

## PALLIATIVE CARE: TELEHEALTH VIDEO-CONSULTATIONS

### Information for Patients and Carers

Telehealth aims to make it easier for Australians who have difficulty getting to a specialist, or who live in rural and remote areas. By using electronic and telecommunications technologies, telehealth enables you to consult with health-care professionals without having to travel long distances.

The Barwon Health Palliative Care Program is committed to providing care to patients and their families within the Barwon South West Region. A consultation with your Palliative Care Physician by video may be a suitable option for you. The video-consultation can happen while you are home, or with your local GP or other health-care professional, in their clinic.

### Using this service

It is always best to speak to your doctor before seeking advice from a Specialist. You can then ask them for the required **medical referral** for a telehealth video-consultation. If it is clinically appropriate for you to use the telehealth service, when the Palliative Care office receives your referral, we will contact you to book an appointment.

The consultation can be in your home, or at the clinic of your GP or Specialist.

Wherever you are, you will need:

- A computer with a web camera (built in or add on)
- A microphone (built in or add on) and / or telephone
- A reliable internet connection
- An email address

Some simple set-up instructions and a consent form will be sent to the nominated email address and one of our staff will test your equipment and set-up with you before your first appointment.

If you have special needs such as an **interpreter**, or would like your GP, other Specialist, Practice Nurse, Nurse Practitioner or other health professional to join the consultation, please let us know so we can help arrange a time that suits everybody.

If you have a question, or need help before, during or after the telehealth video-consultation, please ask our staff.



## What will I need to do on the day?

This will vary depending on your location at the time of the appointment. Our staff will provide you with specific instructions before your appointment.

- If you are at home, check that your computer, internet connection, speakers, microphone and camera are all turned on and working.
- If you are at your doctor's clinic our staff will liaise directly with the staff at the doctor's clinic about their set-up. You only need to arrive at their clinic prior to the allocated time ready for the appointment.

Please be ready at the scheduled time of your consultation.

- As with other health-related appointments, clinics often run behind time and you may have to wait before the doctor joins your appointment.
- Be ready anyway, you will hear when the doctor starts your consultation.

A telehealth video-consultation is like any other appointment with your doctor. Try to:

- avoid any possible interruptions to your appointment (visitors, noise),
- speak as clearly as possible, and
- look at the screen.

**Please have your phone turned on and handy.** We will call you if there are any problems.

**IMPORTANT:** If you are unable to attend the appointment, **please call us to cancel or reschedule.**

## Who will be part of the consultation?

At the start of the appointment we will introduce everyone in the room and ask you to do the same. As with a face-to-face consultation, there may be students, trainees or other staff in the consultation. You can always ask for them to leave at any time.

You are also welcome to have anyone with you.

If you wish to speak privately with the Palliative Care Physician, ask any other people present to leave the room.

## What about privacy?

As with a face-to-face consultation:

- No one (including you, your GP or us) may record the consultation without written consent by all involved.
- You will be emailed a consent form that we will ask you to sign and return prior to your video-consultation.
- We will keep a written record of the consultation and this will go in to your Barwon Health medical record.



## What about follow up?

You will be offered a follow-up appointment or investigations as needed, this could be by video-consultation again, in person or with your GP.

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

As with any consultation, if you are not happy with the clinical outcome or decisions, you can always ask to see another doctor or seek a second opinion. If you don't like the style of a video-consultation you are always welcome to choose face-to-face consultations in future. You may also ask to stop the video-consultation at any time.

The choice is always yours – a video-consultation is just one option for you or your loved one.

## Are there any charges?

There is no cost to you from the Barwon Health Palliative Care Program for use of the telehealth video-consultation service. If you ask your GP or other Specialist to attend the appointment, please discuss their potential fees with them. Both the Palliative Care Physician and your GP or other Specialist may bill Medicare. If eligible, we will ask for your consent to bill Medicare. This request will be by email.

## How can I give feedback?

Please complete the online survey that you will be sent after your first telehealth video-consultation. It is very important and useful to us and the future of telehealth video-consultations that you share your experiences.

We are interested in any feedback about our service and encourage you to provide this, either verbally or in writing. Staff will assist you with this process to ensure that feedback reaches relevant staff, if desired. This will be managed in a confidential way.

The following options are available:

- Contact the Barwon Health Palliative Care Manager on **T 03 4215 5700**, or
- Contact the Barwon Health Consumer Liaison Officer on **T 03 4215 1250** or mail  
Barwon Health  
Safety & Quality Unit  
PO Box 281  
Geelong VIC 3220

