

STATE-WIDE EQUIPMENT PROGRAM

**LARYNGECTOMY CONSUMABLES
PROGRAM**

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

JULY 2018

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Laryngectomy Consumables Program Transitional Operational Policies

1. Laryngectomy Consumables Program

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of these operational policies is to provide a framework for the State-wide Equipment Program (SWEP) which is funded through the Department of Health and Human Services (the department) to administer the Laryngectomy Consumables Program.

1.2 Victorian Aids and Equipment Program (VA&EP) Overview

SWEP administers a number of programs under the VA&EP on behalf of the department to support people with disabilities and the frail aged to remain living in the community.

In addition to the Laryngectomy Consumables Program SWEP administer the following:

- Aids and Equipment Program (A&EP)
- Continence Aids Program (CA)
- Domiciliary Oxygen Program (DOP)
- Supported Accommodation Equipment Assistance Scheme (SAEAS)
- Vehicle Modification Subsidy Scheme (VMSS)
- Top Up Fund for Children (TFC)
- Lymphoedema Compression Garment Program (LGCP)
- Preventative Maintenance Program (PMP)

2. Program Overview

The Laryngectomy Consumables Program was initiated after an announcement by the Victorian Government in 2018 to give crucial funding to help Victorian laryngectomy patients access everyday equipment they need to assist with breathing and the prevention of infections.

A laryngectomy involves the removal of the larynx (voice box), typically following laryngeal cancer. This surgery results in a stoma (permanent hole) in the neck for breathing, with the mouth and nose no longer providing this function. This disconnection between the upper and lower airway leaves no natural passage to provide humidification and filtering therefore inhaled air is cold, dry and unfiltered. The consequence of this is respiratory complications including involuntary coughing, excessive phlegm production, forced expectoration and dyspnoea.

There are many products available to provide humidification and filtering to facilitate improved pulmonary and respiratory function and minimise potential for further medical complications such as infection, some of which will be available through this program. These include heat and moisture exchangers (HMEs) and various stoma covers. The use of these consumables requires ongoing replacement.

Funding up to \$5,000 per patient, over a twelve (12) month period from the date of the first application, is available for the purchase of laryngectomy consumables as identified in Section 10: Availability and Supply.

2.1 Aim

The Laryngectomy Consumables Program provides people who have undergone a laryngectomy with items to enhance pulmonary and respiratory function and subsequently aims to:

- Reduce coughing, shortness of breath and excessive sputum production
- Enhance social connectedness
- Reduce physical and psychosocial problems in this population such as fatigue, sleep, anxiety and depression
- Improve voice quality and ability to communicate effectively
- Enable hands free speech
- Reduce reliance on support from health care professionals

2.2 Principles

The key principles underpinning the Laryngectomy Consumables Program are to improve outcomes for individuals and aim to achieve a patient centred service through:

- streamlined and timely access to an integrated and coordinated service delivery system
- transparent processing, prioritisation and equitable access
- efficient and cost effective use of resources.

2.3 Objectives

The objectives of the Laryngectomy Consumables Program are to provide:

- Laryngectomy items that support the patient to optimise the management of their laryngectomy
- Streamlined, single point of access for patients irrespective of their place of residence in Victoria.
- Efficiently administered program that is targeted to patients most in need and ensures equal access throughout Victoria for people who have undergone a laryngectomy.
- A cost-effective program which maximises assistance to as many patients as possible.
- High quality items that comply with relevant Australian Standards (where applicable).

2.4 Eligibility Criteria

Laryngectomy consumables are provided for patients who meet the following criteria through the Laryngectomy Consumables Program:

- must be a permanent resident of Victoria

or:

- hold a Permanent Protection Visa or Humanitarian Visa or be an asylum seeker

And

- have undergone a recent surgical procedure for a laryngectomy, and completed an appropriate trial of consumable products/items (for a minimum 30 days post discharge)

or:

- can provide evidence that the patient is currently using self-funded consumables

or:

- have not previously used laryngectomy consumables due to lack of affordability.

Queries regarding eligibility should be directed to the service provider as per Appendix 1.

The person is not eligible if:

They are eligible to receive assistance for the item/service from other Government-funded aids and equipment programs, or have funds remaining from any form of compensation/legal settlements or court awards relating to their laryngectomy including:

- Patients who have not completed an appropriate trial (minimum 30 days post discharge)
- Consumables for short term (including post surgery while surgical sites heal), intermittent, episodic or emergency situations
- The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Gold Card holders
- The Transport Accident Commission (TAC).
- Workcover Authority.
- An in-patient of a public or private hospital.
- The cost of the aid/equipment can be claimed through a private health insurance policy. Note: the Laryngectomy Consumables Program will fund the gap between the cost of the item/s and private health insurance refund.
- Within the 30 days post discharge period from a public hospital or extended care centre where the provision of laryngectomy consumables is related to the hospital admission.

Note: *Patients may be eligible for the Laryngectomy Consumables Program once eligibility under another Government-funded source/program or entitlement is exhausted or discontinued.*

2.5 Public Hospital responsibility

In 1995, an agreement was reached between the Disability Services and Acute Health Divisions to streamline the process for people requiring aids, equipment and home modification services on a permanent or long-term basis following discharge from public hospitals. For current information regarding Public Hospital responsibility for aids and equipment please see points 1-7 inclusive: <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/feesman/fees9.htm#SectionC7>

Applications for the Laryngectomy Consumables Program may be submitted during the 30-day period as mentioned above. However, items will not be supplied until the completion of the 30 day trial post discharge.

2.6 Commonwealth Aged Care

Residents of Commonwealth government funded residential aged care, recipients of all levels of the home support packages and the home support program are eligible to apply to the Laryngectomy Consumables Program for all items currently available.

2.7 Private Hospital Patients

The Laryngectomy Consumables Program will accept applications from eligible private hospital patients immediately on discharge following a successful trial of items required.

2.8 Change In Recipient Status

Patients of the Laryngectomy Consumables Program are responsible for advising the service provider of a change to their:

- Eligibility status to the Laryngectomy Consumables Program
- Contact details and/or address including if they move interstate, overseas or into a Commonwealth Government funded residential aged care service
- Nominated contact person's details
- Entitlement to receive compensation from any source, for their laryngectomy management and to repay the cost of items supplied and administration as itemised on the VA&EP Eligibility Form
- Change in physical condition such as; change or decrease in functional or cognitive ability impeding the safe use of the items supplied.

Note: *When a patient moves interstate or overseas, or no longer meets the eligibility criteria for this program, they can continue to use their allocated items, but will no longer be eligible for further assistance through the Laryngectomy Consumables Program.*

2.9 What Does the Laryngectomy Consumables Program Provide?

The Laryngectomy Consumables Program provides:

- Funding as specified in the Laryngectomy Consumables Program operational policies/guidelines under availability and supply.

The Laryngectomy Consumables Program does not provide:

- Plug inserts for voice prostheses; lubricant.
- Batteries

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Department of Health and Human Services

The Department of Health and Human Services as the funder of the Laryngectomy Consumables Program has responsibility for:

- Planning and development of new programs and schemes of the Laryngectomy Consumables Program including analysis of trends, emerging needs and projected demand.
- Promoting the principles and objectives of the Disability Act 2006 and other relevant legislation.
- Allocating funding to Laryngectomy Consumables Program service providers.
- Monitoring service provision to ensure service targets and performance are met.
- Monitoring quality improvement initiatives and ensuring quality of service.
- Coordinating the development of policy and guidelines for the operation of the Laryngectomy Consumables Program.

3.2 State-wide Equipment Program

SWEP administers the Laryngectomy Consumables Program based on the Department of Health and Human Services Policy and Funding Plan and relevant operational policies.

Appropriate and efficient management of the program

- Ensuring that contractual obligations are met as detailed in the Service Agreement.
- Administering the program in accordance with the Laryngectomy Consumables Program operational guidelines and determine priorities of applications.
- Responding to enquiries from the public about Laryngectomy Consumables Program.
- Manage the program budget during the year within the Priority of Access Framework.
- Adhering to the principles and objectives of the Disability Act 2006 and other relevant legislation.

Commitment to high quality services

- Operating efficient and effective services in accordance with the National Standards for Disability Services, and the Human Services Standards.
- Ensuring the rights, confidentiality, and privacy of patients are protected in service policy and practice.
- Reporting any faulty equipment, when notified as likely to cause serious danger, to the supplier or in the case of goods likely to cause serious injury or death that are defective, unsafe or fail to meet prescribed construction, performance and design standards, to Consumer Affairs Victoria on 1300 558 181.
- Undertaking an annual patient satisfaction survey to seek feedback and inform continuous quality improvement of the Laryngectomy Consumables Program.
- Capacity for networking
- Establishing links with other service providers/stakeholders and ensuring that the provision of the Laryngectomy Consumables Program is coordinated and integrated.
- Providing information on where specialist assessments can be obtained or referring onto other services as appropriate.

Purchasing of laryngectomy specific items

In purchasing laryngectomy specific items the service provider should exercise care in their selection and show restraint with costs while having regard to value for money. This includes:

- The quality (service and durability) of items should be balanced against cost representing value for money that includes but is not limited to: delivery and warranty of the product. Although cost is a consideration, the primary consideration is the safety of the item/s.
- Procurement strategies should aim to maximise the purchasing power of the Laryngectomy Consumables Program service provider within the supply market.
- Any procurement activity must comply with the relevant legislative requirements.

- Items issued should conform to one or more of the following requirements:
 1. Relevant Australian Standards (if applicable).
 2. Therapeutic Goods Australia (TGA) registration (Class 1 Medical Devices) (if applicable).
- Where possible, it is preferable for Laryngectomy Consumables Program to purchase Australian made items.

3.3 Specialist Prescribers and Assessors

Otolaryngologists and Speech Pathologists registered to practice with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency or other professional/regulation body (as per appendix 2), are responsible for initial certification to verify the patient has undergone a laryngectomy and are required to:

- Undertake assessments of a patient's clinical need and in conjunction with the patient, prescribe the most appropriate laryngectomy consumable products available through the program, to meet their needs.
- Confirm the potential applicant's eligibility for funded laryngectomy consumable items/products as per section 10 Availability and Supply, prior to submitting an application.
- Confirm the person does not have compensation funds available to be used for equipment associated with their laryngectomy prior to submitting an eligibility form.
- Provide a completed prescription form, with specifications, recommendations and justification as to the most appropriate and cost effective item/s and recommended supplier to the Laryngectomy Consumables Program.
- Supply a quotation where items are not available through a contracted supplier.
- Provide information on the patient's urgency of need and implications of non-provision.
- Inform the patient of possible alternatives to the prescribed item (if applicable).
- Establish that the patient and/or their carer have the cognitive, physical and psychological ability to use the item/s effectively.
- Re-assess the patient when notified of a change in their cognitive, physical and psychological ability occurs to ensure they can continue to use the item/s.
- Be available to discuss the assessment report and recommendations with a Clinical Advisor¹ and amend the recommendations where appropriate.
- Ensure training is provided to patients/carers in the appropriate safe use of their item/s.
- Ensure the applicant is advised of the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights and consumer rights and responsibilities. Further information can be found at the following links:

<http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/national-priorities/charter-of-healthcare-rights/>

¹ The State-wide Equipment Program (SWEP), contracts 'Clinical Advisors' who are highly skilled and qualified health professionals with demonstrable high level experience in the prescription and fitting of laryngectomy consumable products.

3.4 Patients

A patient is an individual who has had an application submitted on their behalf and has been deemed eligible for, or has received assistance with the supply of items through the Laryngectomy Consumables Program.

Patients of the Laryngectomy Consumables Program are responsible for:

- Accepting the terms and conditions of supply.
- Paying the cost of assessment where a prescriber charges a fee for service for undertaking an assessment of their functional needs.
- Paying for laryngectomy consumables once the amount of \$5,000, over a twelve (12) month period from the date of the first application, has been reached.
- Advising their prescriber if they have available compensation funds specifically for the management of their laryngectomy or no longer meets the eligibility criteria for the Laryngectomy Consumables Program.
- Notifying the Laryngectomy Consumables Program of a change to their eligibility status such as per Section 2.8 Change in Recipient Status.
- The general upkeep, care and cleaning, storage and disposal of items/products.
- Using the items supplied for the intended use in accordance with prescriber and manufacturer recommendations.
- Advising their prescriber of any change or decrease in functional or cognitive ability impeding the safe use of the item/s supplied safely, and arranging for a new assessment.
- Agreeing to undergo further assessment if there has been a change in their condition (as mentioned above), and agree to any recommendations made by their prescriber as to alternative/more suitable items.

4. Application and Supply Process

Upon receipt of an application the Laryngectomy Consumables Program will:

- Confirm the patient's eligibility.
- Confirm application for laryngectomy consumable items are: submitted in accordance with the prescriber's approved level of credentialing, validated and, if required, forwarded to a relevant clinical advisor for approval and/or advice/ follow up action.
- Prioritise applications based on urgency of need and implications of non-provision. The Priority of Access Framework (see Section 5 below) ensures applications are consistently prioritised.
- In the event waitlisting of applications is required, the Laryngectomy Consumables Program is required to manage waitlisted applications in accordance with the SWEP Budget and Demand strategy.
- Acknowledges all applications in writing to the patient within 10 working days of receipt of their application.
- Coordinates the provision of laryngectomy consumable items between all parties, ensuring that the patient is kept informed of the progress of their application.
- Ensures the item/s are delivered as per the prescriber's instructions.
- If the cost of laryngectomy consumables exceed \$5,000 over a twelve (12) month period from the date of the first application, the Laryngectomy Consumables Program needs to advise the patient that the maximum level of funding has been reached and the eligibility date for further supply.

4.1 Supply and Monitoring

- All new applications will be considered in line with the SWEP Budget and Demand Management Strategy. This strategy ensures that:
 - Annual budget is allocated across 12 monthly periods
 - New applications are triaged by using the Priority of Access Framework (see Section 5 below)

5. Priority of Access to the Laryngectomy Consumables Program

To ensure patients most in need are assisted, once a person has been deemed eligible for the Laryngectomy Consumables Program, their application should be prioritised based on the following categories:

5.1 'No Waiting' category

While orders for laryngectomy consumable items/products will be placed immediately on receipt of a completed application, there may be a time delay before the products are delivered.

5.2 'High Urgency' category

Consumables will be ordered as soon as funds are available for:

Criteria: (not in priority order)

- The provision of consumables is critical to the safety of the patient.
- The non-availability of items will lead to a deterioration of the patient's health which may result in premature admission to institutional care, hospitalisation or dependence on more costly services.
- The non-availability of the items will place excessive demand on carers in caring for the patient and seriously jeopardise the current care/living arrangements.

In the event that an application is waitlisted it will be processed in consideration of the priority of the application and then in chronological order of receipt.

Waiting timeframes will vary as all applications are triaged using the Priority of Access Framework. If a patient's circumstances change after the application is lodged, and the provision of the equipment becomes more urgent, the prescriber is able to escalate the urgency of need with the Laryngectomy Consumables Program at any stage.

6. Grievance Procedures and Dispute Resolution

The right of a patient to lodge a complaint about a service is fundamental to the promotion of individual rights. Written information regarding grievance/complaints or dispute resolution processes should be made available to patients and or carer by the Laryngectomy Consumables Program.

If a patient or carer has a complaint about any aspect of the Laryngectomy Consumables Program, he/she should raise the matter with the Laryngectomy Consumables Program in the first instance, and attempt to resolve the issue by mediation or negotiation.

If the matter cannot be resolved the patient may wish to pursue the issue following the process as outlined in the auspice agency's Grievance/Complaint procedures and Dispute resolution.

If the issue remains unresolved between the patient and the Laryngectomy Consumables Program, it should be directed to the Health Services Commissioner.

7. Patient Records and Privacy Principles

The Public Records Office Victoria (PROV) advise that Laryngectomy Consumables Program records can be treated as financial records and may be destroyed after 7 years refer to *PROS 07/01 General Retention & Disposal Authority for Records of Common Administrative Functions 2013 class 5.11*. The *Health Records Act 2001* (the Act) establishes privacy standards for the handling of health information (including disability) and regulates the handling of health information including collection, use, disclosure and access. The Act will give individuals a legally enforceable right of access to their own health information, which is contained in records held in the private sector (public sector access continues via Freedom of Information). The Act, which commenced on 1 July 2002, applies to all Victorian organisations – profit and non-profit, public and private sector, and people who handle health information. Under the Act, health information that is collected, held or used by organisations must be handled in accordance with the Health Privacy Principles in Schedule 1. The Principles cover many different aspects of information handling. They are binding and a contravention of the principles is “an interference with the privacy of an individual”. For further information refer <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/privacy.htm#principles> or www.health.vic.gov.au/hsc

8. General Conditions of Supply

Whilst a patient may be eligible for assistance from the Laryngectomy Consumables Program, it does not guarantee that a particular item will be provided. This depends on the priority of the application and the availability of funds.

The Program will purchase and supply only those items listed in the '*Laryngectomy Consumables Program availability and supply*' to applicants and/or their carers who have the cognitive, physical and psychological ability to use the item safely and effectively.

There are limitations for the number of items available over a twelve (12) month period from the date of the first application.

9. Retrospective or Reimbursement of Funding

The Laryngectomy Consumables Program will not reimburse or fund any costs associated with any items that a person may have committed to, either before or after their application to the Laryngectomy Consumables Program has been submitted, regardless of their eligibility to this program.

The Laryngectomy Consumables Program service provider must approve all applications for items/products prior to supply. The Laryngectomy Consumables Program will not provide funds retrospectively for items/products purchased prior to approval

10. Availability and Supply

Available Items	Number of items available over a twelve (12) month period from the date of the first application	Prescriber Qualification
Laryngectomy Consumables		
HME cassettes	365 per year	Otolaryngologist , Speech Pathologist eligible for membership of Speech Pathology Australia
Foam stoma covers	365 per year	
Cloth stoma cover	4 per year	
Laryngectomy tube or button	2 per year	
Hands free device	1 per 3 years	
Accessories	1 per year	
Adhesives (standard)	365 per year	
Adhesives (non-standard)	180 per year	
Skin care	1-14 packets per year (pending packet size)	

NB: Electronic Voice Aids including electrolarynx and voice prosthesis are available through the State-wide Equipment Program.

For further information in relation to these items please refer to the Victorian Aids & Equipment Program Guidelines.

Appendix 1: Laryngectomy Consumables Program Service Provider Details

Service Provider	Program Name	Contact	Telephone	Fax	E-mail Address	Address
Ballarat Health Services	Laryngectomy Consumables Program	Director: Jeni Burton For relevant Program Manager details please visit our website contact page	1300 74 7937 1300 PH SWEP	5333 8111	swep@bhs.org.au	State-wide Equipment Program PO Box 1993 Bakery Hill VIC 3354

Appendix 2: Prescribers

Sub Program	Medical Practitioners	Health Professionals	Allied Health Professionals	Speech Pathologist
Laryngectomy Consumables Program	√	x	x	√

Health practitioners eligible for registration with the Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency include:

Medical Practitioners: are Specialist otolaryngologists – head and neck surgeons eligible for registration with the Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency.

Specialist prescribers either registered, accredited, or certified to practice with a peak body or statutory organisation:

Speech Pathologists who are certified practising members of Speech Pathology Australia.