

Palliative Care Referral Guideline

Austin Health Palliative Care Unit holds weekly post-clinic meetings to discuss and plan the treatment of patients with palliative conditions.

Department of Health clinical urgency categories for specialist clinics					
For all emergency cases that require immediate review, or pose an immediate risk to life or limb, please dial 000 or send the patient to the Emergency Department.					
Urgent: Referrals should be categorised as urgent if the patient has a condition that has the potential to deteriorate quickly, with significant consequences for health and quality of life, if not managed promptly. These patients should be seen within 30 days of referral receipt.					
Routine: Referrals should be categorised as routine if the patient’s condition is unlikely to deteriorate quickly or have significant consequences for the person’s health and quality of life if specialist assessment is delayed beyond one month.					
Exclusions: Palliative Care Unit does not provide the following services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients not previously known to Austin Health. • Patients with Chronic Pain Syndromes – Refer to the Austin Chronic Pain Clinic. • Non-ambulant patients – can be referred but will be seen by our outreach team; consider instead referring directly to local Community Palliative Care Service. 					
Condition / Symptom	GP Management	Investigations Required Prior to Referral	Expected Triage Outcome	Expected Specialist Intervention Outcome	Expected number of Specialist Appointments
Patient has a life limiting illness requiring one or more of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complex symptom management e.g. pain, dyspnoea or psychological distress; 2. Clarification regarding advance care planning and goals of care; 3. Assistance with end-of-life care planning. 	Internet Resources CareSearch GP Hub https://www.caresearch.com.au/Health-Professionals/General-Practitioner Finding a Community Palliative Care Service https://www.pallcarevic.asn.au/directory/services Palliative Care Victoria https://www.pallcarevic.asn.au/	To be included in referral: Clinical history and examination A current list of medications MUST be brought with the patient Imaging (If external to Austin) Diagnostics (If external to Austin) Instruct patient to bring films & diagnostic results to the Specialist Clinic appointment (If external to Austin)	In all cases, referrals will be triaged by the Palliative Care Consultancy Service, and patients will be notified of their appointment.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishing treatment plan and discharge back to Referrer, and/or on to Community Palliative Care Service 2. Securing patient/family confidence and understanding of care needs 	1-4 appointments will usually be required.