

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN CAPE
GUIDELINES FOR DONATIONS OF WHEELCHAIRS

PART 1: DONATION NEEDS

1. QUANTIFYING THE NEED FOR WHEELCHAIRS

The need for wheelchairs is a global one. Worldwide an estimated 65 million people require wheelchairs. (WHO 2008: Guidelines on the provision of manual wheelchairs in less resourced settings) In the Western Cape, where approximately 80% of the population is dependent on state-subsidised health care services, the Department of Health annually supplies approximately 4,000 persons with wheelchairs and accessories. Despite this, approximately 1,400 additional persons must be waitlisted annually for devices. This includes provision of devices to first time users, as well as for those persons requiring replacements.

To ensure optimal function in the community, each user needs to be supplied with a device best suited to his/her personal, physical and environmental needs. See Fact Sheet 6: Visual Aids (Motivation UK).

2. IS THERE A NEED FOR DONATIONS?

YES!! In light of the above shortfall in the health care budget, appropriate donations are certainly welcome and needed. What is meant by appropriate donations?

3. APPROPRIATE DONATIONS

When analyzing the need of the 1,400 Western Cape residents added annually to the waitlist, the following is clear:

- 60% are children who require children's wheelchairs. The majority require posture support buggies or wheelchairs that offer postural support systems.
- 45% require postural support systems and/or specialised pressure care cushions.
- 15% require motorised chairs.

- 15% require positioners to aid in 24 hour management regimes, i.e. special sleep positioners and standing frames.

(Total is >100%, as one user may need a combination of devices.)

4. HOW ARE DONATIONS MANAGED?

Provincial Donations:

The Provincial Government of the Western Cape: Mobility Assistive Devices Advisory Committee (MADAC) is a provincial body representing all six Regions in the Western Cape, all levels of care, as well as Disabled People's Organisations (DPO's) and Non-governmental Organisations (NGO's). This committee functions under the auspices of the Head: Western Cape Rehabilitation Centre, as well as the Directorate: Public Health at the Provincial Head Office.

This committee deals with all issues related to mobility assistive devices in the Province, e.g. policies, training, backlogs, Tenders, central database and donations. A detailed Provincial database is kept of all clients needing wheelchairs and accessories. Types, sizes as well as special requirements of devices are listed. Any person, school, NGO or DPO may refer a client to be waitlisted for a chair, but assessment for the specific device is done by a trained therapist or nursing sister. The committee actively monitors and facilitates the selection process, ordering and issuing of chairs, and co-ordinates the waitlist of applicants for Provincial-, National- and International Donations.

Donations to institutions:

Donations to institutions are managed on a similar basis as for provincial donations. Each facility manages their own database. This information is duplicated in the Provincial database.

Revised by PGWC Mobility Assistive Devices Advisory Committee Jan 09