



Australian Government



myagedcare



General Practitioners fact sheet - June 2016 update

Referring patients to aged care services

This fact sheet provides General Practitioners (GPs) with information to assist in referring older patients (aged 65 years and over and 50 years and over for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) to aged care services. These arrangements apply to GPs in all states and territories (except Western Australia).

The Department is making changes to standardise and improve the use of My Aged Care by health professionals. This reflects the important role that health professionals play in the care of older people and the value in harnessing their knowledge and expertise in supporting older people's access to aged care services.

Watch the video on the new health professional webform

Find out more about the new health professional webform on the Department of Health's YouTube site: www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFjibUjwiBU

How do I access aged care services for my patients?

The national model for My Aged Care places importance on the need for an independent and holistic assessment of an older person's needs prior to the commencement of aged care services.



For further information, go to My Aged Care
1800 200 422 | www.dss.gov.au/myagedcare

In order for older people to receive an assessment for aged care services, they will need to be referred for an assessment via My Aged Care. The contact centre will register the client and, dependent on the information you have provided, will undertake initial screening to assess whether the client will need either a home support assessment or a comprehensive assessment.

The type of assessment your patient will require is dependent on the services they need to access:

- If a patient is seeking Transition Care, residential care, residential respite, or is seeking access to a Home Care Package, GPs can refer patients for a comprehensive assessment for aged care services by an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT).
- If the patient requires Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) services, GPs can refer patients for a home support assessment by a Regional Assessment Service (RAS).

The RAS or ACAT assessor will assess the client to determine the client's needs and develop a support plan with the client. The assessor will refer the client to the appropriate service provider(s) to initiate aged care support services. All referrals are based on the client's expressed preferences for any particular service provider.

How do GPs make referrals for an assessment?

To refer a patient on to My Aged Care for an assessment, it is preferred that GPs use either of two methods:

- Use the online health professional referral form that be accessed via the 'Contact Us' page on the My Aged Care website or via [MyAgedCare.gov.au/referral](https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/referral); or
- Call the My Aged Care contact centre on **1800 200 422**.

Note that referrals can also be faxed to the My Aged Care contact centre. GPs should be aware that if a referral is made via fax (1800 728 174), the My Aged Care contact centre will be unable to acknowledge receipt of the referral.

When the online referral form is used referrers will receive confirmation that their referral has been received by My Aged Care as well as a unique reference number so they can follow up the referral if necessary. Further benefits include faster processing and the ability to print and save the web form as a Portable Document Format (PDF).



Can GPs refer patients for urgent services?

While an assessment of a client's need is required in order for the client to access aged care services, the Department also acknowledges that there are specific circumstances where GPs will need to refer directly to a service provider. GPs can seek to refer a patient directly to a service provider in circumstances where:

- There is an urgent need for a service based on the patient's circumstances which, if not met immediately, may place the patient at risk; and
- The services where this is likely to happen are: nursing, personal care, meals and transport.

These services would be of a time-limited duration with a longer term commitment only occurring after assessment.

How do GPs make direct to service referrals for urgent services?

The preferred method for GPs to access urgent services for their patients is by contacting the service provider directly. The service provider will, if able, provide urgent care for the patient and subsequently refer the patient to My Aged Care for an assessment of ongoing service needs.

GPs can also call the My Aged Care contact centre on 1800 200 422 to make referrals directly to services. The contact centre can make an electronic referral to these services as well as concurrently referring the patient to the appropriate assessment.

Note that acceptance of the referral for urgent care will be based on the service provider's capacity to take on new clients and the relative needs of clients awaiting services.

Will there be future enhancements to referral processes?

The longer-term vision for health professional referrals is to look at building connectivity between My Aged Care and My Health Record. The new health professional web form is a significant step forward.

Additional work is being undertaken to develop templates that can be used by GPs to make referrals from existing clinical information systems, which will support current GP workflows. Consultation with a range of GPs will occur to support the development of these templates. It is intended that the templates would reflect the same content as the enhanced web form.

Where can I find more information?

More information about My Aged Care, including guidance material, fact sheets and videos, is available on www.dss.gov.au/MyAgedCare. The Department will provide further information and resources in the coming months to support GPs as users of the My Aged Care System.



For further information, go to My Aged Care
1800 200 422 | www.dss.gov.au/myagedcare