



## FACT SHEET

# Patient referrals and alternative destinations

There has been increasing demand on emergency ambulance resources to attend Triple Zero (000) cases where the patient is considered to have a low acuity medical or minor injury presentation suitable for out-of-hospital care. Previously, in the absence of formalised referral arrangements, paramedics have been required to transport patients to the hospital Emergency Department (ED) despite recognising this may not be the most appropriate care destination for the patient.

The patient referrals and alternative destinations initiative involves paramedics, where appropriate, referring and/or transporting low acuity patients to an alternative destination such as their regular general practitioner (GP) following a Triple Zero (000) call. The aim of this initiative is to improve patient outcomes by providing continuity of care with their regular primary health care provider. It also recognises the specialist role GPs have in the ongoing care of their patients and in areas such as chronic disease where they have a greater understanding of their patient's baseline presentation.

This integrated care model should be considered to enhance service provision for patients who are generally accessing health or social services through the Triple Zero (000) system. It will benefit these patients by matching their clinical needs to the most appropriate health care.





## FACT SHEET – PATIENT REFERRALS AND ALTERNATIVE DESTINATIONS

This initiative currently requires intensive care paramedics (ICPs) to complete additional training focused on enhancing their clinical reasoning and decision-making skills. This additional capability is grounded in taking a detailed history and physical examination of the patient, which then allows the ICP to safely refer patients identified as not requiring ED treatment to an alternative care pathway.

### Successful trial

Providing appropriate patients with alternative referral destination options has been successfully trialled on the NSW Central Coast in collaboration with the Central Coast NSW Medicare Local.

These referrals were successfully realised as a result of:

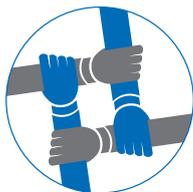
- The paramedics being conversant with the indications for referring patients and the referral processes in relation to the wider health community, and how these processes may be utilised.
- The paramedics' understanding of the purpose and function of the range of settings in which emergency/unscheduled care is delivered, including the ambulance service, primary care, out-of-hours facilities and the ED.
- The paramedics acknowledging and understanding the roles and values of those involved in delivering emergency/unscheduled care.



Specific areas of focus for the alternative patient destination model of care.



### Alternative patient destination models



Guide and support local implementation teams



Investigate other appropriate referral options



Facilitate training