

## After Hours Medical Telehealth Project

### ***Telehealth Consultation Fact Sheet for: Patients and Families***

Your healthcare team is committed to providing the best care to patients as close to home as possible. In certain circumstances, the health service may be able to offer Telehealth Consultations (TH video-consultations) in the Urgent Care Centre (UCC) for afterhours presentations between 9.00pm and 7.00 am. There are many benefits to you by using this service such as reducing the need to travel to see a doctor and more convenient access to medical care. Video-conferencing is one of the main ways in which telehealth is improving access to healthcare services for patients who live in regional, rural and remote areas. Instead of having to travel to the nearest major hospital to see a doctor, an increasing number of patients are using video-conferencing. Using telehealth helps us to bridge the distance between doctors and patients and virtually bring the doctor to you!

#### **What is a Telehealth Consultation?**

A Telehealth consultation is an appointment with a doctor which is held using a state of the art camera and viewing screen between a doctor in the Emergency Department at Latrobe Regional Hospital (LRH ED), and the Urgent Care Centre that you have presented at.

On presentation to the UCC you will be assessed by a nurse and given a 'triage score' which indicates the urgency of your condition and helps staff to prioritise your care and treatment. Should your case be in the moderate to minimal urgency range (triage category 4 or 5) you may be offered a telehealth consultation.

Your case will be placed in the triage queue at LRH and you will be seen by a doctor in order of priority. The consultation will be run through a secure video camera system between the UCC and LRH ED.

The camera is set up with two-way vision so you can see your doctor and they can also see you.

You will be able to ask the consulting doctor questions, just the same as a normal consultation.

#### **Do I have a choice?**

Yes you do.

It is your choice to select a face-to-face consultation if you prefer. The individual health service may not always be able to offer a face to face consult with a doctor, so patients may have to travel to access this.

Not all presentations are suitable for Telehealth and sometimes you will be required to attend another health service site in person.

Where possible and if appropriate, a Telehealth consultation will form part of your care plan when you present after hours between 9.00pm and 7.00 am when there is no local medical coverage available for the moderate to minimal urgency range (triage category 4 or 5). Your healthcare provider will assess the appropriateness of a video consultation for your situation.

#### **Do I have to pay extra for Telehealth Consultations?**

There should be no cost to you.

#### **What do I need to do at the time?**

If you attend your local Urgent Care Centre you will be assessed and given a triage score to help staff to prioritise your care.

If you choose not to have a Telehealth consultation/appointment nursing staff will work with you to determine the most appropriate action to meet your health care needs.

You will be able to request a medical certificate or certificate of attendance as required, please remember to ask if one is required.

Sometimes your local GP or medical provider may need to follow up aspects of your care in the following days to ensure that they have the most up to date information, can review your treatment recommendations and monitor your progress or provide prescriptions and so on.

### **Who will be with me during the Telehealth Consultation?**

At the start of the Telehealth consultation an introduction will take place so you know who is involved in the care process.

You are welcome to have anyone with you at your end of the consultation. This could be a family member or carer for example. A nurse will be present with you in person in the Urgent Care and can assist with any aspects of the consultation.

Your permission should always be sought if third parties such as students are to sit in. As usual, you can always ask for them to leave the consultation at any time.

### **What about privacy?**

The privacy principles are the same as a normal consultation.

Your Telehealth consultation will not be recorded unless prior consent has been obtained.

As with a face-to-face consultation, documentation of the consultation will go into your medical record.

### **What about follow-up?**

This will occur as required and you will be notified of any follow up requirements prior to the end of the consultation or before you leave the UCC.

### **What if I'm not happy with the consultation?**

If at any time you do not wish to continue with the consultation via video, you are always able to cease the meeting and seek advice elsewhere. Just inform staff involved in the Teleconference.

If you are not happy with any care received by any health provider at any time, we recommend you follow up with the appropriate person or ask to see another doctor or seek a second opinion. You can access a Compliments/Comments/Complaints form in the UCC of the health service or ask staff and they will provide one to you as your feedback is important.

Contact

Vicki Farthing Executive Director of Nursing: 03 5667 5507: [vicki.farthing@gshs.com.au](mailto:vicki.farthing@gshs.com.au)

The Health Services Commissioner: Free Call 1800 550 552

### **How can I give feedback?**

Telehealth consultations have been well established in health care for many years, however they may be relatively new to rural UCC's, therefore you may be asked to participate in an evaluation being performed by Monash University to help assess the service and assist with improving the process.

Participation is voluntary and your details will remain anonymous unless you choose otherwise.

Your feedback will help improve the services offered in your area and to others using Telehealth