

## REFERRAL GUIDELINES: Emergency Department

All patients referred to Emergency Department (ED) are assigned to a triage category based on their clinical need and related psychosocial factors. The clinician reviewing the referral will use their clinical judgement to determine the best service response for the patient.

In order for the ED to provide appropriate and rapid care for your patient please consider:

- **Does the patient need emergency assessment and care or admission? Do they need the ED NOW?**
  - o If the patient does not need urgent care, consider alternatives.
  - o The ED is not a means of bypassing an “out patient” booking system and sending the patient to the ED with the aim of obtaining an earlier out patients appointment for a stable, non urgent condition is not appropriate.
  - o WMH encourages GP’s to consult specialist physicians and surgeons to refer patients.  
<http://www.mercyhealth.com.au/ifhp/Pages/Refer%20a%20Patient.aspx>).
- **Does the patient need an ambulance?**
- **Can preliminary investigations be done to determine the need for the patient to come to the hospital?**
  - o The ED does not have access to unlimited 24 hour radiology services.
  - o The ED is not the “convenient” place to get pathology or radiology.
  - o Consider alternatives which will not compromise patient health and safety.
- **Please do not give the patient unrealistic expectations.**

The ED is busiest in the afternoons and evenings and waiting is often inevitable. Patients are triaged according to the level of urgency of their problem. It is not helpful if they are given expectations that they will be seen as a priority for a non urgent problem. Also, the decision to admit patients rests with the ED medical staff after assessment of the patient and often in consultation with in-patient units.

## MAKING A REFERRAL

In order to refer a patient to the ED for review and treatment referring GP's /Medical Specialists are required to:

- **Phone our ED Consultant or Senior Doctor in charge on 8754- 3318** to discuss your patient and
- **Provide a comprehensive referral letter** to accompany the patient along with results from all recent investigations including pathology results, X-ray results and film.

ED consultants are usually available by phone to GP's for questions relating to **emergency patient management**. Consultants on duty are also expected to be involved in patient care so whilst they endeavour to answer calls promptly, on occasion this may not be possible.

Your letter should include



### Essential referral content

#### Essential information

- Full name
- Address and phone numbers
- Date of birth
- Indigenous status
- Referring GP details
- Health insurance details
- Preferred language and interpreter requirements
- Medicare number
- Mobility needs
- Advanced Care Plan
- Medical Power of Attorney

#### Clinical

- Presenting problem and duration of symptoms
- GP diagnosis or provisional diagnosis, if known
- Relevant medical history
- Relevant social history or special needs
- Current medications
- Investigation results
- Allergies or warnings
- Physical examination results
- Management to date and response to treatment

#### Referrer details

- Name, address and contact information
- Provider number
- Signature

## INTERPRETING SERVICES

A proportion of our patients have limited or no proficiency in English. In these cases, we engage professional interpreters for communication with our clinicians. To enable access to an appropriate interpreting service, please ensure that your referral includes information on the patient's preferred spoken language and their need for an interpreter.

### **Werribee Mercy Hospital – Emergency Department**

300 Princes Highway, Werribee, 3030

Phone 03 8754- 3318      Fax: 03 8754 3363