

**Issue: Cots in Remote Health Centres**

Raised by: Management request

Background: A recent complaint has led to the request that Best Practice Group advise on whether children's cots should be placed on the standard equipment list for DHCS Remote Health Centres. They are not currently listed as standard equipment.

Discussion: The need for cots in remote health centres is obviously for where a safe and suitable resting area is required for the care of a sick infant or child. There may also be requirement to look after a well child where the carer is either undergoing a clinical check-up, or is too unwell themselves to care for the child at the time.

There is no doubt that the dedicated resource of a safe crib or cot is ideal in managing the care of children, however it is not considered to be necessary that all health centres must have this equipment on site. Alternative management techniques, cost, and in some cases limited space in health centres, are factors that influence this decision.

There are a number of Health Centres that already have cribs or cots on-site, some of which use this equipment intermittently. There are also numerous anecdotal accounts of Health Centres that have a cot, but do not utilise it.

If a Health Centre feels the presence of a cot is of value this can be sourced as an additional requirement. In this instance it is recommended that inquiries be made to the NT regional hospitals to source surplus stock rather than purchasing new equipment.

It is appropriate to comment that infants and children should not be left unattended and care needs to be taken in the supervision of children on elevated surfaces when in care. The use of carers to supervise children is warranted as the rule. Exceptional circumstances only should see staff being required to watch for children apart from involvement in direct clinical care.

Consultation: Within Best Practice group.

References: Nil

Outcome: Cots / cribs are not mandated as standard equipment.

Where cots or cribs are already available, their use is encouraged, providing care of children is still managed in a proactive way utilising carers and not leaving children unattended.