



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

Data request charging policy

Epidemiology Branch, Public Health Division

Title: Policy to charge clients requesting epidemiological advice and data

1. Background

Epidemiology Branch (Epidemiology) has always provided epidemiological services to health planners and program evaluators within WA Health and other government departments, academic institutions and non-government organisations, since its inception. While these services are provided free of charge to WA Health staff, online intranet applications such as HealthTracks Reporting and Epidemiology Calculator are available to WA Health staff to extract user-defined reports on health conditions and trends.

Epidemiology has been charging an amount of \$150 an hour to external clients such as private health consultants and Medicare Locals since 2011 for project work that requires the production of information over and above that which is published. For the purposes of this document, a project is defined as the time and resources used to provide a systematic response to a request for information by a client who is not a WA Health salaried officer or is not identified as exempt from fees by Epidemiology.

To sustain the ability of Epidemiology to continue providing epidemiological services to all clients in the medium to long-term under future funding and expenditure, a costing model based on sound budgetary policy, operating under a partial cost recovery framework has to be implemented.

2. Scope

This document outlines the process flow and the pricing structure used by Epidemiology to provide epidemiological services to its clients. This policy may apply to the following groups of clients:

- Private consultants
- Commonwealth Departments
- Commonwealth funded organisations (e.g., WA Primary Health Alliance)
- Other State and Territory Governments
- Universities/research institutes
- Non-government organisations
- Public (students and community groups)

This policy does not apply to costs incurred by media requests or to all persons employed in WA Government agencies or WA Health, which incorporates the following entities:

- Department of Health
- Metropolitan Health Service
- Western Australian Country Health Service
- Quad Centre

When a request for information is made by a WA Local Government Authority, no fee will be charged if the information is requested to fulfill the requirements specified in Part 5 of the Public Health Act 2016 to prepare local public health plans.

A fee is not charged where there is a reciprocal arrangement or a collaborative program has been established through a joint agreement. Managers should exercise caution/discretion if the potential exists to damage existing relationships and consult with the Principal Epidemiologist for a decision.

Even for WA Government agencies or WA Health clients, an assessment is required on a case by case basis to determine if a charge may be applied for the services. In this case, the respective managers will need to be satisfied that the information will not be used for personal research purposes and only for WA Health core business.

3. Policy statement

The purpose and capacity of a data request will determine the time it will take to generate a report and its cost.

3.1. Prioritisation

Depending on existing commitments, availability of resources, complexity of the task, and operational feasibility the time taken to provide a report typically takes approximately 10 working days. Notwithstanding, in the case of requests by the Minister for Health or Director-General, the authorisation or endorsement of the Assistant Director General of Public Health may allocate a higher priority for the preparation and completion of a request.

3.2. Application Process

Initially the client is required to complete the Epidemiology Data Request form and submit it to epi@health.wa.gov.au indicating the purpose and how the data will be used.

Epidemiology assesses the request and provides a quotation for the services, outlining the contents of the report and the time it will take to complete it. The costing model is outlined in Appendix 1.

A quotation is a fixed price offer that can't be changed once accepted by the client. This holds true even if the Branch takes longer to complete the task than expected.

The quotation should specify precisely what it includes, and the client should be made aware that significant variations outside of this will be subject to additional charges.

A quote will remain valid for two months from the issuing date of the quote. A new quote will be issued to the client after the expiry date and the client's request will be treated as a new request with a new data request ID. Once the client accepts the quotation, contents and the timeframe in writing, work on producing the report commences.

If the data have been published on the internet, the site address will be provided to the client and there will be no charge. If the data analysis for the requested data has been performed for some other purposes and/or for other clients as recorded in the task database maintained by the Epidemiology Branch, the client will be charged the minimum fee for one hour.

3.3. Terms and Conditions

By agreeing to accept data from Epidemiology and signing the contract (refer Client Agreement Form), the requestor:

- 3.3.1. in the case of unit record data, agrees not to copy or store parts or the whole datasets in personal computer devices and take the datasets away from the designated place of secure storage in any media;
- 3.3.2. agrees not to pass on or divulge the released data to a third party without the prior approval of Epidemiology;
- 3.3.3. acknowledges that the data released remains the property of Epidemiology;
- 3.3.4. agrees not to use the data for any purpose other than that for which it was originally requested;
- 3.3.5. agrees that the source of the data will be properly referenced whenever it is used in publications; and
- 3.3.6. agrees for staff at Epidemiology to check the data that will be or may be released prior to release.

Disclaimer

The Epidemiology Branch cannot be held liable for subsequent changes/updates to the source data from which the summary tables were originally derived nor be held accountable for the accuracy of the interpretation of data provided by Epidemiology to the client.

3.4. Applicant Obligations

Applicants wishing to receive a report from Epidemiology under this policy must agree to:

- 3.4.1. operate within the framework as outlined in the *WA Health Information Access and Disclosure Model (Operational Directive 0360/12)* and adhere to the *Information Use Policy (Operational Directive 0390/12)*;
- 3.4.2. agree to pay in full the agreed amount charged for Epidemiology to complete the request by the due date specified in the invoice;
- 3.4.3. acknowledge the role of Epidemiology in all publications and reports;
- 3.4.4. provide a copy of any draft reports, journal articles or publications to Epidemiology for review and comments within 10 working days, prior to distribution or publication; and
- 3.4.5. provide a copy of final reports or journal articles to Epidemiology for its research outputs collection.

4. Definitions

Client	One who is not a WA Health salaried officer or is not identified as exempt from fees by Epidemiology
Project	Defined as the time and resources used to provide a systematic response to a request for data, report or epidemiological advice by a client.
Report	Any output provided to a client under the agreed specifications at time of quotation. This can include, but not restricted to a written report, Excel table or map.
WA Health	Department of Health, Western Australia

5. Roles and responsibilities

Principal Epidemiologist

The Principal Epidemiologist is accountable for all revenue raised on behalf of WA Health as a result of this charging policy.

Managers and Supervisors in Epidemiology

Managers and supervisors are responsible for the implementation of the policy in charging clients according to cost guidelines outlined in the appendix.

6. Compliance

The use of epidemiological services and the release of health data are to be consistent with the WA Health Information Access and Disclosure Policy (Operational Directive 0539/14) and Information Use Policy (Operational Directive 0572/14).

Requests for data by clients must demonstrate that the information provided will be used in accordance with the applicable legislation, regulations and guidelines.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in the client being banned from further epidemiological advice and/or services. If the client's actions are deemed of a criminal nature, the matter may be referred to the appropriate authorities.

7. Evaluation

Evaluation of this policy is to be carried out by the Policy Owner (refer below).

Quantitative information on revenue earned, category of clients, time and duration of services provided, will be measured against existing baseline data to calculate the efficiency of the policy.

8. References

Application and pricing arrangement (2014). *Data Linkage Branch, Public Health and Clinical Services Division, Department of Health Western Australia*, 5p.

Costing and Pricing Government Services – Guidelines for use by agencies in Western Australian public sector (2015). *Department of Treasury, Government of Western Australia*, 40p.

Commercial-in-confidence document entitled “Advice of acceptance of offer for provision of epidemiology information system (GIS) upgrade issued under ICT services CUA 14008 Ref HIN08115” (2015). *Department of Health, Government of Western Australia*, 4p.

Consulting fees – Centre for Applied Statistics, University of Western Australia (2015). <http://www.cas.maths.uwa.edu.au/consulting/fees>.

9. Related documents

- WA Health Information Access and Disclosure Policy (Operational Directive 0539/14)
- Information Use Policy (Operational Directive 0572/14)
- Data Linkage Branch - application and pricing arrangement (2014)

10. Authority

Title:	Principal Epidemiologist		
Contact:	Peter Somerford		
Directorate:	Epidemiology Branch		
Version:	1.2	Date Published:	16/10/2017
Date of Last Review:	27/09/2017	Date Next Review:	01/12/2018
Comments:	Added the circumstances under which Western Australian Local Governments will not be charged. Removed Western Australian Local Governments from the list of entities to be charged.		

Epidemiology Costing Model

The model will be based on two components, namely a variable cost (VC) and a constant cost (CC). The VC will vary with the time it takes to produce a report while the CC takes into account the overheads associated with preparing the information requested.

Variable cost component

- The time taken by an officer or the sum of the time taken by officers to complete the task. This task may be a combination of the time taken to extract a report from HealthTracks Reporting, HealthTracks Mapping, manual extraction from information contained in source datasets, prepare analyses or advice and conduct a literature search. The time taken to proof read and obtain approval to release the report will also be included.
- The client will be charged at the rate of \$130 an hour for the above services.
- The minimum amount charged is for one hour regardless of whether the work will be completed in less than one hour. All other charges will be based on whole hours and calculated from completed hours plus part hours rounded to the next hour.

Constant cost component

- In addition to the per hour charge, clients will be charged a cost per request as specified below.
- Once-off administration fee of \$50 to cover initial assessment and processing of the request.
- Once-off infrastructure cost of \$200 for the request includes the cost of developing analytical tools as well as maintenance and management of Epidemiology datasets (administrative, population and survey data or otherwise).

A charging schedule is provided in Table 1 using the formula below:

$$\text{Total cost} = \text{Variable component} + \text{Constant component} + 10\% \text{ GST}$$

Table 1: Charging Policy

Request time (hours)	Variable component cost (\$)	Constant component cost (\$)	Total cost (Excluding GST) (\$)	GST (10%) (\$)	Total cost (Including GST) (\$)
1	130	250	380	38	418
2	260	250	510	51	561
3	390	250	640	64	704
4	520	250	770	77	847
5	650	250	900	90	990
6	780	250	1,030	103	1,133
7	910	250	1,160	116	1,276
8	1,040	250	1,290	129	1,419
9	1,170	250	1,420	142	1,562
10	1,300	250	1,550	155	1,705
15	1,950	250	2,200	220	2,420
20	2,600	250	2,850	285	3,135
25	3,250	250	3,500	350	3,850
30	3,900	250	4,150	415	4,565
35	4,550	250	4,800	480	5,280
40	5,200	250	5,450	545	5,995
45	5,850	250	6,100	610	6,710
50	6,500	250	6,750	675	7,425
55	7,150	250	7,400	740	8,140
60	7,800	250	8,050	805	8,855
65	8,450	250	8,700	870	9,570
70	9,100	250	9,350	935	10,285
75	9,750	250	10,000	1000	11,000
80	10,400	250	10,650	1065	11,715
85	11,050	250	11,300	1130	12,430
90	11,700	250	11,950	1195	13,145
95	12,350	250	12,600	1260	13,860
100	13,000	250	13,250	1325	14,575

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