

Appointment Confirmation, Cancellation & Did Not Attend Policy

Purpose

IWC is committed to providing culturally safe, accessible, and timely healthcare for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the wider community. This policy supports fair access to appointments by reducing unused appointment times, while recognising that social, cultural, family, transport, and health factors may affect attendance. This policy is applied in a fair, respectful, and compassionate manner, with individual circumstances always taken into account.

Scope

This policy applies to all appointments booked with IWC across all service areas, including but not limited to:

- Medical
- Allied Health (Physiotherapy, Dietetics, Diabetes Education, Speech Pathology)
- Dental
- Psychology
- Any other clinical or community health services delivered by IWC

This policy applies to:

- All clients of IWC
- All staff involved in booking, confirming, delivering, or managing appointments
- All appointment types, including in-person and telehealth

The policy governs:

- Appointment confirmation and reminder processes
- Cancellation timeframes
- Management of Did Not Attend (DNA) appointments
- Application and waiver of cancellation and DNA fees
- Management of repeated non-attendance

This policy is implemented in a culturally safe, trauma-informed, and person-centred manner, recognising the social, cultural, family, transport, and health factors that may impact attendance.

References

ISO 9001:2015

RACGP – Standards 5th edition

NSQPCH



Responsibility

IWC is responsible for:

- Providing clear information to clients about appointment expectations, cancellation timeframes, and possible fees
- Implementing reminder systems (SMS and phone calls) to support attendance
- Applying this policy in a fair, culturally safe, and compassionate manner
- Considering individual circumstances before recording DNAs or applying fees
- Ensuring that urgent and clinically necessary care is not withheld due to unpaid fees
- Monitoring patterns of non-attendance to improve service access and engagement

Managers and Team Leaders are responsible for:

- Ensuring staff understand and follow this policy
- Supporting staff to manage DNAs and cancellations appropriately
- Overseeing consistent and fair application of fees and waivers
- Supporting service improvement strategies to reduce DNAs
- Escalating complex or sensitive cases where required

Administrative and reception staff are responsible for:

- Booking appointments accurately
- Issuing appointment reminders in line with this policy
- Recording cancellations and DNAs correctly in the client management system
- Attempting contact where appointments are unconfirmed
- Communicating respectfully and clearly with clients about cancellations and DNAs
- Flagging repeated non-attendance to clinical or management staff where appropriate

Clinicians are responsible for:

- Attending appointments on time and being available for scheduled sessions
- Recording DNAs and late cancellations appropriately
- Notifying administration staff of any changes to appointment availability
- Considering individual circumstances when recommending DNA recording or fee waivers
- Referring clients to care coordination or support services when repeated non-attendance occurs

Clients are responsible for:

- Attending scheduled appointments where possible
- Notifying IWC as soon as possible if unable to attend
- Responding to appointment reminders where able

- Providing updated contact details
- Working with IWC staff to find appointment times and reminder methods that support attendance

Definitions

Appointment – refers to a scheduled booking for a client to receive a service from IWC, including in-person or telehealth consultations.

Appointment Confirmation – refers to a client response (via SMS, phone or in-person) indicating their intention to attend a scheduled appointment.

Cancellation – refers to the notification by a client or IWC that an appointment will not be attended.

Clients – includes clients, patients, visitors and participants.

Culturally Safe Care – refers to care that is respectful of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultural identity, beliefs, values, and practices, and that recognises the impact of social and cultural factors on health and attendance.

Employees – includes employees, students, volunteers, and sub-contractors.

IWC – Indigenous Wellbeing Centre is our Organisation.

Late Cancellation – refers to a cancellation made within 12 hours of the scheduled appointment time.

Repeat Non-Attendance – is a pattern of two or more late cancellations or DNAs within a defined period, triggering review of appointment arrangements and support strategies.

Telehealth Appointment – is a consultation delivered by phone or video instead of in person.

Unconfirmed Appointment – refers to an appointment for which the client has not responded to reminder messages or phone contact attempts prior to the scheduled time.

Policy

Appointment Reminders & Confirmation

To support clients to attend their appointments, IWC provides appointment reminders via SMS and phone calls as a courtesy. Reminders are sent:

- 72 hours prior to the appointment
- 48 hours prior to the appointment
- 24 hours prior to the appointment

Clients are encouraged to confirm their appointment by replying to the SMS/phone reminder.

Unconfirmed Appointments

If an appointment has not been confirmed:

- Our team may attempt to contact the client to confirm attendance.
- Where attendance cannot be confirmed, the appointment may be offered to another client to support timely access to care for the community.
- No cancellation fee applies where an appointment is cancelled due to non-confirmation.

Cancellations

If you are unable to attend your appointment, please notify IWC as soon as possible so the appointment can be offered to another client.

- Cancellations made more than 12 hours before the appointment:
 - No fee applies.
- Cancellations made within 12 hours of the appointment:
 - A late cancellation fee may apply, as this short notice makes it difficult to rebook the appointment. Depending on your appointment type and where appropriate, you might have the option to switch to a telehealth consultation instead, with no cancellation fee for transferring from an in-person appointment to telehealth.

Did Not Attend (DNA)

A Did Not Attend (DNA) occurs when:

- A client does not attend their scheduled appointment, and
- The appointment was confirmed, or
- The client did not cancel with the required notice.

DNAs are recorded after consideration of individual circumstances, including cultural obligations, family responsibilities, transport issues, and health-related factors.

Fees

Cancellation and DNA fees are intended to contribute to the cost of clinician time that cannot be reallocated at short notice.

- Fees are not claimable through Medicare or private health insurance.
- Where fees apply, payment arrangements may be discussed.
- DNA or cancellation fees will not prevent access to urgent or clinically necessary care for clients.
- Fees may be waived at IWC's discretion.

Applicable Fees

IWC Service	Late Cancellation / DNA Fee
IWC Medical	\$15
IWC Allied Health (Physiotherapy, Dietetics, Diabetes Education, Speech Pathology)	\$50
IWC Dental	\$50
IWC Psychology	\$100

Repeat Non-Attendance

Where there are repeated late cancellations or DNAs, IWC may:

- Review appointment arrangements to better support attendance
- Discuss alternative appointment times or reminder methods
- Involve care coordination or Indigenous Health Worker support where appropriate
- Review ongoing care arrangements to ensure services best meet the client's needs

The aim of this process is to support engagement in care, not to restrict access.

Exceptional Circumstances

IWC recognises that unexpected situations can occur. Cancellation and DNA fees may be waived in cases of genuine emergencies, cultural obligations (including Sorry Business), illness, transport issues, or other exceptional circumstances.

