



Rationale:

CFT recognises that apart from the physical impacts of CF on the individual's health, it is also emotionally challenging for the person with CF and their loved ones and that they may benefit from speaking to a qualified counsellor.

CFT also recognises the financial impacts of the condition and seeks to provide some relief to those affected through the provision of counselling and support upon request.

The Counselling Assistance Policy links to one of the three pillars of CFT's ~~2014-17~~2018 to 2022 Strategic Plan – Services: Delivering services to our members that meets their needs and, provide support, ~~and reduce isolation.~~

Definitions:

“Counselling” refers to support provided to members by a registered Psychologist or Psychiatrist.

“Counsellor” refers to a Psychologist or Psychiatrist who holds a current registration to practice in Australia.

“immediate family” includes partners, spouses or widows of people with CF and parents, carers, siblings or children of a person with CF who is living or deceased.

“financial year” means the financial year of CFT which is 1 January to 31 December in each year.

“members” refers to financial members of Cystic Fibrosis Tasmania Inc.

Purpose:

To ensure that members have mental health support available at no out-of-pocket expense to them or their family.

Policy:

1. CFT will provide assistance to members living with CF to access counselling and support by way of reimbursement of those expenses, up to an annual limit.

2. Access to this support will also be made available for immediate family of the member as per the definition above.
3. The member applying for financial assistance must be a current, paid up member of CFT or join CFT for a minimum of two years, to be eligible for assistance.
4. Applications for financial assistance are to be made on the attached "Financial Assistance Application Form for Counselling".
5. To access this funding members are required to:-
 - a. Visit their General Practitioner and ask for a Mental Health Care Plan through the Australian Government's *Better Access to Mental Health Care initiative* (BAMHC);
 - b. Complete the attached "Financial Assistance Application Form for Counselling" and submit it to CFT along with details of the counsellor being seen and the date of the first visit;
 - c. Contact the counsellor and ask them to invoice CFT for the gap payment directly;
 - d. In the event that the counsellor is unable to directly invoice CFT, undertake to provide a copy of the invoice, together with the Medicare documentation indicating the gap payment, to CFT for reimbursement. CFT will endeavour to process this within ten days of receipt.

6. Level of Assistance:

- a. CFT will provide up to \$600 per financial year per membership to cover the gap payment following the member's accessing of the BAMHC program;
- b. In the event that a member is ineligible for support under the BAMHC, following proof of refusal being provided, CFT will fund visits to a counsellor up to a limit of \$1,000 per financial year per member. This assistance will be considered on a case by case basis.
- c. Additional assistance over \$1,000 per financial year will be considered on a case by case basis.
- d. The total amount available for members under the policy will be determined by the Board on an annual basis.

7. Approval of funds:

The Executive Officer, may approve applications totalling up to \$1,000pa per member. Any requests for assistance above this level require the approval of the Executive Officer and one Executive member of the Committee.

In the absence of the Executive Officer, the Executive Assistant will seek the approval for any payments under this policy from one Executive member of the Committee, prior to processing any application.

Financial assistance will be provided via electronic transfer, BPay or another manner agreed between the member, counsellor and Cystic Fibrosis Tasmania.

Date of policy approval by CFT Committee: 12 July 2017
Date of Review: 12 July 2021