

Service Model & GP Referral Guidelines

Overview

The Barwon Regional Adolescent and Child Health Shared-Care (BRANCHS) clinic is a new public general paediatric service for children and families within the Geelong region. This service has been co-developed, in response to overwhelming regional demand, by the paediatric team with input from the GP liaison unit and advisory panel.

The service operates using a refer in and out model whereby all patients seen will have a GP who has agreed to be the ongoing primary provider for the patient. Following assessment within the outpatient service, and after consultation with the GP, the patient is discharged back to GP care. The GP will have ongoing access to support and advice from the outpatient clinic team after their patient has been discharged and will be able to re-refer as required.

Under a shared co-prescribing arrangement, patients on stimulant or other controlled medicines requiring specialist oversight will have intermittent review, with day to day prescription of these medications managed by the GP. Support will be provided for such prescribing for GPs unfamiliar with requirements.

Intake & Triage

All referrals to the BRANCHS clinic will be triaged for suitability and urgency by clinicians. This will include a phone screen with the client/family to further assist the prioritisation process and phone contact with the GP.

Referrals may be re-directed to a more appropriate service (internal/external to BH) and discharged; or referred to indicated services (internal/external to BH) whilst awaiting an appointment in the BRANCHS clinic.

To maintain **equity and access** to this service for the children in our region, **GP shared-care** and collaborative discharge planning (including case-conferencing) will be a requirement for all children referred to the service. Referrals should clearly indicate the capacity of the referring GP to participate in this model of care.

Inclusion criteria

All children aged <18 years for medical, developmental or behavioural/emotional concerns.

Referrals for management advice without direct clinic review will also be welcome.

All referrals should be made under the guidance of the relevant [Health Pathway](#).

Services not provided

- x Multi-disciplinary autism or educational assessments (can review and refer on as required)

Referrals for surgical and sub-specialist paediatric assessment (Eg Neurology, Cardiology etc) or allied health provider may be re-directed to the relevant visiting specialist paediatric clinic.

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Clinic Profile

Three general clinics weekly at University Hospital Geelong / Barwon Health site.

Clinic staffing consists of:

GP Consultant, Paediatric Consultant, Paediatric Fellow, Registrar, Nurse Social Worker, other Allied Health staff (*consult only*)

Support for referring GPs

To discuss non-urgent questions about shared-care patients, GPs can contact the clinic by email branchs@barwonhealth.org.au.

For urgent paediatric advice, GPs should still contact the UHG Switchboard (03) 4215 0000 to discuss with the On-Call Paediatric Consultant.

How to refer

To allow for the most effective triage and intake process, GPs are encouraged to refer using the BRANCHS Outpatient Template, ensuring detailed clinical information and availability to participate in a shared-care management model is clearly indicated.

This template can be downloaded into your practice software (BP, MD, ZM) from the [Barwon Health GP Referral Templates webpage](#). For any issues using the template, please contact the Barwon Health GP Liaison Unit on (03) 4215 8845 or gpfeedback@barwonhealth.org.au

Referral is available via Fax to (03) 4215 1685

For general queries the clinic can be contacted by phone on (03) 4215 1680

GP Information and guidelines current August 2022