financial support from Emergency Treatment Fund? | 1 |
| 4. Who can make an application to Emergency Treatment Fund?..... | 2 |
| 5. What items/services are eligible to be covered by the Fund?..... | 3 |
| 6. Prior to making an application to the Fund | 4 |
| 7. Application Process | 4 |
| 8. Assessment by the HIV Emergency Treatment Fund Committee | 4 |
| 9. Planned Strategies, Continued Support, and Repeat Applications..... | 5 |
| 10. Payment Process | 6 |

1. Scope

These guidelines apply to all Emergency Treatment Fund applicants.

2. What is the Emergency Treatment Fund?

The HIV Emergency Treatment Fund is funded by Queensland Health and managed by Queensland Positive People (QPP). The Fund provides emergency funding for HIV related treatment and services, including access to services and items that can assist with maintenance of HIV treatment access. The Emergency Treatment Fund is available to all PLHIV in Queensland who are experiencing financial hardship after avenues of immediate short-term support have been explored.

The Fund does not pay for recurring costs.

3. Who is eligible to receive financial support from Emergency Treatment Fund?

All PLHIV regardless of Medicare status and resident in Queensland are eligible to receive financial support from the HIV Emergency Treatment Fund.

For visitors to Queensland from interstate or overseas applications will be assessed on a case by case basis.

The applicant and their client must be willing to be contacted by the Emergency Treatment Fund administrator three months after support from the Fund is provided to assess ongoing engagement with HIV treatment and care.

- Medicare eligible PLHIV:
 - with a low-income health care card (HCC) experiencing financial stress/crisis resulting in disruption or risk of cessation of treatment: or
 - with no health care card experiencing financial stress/crisis resulting in disruption or risk of cessation of treatment: or
- Medicare ineligible PLHIV
 - with no income or income equivalent to but not greater than eligibility for a low-income health care card who are unable to access HIV services and treatments.

4. Who can make an application to Emergency Treatment Fund?

Applications can be made on behalf of PLHIV by:

- General Practitioners
- HIV Specialist Clinicians
- Sexual Health Nurses
- Pharmacists
- QPP Case Managers or Peer Navigators

Please note: this Fund does not accept applications from individual PLHIV.

Applications must demonstrate:

- that all other avenues of financial support have been exhausted, and
- a plan of care that will address the presenting issue/s that necessitated an application to the Fund (e.g. sustainable solutions to address ongoing needs/presenting issue/s such as financial counselling).

5. What items/services are eligible to be covered by the Fund?

The Emergency Treatment Fund is available to provide short-term assistance; each application will be assessed on a case by case basis. Applicants are to source the most cost-effective option available when applying to the Emergency Treatment Fund.

The following represents a guide for applications:

| Medicare Eligible Individuals: | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Medication Costs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-payments for two months of HIV medication • Cost of generic medications for other conditions |

| Medicare Ineligible Individuals: | |
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| HIV clinical care including consultation fees and pathology testing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical consultations x 2 are available • HIV pathology tests for baseline viral load and CD4 counts and follow up. |
| Medication Costs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency treatment costs for generic HIV medication for three months • Cost of generic medications for other conditions |

| All people with HIV regardless of Medicare status | |
|--|---|
| Food Costs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Vouchers to a value of \$100 • Where all avenues of emergency access have been exhausted to support people to have access to food to take with medications |
| Communication Costs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile phone to a value of \$80 • Phone credit to a value of \$30 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To support engagement in HIV associated appointments, i.e. clinical care, community services appointments |
| Travel Costs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus, taxi, train etc. with preference for public transport if available • \$15-30 Go Card top up • Assistance with the costs of transport to attend HIV related appointments or engage with community services appointment such as housing, employment etc. |
| Accommodation Costs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency accommodation will be considered on a case-by-case basis to support people to access HIV care |
| Other Miscellaneous Costs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes sundry costs relating to domestic violence and other vulnerabilities experienced by people; sustainable solutions are encouraged |

6. Prior to making an application to the Fund

It is expected that before applying to the Queensland HIV Emergency Treatment Fund that the following options have been explored:

- Health insurance options (e.g. overseas student's health insurance)
- Asking the prescribing doctor
 - to consider applying for treatment from pharmaceutical companies under a compassionate access scheme
 - whether fees for appointments, pathology and/or treatments can be covered by the clinic (Local Health and Hospital Service), under special circumstances
- Purchase of generic treatments via online pharmacies
- Asking hospital pharmacy for a fee waiver for medications
- Other community emergency relief funds.

7. Application Process

Applications can be completed using an online form found at: <https://www.gpp.org.au/emergency-treatment-fund>. Applications will be processed in one to two business days.

Information needed for application:

- Name: a four letter identifier will be used rather than the full client name. This will be made by using the first two letters of the client's last and first names e.g. John Smith = SMJO
- Date of birth: required to identify the client application, prevent duplication of applications, and link ongoing applications for the same client.

The application must also include *brief* details including:

- Overview of client circumstances and information demonstrating that this person is experiencing financial hardship and is unable to meet these financial costs without assistance from the Emergency Treatment Fund.
- Options considered/attempted to access this financial assistance from other sources.
- Circumstances and information describing how the support requested will assist the person to engage/remain engaged in HIV treatment and care.
- Strategies that will be implemented to address longer-term solutions to presenting issues that necessitated support from the Fund.

8. Assessment by the HIV Emergency Treatment Fund Committee

The purpose of the Emergency Treatment Fund Committee is to:

- Provide strategic oversight and governance of the Emergency Treatment Fund
- Assess applications to Emergency Treatment Fund according to the criteria outlined in this document
- Follow Emergency Treatment Fund Procedure responsibilities.

Applications will be processed within one to two business days and the applicant advised by email of the outcome by the HIV Emergency Treatment Fund Administrator.

For applications to be approved they will require the support of three members of the committee.

The Emergency Treatment Fund Committee is currently (2020) comprised of:

- Chris Howard, QPP - Executive Programs Manager (Chair)
- Bernard Gardiner, Queensland Council for LGBTI Health - Board Member (Central Queensland)
- Gai Lemon, Brisbane North PHN - Program Development Officer Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs

9. Planned Strategies, Continued Support, and Repeat Applications

Continued Support

Funding for longer-term support will be assessed on a case by case basis. In certain circumstances, 6 months of 3 scripts of HIV medication may be considered.

All approved funding *must be expended within one year of approval*.

Planned Strategies

Applicants are required to demonstrate how they will address the issue/s that necessitated an application to the Fund. Planned strategies could include referral to financial counselling, support to assist person to access Centrelink benefits, support with migration, and fee waiver with HHS pharmacy.

Applications without planned strategies to address the issues which have necessitated an application to the Fund will be sent back to the applicant for revision. Once the applicant is able to provide sufficient evidence of planned strategies, the application will be progressed.

Repeat Applications

The intent of the Fund is to facilitate *emergency* support for people with HIV to remain engaged in HIV treatment and care. Support from the Fund is *not* intended to be of an ongoing nature or recurrent, i.e. recurring payments for monthly medications.

As Fund resources are limited, there is an expectation that the issues or circumstances which necessitated an application to the Fund will be addressed by the client with the support of the applicant. If strategies previously advised have not been implemented in future applications the Committee will seek an explanation.

10. Payment Process

- On approval of an Emergency Treatment Fund application – applicants must provide the Emergency Treatment Fund administrators with an invoice that can be paid for via the following methods:
 - over the phone by the Emergency Treatment Fund Administrator, or
 - by the applicant and reimbursed by the Emergency Treatment Fund.
 - **Important:** Approved funds will not be deposited directly into an applicant's bank account. E.g. Rent money will need to be deposited into the landlord or property manager's bank account.

In extraordinary circumstances, the Executive Programs Manager will assist approved applications to be paid by other methods to assist with responding to a client in crisis/emergency need.

Contacts:

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| Queensland Positive People P: 07 3013 5555 | www.qpp.org.au |
| Queensland HIV Public Health Team P: 07 3328 9797 | https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/sex-health/hiv-aids#team |
| Find your nearest HIV/sexual health service | www.endhiv.org.au/clinic-search |

For more information, please contact Jason Radcliffe, Public Health Officer

Email: emergencytreatmentfund@qpp.org.au

Phone: 07 3013 5505