

The QAAMS Program is Unique!

The QAAMS Program is the first of its type to be developed for Indigenous People anywhere in the world and places Aboriginal Medical Services at the leading edge internationally of using point-of-care technology to support diabetes management.

Across three and a half years of quality assurance testing, Aboriginal Health Workers have shown they can perform point-of-care HbA1c testing to an analytical standard equivalent to that of trained laboratory scientists and technicians.

For Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, a Medicare rebate is available for each HbA1c test that is performed. This rebate has ensured that the QAAMS program is self-funding and self-sustaining.



Return this section by fax or mail



**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
ON THE QAAMS PROGRAM**

If you are interested in joining the QAAMS program or learning more about it, please complete the following questions:

Name of Your Health Service

Contact Person

Contact Phone

Contact Email

Are you an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service?

Yes No

(Only ACCHSs are able to claim the Medicare rebate for HbA1c tests on the DCA 2000)

Do you have a DCA 2000?

Yes No

If not, would you be prepared to buy one? (cost approximately \$6500 AUD)

Yes No

Do you have an Aboriginal Health Worker available to run and manage HbA1c testing on the DCA 2000?

Yes No

Other Comments or questions you'd like answered

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Please photocopy this section and mail or fax it to:

Mark Shephard

QAAMS Program Manager

**c/o RCPA Quality Assurance Programs Pty Ltd
Flinders Medical Centre, Bedford Park SA 5042**

or fax 08 82046063.

**Mark's phone number is 08 82045070 and his email is:
Mark.Shephard@flinders.edu.au**

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**THE 'QAAMS'
PROGRAM**

**Education, Training and Quality Assurance
for point-of-care Haemoglobin A1c testing
in Aboriginal Medical Services**

Is diabetes
a major health problem
in your community?

Is diabetes a health priority
for your medical service?

Do you have an Aboriginal Health Worker
who could be assigned to an innovative
specialist diabetes program?

Are you interested in taking even
greater control and ownership of
diabetes management?

Then the QAAMS program may
be appropriate for your health service?

Please take time to read
this brochure

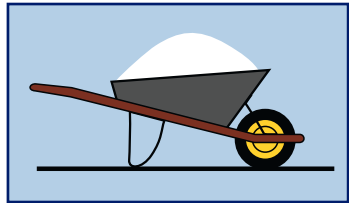
Introducing the Program

As a crucial part of their on-going management, Aboriginal people with diabetes need to have their blood Haemoglobin A_{1c} (HbA_{1c}) levels regularly tested so that their doctor can see how well their diabetes has been controlled over the past three months.

Aboriginal Health Workers can now do their own HbA_{1c} testing on-site in the community using a small, portable point-of-care medical instrument called the Bayer DCA 2000.

What is HbA_{1c}?

HbA_{1c} is simply sugar that is attached to Haemoglobin in the red blood cells of the body. In a person without diabetes, HbA_{1c} makes up around 5-6% of the Haemoglobin in red cells. In



a person with diabetes, the amount of HbA_{1c} can be between 7% and 14% or even higher. The higher the HbA_{1c} above 7%, the poorer

the diabetes control, and the greater the risk of developing complications of diabetes. The target HbA_{1c} for a person with diabetes is 7%.

The Bayer DCA 2000 point-of-care medical instrument

HbA_{1c} is measured by the DCA 2000 on just a fingerprick of blood with the result ready for the client and the doctor in only 6 minutes. The DCA 2000 therefore provides a convenient service for clients and ensures greater community control, while the doctor can act immediately on the result.



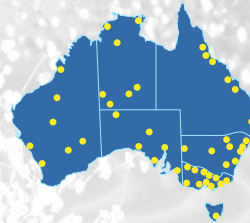
The QAAMS Program

50 Aboriginal Medical Services from around Australia currently participate in the QAAMS program, which is managed by the RCPA Quality Assurance Programs Pty Ltd on behalf of the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing and with the support of NACCHO. More than 2300 Aboriginal people with diabetes are now having their HbA_{1c} levels tested through the program. Recently, the island of Tonga in the Western Pacific has joined our QAAMS program.

What does the QAAMS program provide?

The QAAMS program provides the following support services for participating sites

Participating sites in 2002



Education and Training

All participants are given a set of education resources (book, video, and posters), which cover topics about diabetes, HbA_{1c}, the DCA 2000 machine and the principles and practice of quality assurance.



On-going Training

Aboriginal Health Workers from each site have initial formal training in how to perform an HbA_{1c} test on the DCA 2000. There are also regular education updates and opportunities for



retraining through on-site visits, and regional and annual Workshops conducted by the QAAMS training team.

Quality Assurance

A quality assurance program has been developed to monitor the performance of all DCA 2000 machines across Australia by the RCPA Quality Assurance Programs Pty Ltd, who provide similar quality assurance programs for more than 1000 laboratories in Australia, New Zealand and other parts of the world.

Testing kit

Aboriginal Health Workers from each service make up and test two quality assurance samples every month (from a testing kit supplied by the QAAMS program). They fax their results to the QAAMS central office in Adelaide. The performance of each service's DCA machine can be checked by comparing their QAAMS results with the known values for those quality assurance samples and with the results from all other services. Simple graphical reports summarising the DCA's short- and long-term performance are then sent to each service. These quality checks ensure that each service has confidence their machine is generating results that are appropriate for patient care.

