

Dear Ballarat GPs

REFERRALS TO THE BHS EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

Change in process:

The Emergency Department (ED) **no longer expects a phone call** from local GPs regarding patients they are sending to the ED. We would request a **concise referral with a clear request** outlining the issue which you would like the ED address. An accurate current medication list is extremely helpful. Please give this letter to the patient for them to present at triage.

Rationale for the change:

The ED and GPs are getting busier and the phone call is adding delays (interruptions) at both ends. Often the patient has arrived at the ED before we have received the call or before we can process the information (deliver it to triage). A referral letter is almost always sent anyway so we feel we do not need both.

AO Phone:

5320 4801 The AO phone will continue to be answered 24/7 by the most senior medical staff member on duty in the ED. We will continue to welcome calls for emergency advice, sensitive issues or where it is not feasible/possible to send an appropriate letter (patient not present or being moved too urgently).

We would still prefer to discuss transfers with practitioners based outside Ballarat especially time critical or services we do not currently provide (neurosurgery, plastic surgery). We may be able to prevent unnecessary patient transfers and delays.

Faxes:

NEW NUMBER 5320 4826 (ED RECEPTION). We would like to notify a change of fax number but please be aware that without "discussion" faxes in the ED are often missed due to clerical staffing issues (that is the fax machine may not be checked for many hours) – please only send a fax as a last resort but also call the AO phone too (so we know to flag this with reception).

Implementation:

This change will take effect immediately (and some of you may have already received verbal advice of this change!) however we all know that it will take time for everyone to adjust.

Our aim to reduce unnecessary work on both ends and to ensure 'our' patients get access to the safest, timely and most appropriate care.

Thank you and we look forward to continuing our good relationships.



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Our vision: *Safe Respectful Care for All*