

After-Hours Tele-health Pilot in Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACF)

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the NBMPHN implementing this pilot?

There has long been an identified need for medical care for residents of RACFs in the After Hours period. When residents at RACFs are unable to access medical care at their facility, they are often transferred to local hospital emergency departments by ambulance, for medical assessment and treatment. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) such as Emergency Departments and Ambulance Services should be the last resort for treating patients with emergent conditions that could not be timely managed in a community setting.

Access to medical care for residents of RACFs during the After Hours period varies across the region. In addition to general practices who provide their own After Hours coverage funded under the Practice Incentive Program (PIP), there are some Medical Deputising Services (MDS) operating in the region. RACFs have reported MDS doctors are often delayed by several hours, or not available at all in some regions. In these situations RACF staff have reported that when they are unable to contact the resident's usual GP in the after-hours period, the only option is to call an ambulance. There are areas within the Nepean Blue Mountains region where ambulance call out rate from RACF is very high. Emergency departments have reported that a significant number of RACF patients are transferred to hospital for conditions that could be managed within the facility if medical advice was available.

Why My Emergency Doctor?

Earlier in 2019, NBMPHN conducted an expression of interest process seeking an RACF video/telehealth model for the after-hours period. My Emergency Doctor (MED) were the successful tenderers for this service. My Emergency Doctor (MED) is Australian-owned and operated. This service is Medicare rebateable for residents of aged care facilities with a GP referral in place. The service provides an after-hours online tele-medical service connecting patients and onsite healthcare providers to Specialist Emergency Doctors, via a video link through the MED smartphone app.

The MED doctors are all Fellows of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (FACEMs). They will provide online consultation and diagnosis if an urgent care situation arises during the after-hour period. This also include prescriptions, x-ray and pathology referrals, as well as advice on whether the patient needs to attend the Emergency Department or whether their condition can be managed onsite. Their Patient Support Team will send a copy of the Consultation Summary to the facility and resident's GP via their preferred method of secure communication e.g. fax; secure email or via a secure messaging service.

Will My Emergency Doctor be contacted during normal hours?

My Emergency Doctor will only be contracted to provide consultations in the after-hours period when the resident's usual GP is not available. After Hours period is defined as after 6pm and before 8am on weekdays; before 8am and after 12noon on Saturdays; and all day on Sundays and public holidays.

Will the Emergency Medicine Specialists be dedicated to this service in the after-hours period or will they be also working in an emergency department at the same time?

The Emergency Medicine Specialists will be on shift only for My Emergency Doctor when they are providing this service.

What if I do not want my residents to be part of this service?

It is your decision as a GP if you would like to refer your patients to access My Emergency Doctor service in the after-hours period when you are not available. You can refer all, some or none of your patients for access to the My Emergency Doctor service in the after-hours period. You will be asked by the facility to complete a consent form to provide your preference regarding which patients are to access this service.

What support will the Residential Aged Care Facility have to implement this service?

As part of the pilot, NBMPHN is providing the necessary resources to assist the RACF to implement access to the My Emergency Doctor smartphone app. My Emergency Doctor undertake an on-boarding process with each RACF including procedures to support RACF staff and agency RACF staff to access the My Emergency Doctor service in the after-hours period.

What communication should I be expecting from My Emergency Doctor if they consult with one of my patients in the after-hours period?

The My Emergency Doctor Patient Support Team will send a consultation summary to the facility and resident's GP via their preferred method of secure communication e.g. fax; secure email or via a secure messaging service.

Will other models of after-hours care be considered in the future?

This pilot will operate in 8 of the 29 RACFs in the Nepean Blue Mountains region for a 12 month period. During this time the pilot will be evaluated. The NBMPHN will also be consulting with General Practitioners, RACFs, NBMLHD and other stakeholders to develop other options for consideration to assist RACFs, GPs and their patients/residents in the after-hours period. If you have any feedback on alternative options we would love to hear from you, please do not hesitate to contact either Yolande Boys or Liz Welch at NBMPHN on 4708 8100.

If I want to provide this option for my patients what do I need to do?

If you would like the RACF to utilise the My Emergency Doctor service in the after-hours period for your patients when you are not available, you will need to complete a consent form and referral to My Emergency Doctor. The participating RACF will provide this to you to complete. Copies of the documents will be provided by the RACF to My Emergency Doctor and kept on file at the facility.

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Please indicate your preference for use of the MED service during the after-hours period, if your patient requires medical support					
RACF TO COMPLETE			GP TO COMPLETE – please initial/sign		
Name of Resident	Date of Birth	Name of Visiting GP	1. No – do not contact MED	2. Yes – please attempt to contact me first. If I am unable to be contacted, please contact MED	3. Yes – please contact MED in the after-hours period
Mr. XYZ		Dr. XYZ			
Mr. XYZ		Dr. XYZ			
Mr. XYZ		Dr. XYZ			
Mr. XYZ		Dr. XYZ			
Mr. XYZ		Dr. XYZ			
Mr. XYZ		Dr. XYZ			
Mr. XYZ		Dr. XYZ			
Mr. XYZ		Dr. XYZ			
Mr. XYZ		Dr. XYZ			
Mr. XYZ		Dr. XYZ			
Mr. XYZ		Dr. XYZ			
Mr. XYZ		Dr. XYZ			
Mr. XYZ		Dr. XYZ			
Mr. XYZ		Dr. XYZ			
Mr. XYZ		Dr. XYZ			

SAMPLE

*The Commonwealth defined after-hours period is between Monday to Friday from 6.00 pm to 8.00 am, Saturdays from midday, all day Sunday and all day on gazetted public holidays.