

E-referrals to Acute Specialist Clinics (Eastern Health)

December 2021 Version 7.1

From 1st December 2021, Acute Specialist Clinics (Eastern Health) transitioned to requiring e-referrals via HealthLink SmartForms as the method for receiving referrals to Acute Specialist Clinics. This approach is aimed towards “axing the fax” for better, safe transfer of care in Acute Specialist Clinics **only**. *This is not an organisation-wide change. All other elements will continue as per normal.* It is acknowledged that this is a significant change and extra support will be provided to GPs to ensure clinics with and without conformant software will be able to successfully transition to electronic referrals.

Practices without conformant software can register for a ‘free’ HealthLink Portal licence by completing the [online registration form](#) and notate in the **comments/Message** field that you would like to use the **SmartForms**. Once HealthLink receives your completed registration application this will be processed, and portal details will be forwarded to you.

The move is designed to ensure your patients’ identifiable clinical information is transmitted from your Clinical Information System (CIS) directly to the Acute Specialist Clinics in a secure format, which will result in:

- receipt of referrals which are intact and complete
- improved legibility
- fewer declined referral and support adherence to the state-wide referral criteria released in 2019 and 2021
- improved appointment advice response times for patients and GPs

HealthLink SmartForms are free to use and integrated with most GP clinical software including Medical Director, Best Practice, Genie and MedTech Evolution.

HealthLink SmartForms include a direct link to HealthPathways Melbourne which is up-to-date with State-wide Referral Criteria, making it easier for GPs to include the required information in the referral to ensure that the referral meets these requirements and can be triaged efficiently and effectively.

For further information and a list of clinics, please visit the Eastern Health Specialist Clinics [webpage](#)

Help is available

Additional information is available at Eastern Melbourne PHN’s [website](#)

Quick start guides

[Medical Director](#)

[Best Practice](#)

[Genie](#)

[Portal](#)

For assistance with the HealthLink SmartForms in your software, contact HealthLink on 1800 125 036 or email HelpdeskHL@healthlink.net

For additional training, including demonstration, contacted Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Digital Health team on digitalhealth@emphn.org.au or, if urgent, 9046 0300

PLEASE NOTE: As the COVID 19 pandemic continues to evolve, some Acute Specialist Clinics activity at Eastern Health has been reduced to ensure we can support the needs of the community and respond to COVID-19.

This means our capacity has been reduced and wait times to offer Acute Specialist Clinics appointments will be longer than potentially expected.

Where possible, care will be continuing to be delivered via telehealth (video) or phone.

For the latest information regarding Patients and Visitors during the Pandemic – please refer to <https://www.easternhealth.org.au/locations/patients-and-visitors> website.

Frequently asked questions

Does this apply to all specialist/ outpatient clinics at Eastern Health?

No, e-referral only currently applies to **all acute specialist clinics and antenatal clinics**. A list of all acute specialist clinics can be found [here](#).

It does not include referrals to the following services: (click on each hyperlink for further referral information)

- [Aged Care Assessment Service \(ACAS\)](#) – referrals through the My Aged Care (MAC) website
- [Cardiology investigations](#)
- [Community health services](#)
- [Early pregnancy assessment service \(EPAS\)](#) – coming soon March 2022
- [Emergency departments](#)
- [Fetal Maternity Assessment Clinic \(FMAC\)](#) – coming soon March 2022
- [Geriatric Evaluation and Management at Home \(GEM@Home\)](#)
- [Hospital Admission Risk Prevention \(HARP\)](#)
- [Hospital in the Home](#)
- [Mental health services](#)
- [Neurodiagnostics](#)
- [Sleep Laboratory](#) and Respiratory Function Tests
- Sub-acute ambulatory clinics (SACS). These services include:
 - Contenance Clinic
 - Falls and Balance
 - Cognitive Dementia and Memory Service (CDAMS)
 - Complex Care Clinic
 - Movement Disorders
 - Ambulatory Pain Management Service (APMS)
 - Rehabilitation Medicine
 - Focal Spasticity
 - Chronic rehabilitation - Cardiac, Heart Failure, Respiratory and Oncology

The referral form for Ambulatory Care and Community Services, and Subacute is available [here](#). Currently, referrals should be faxed to the Eastern Health Access Unit on (03) 9881 1102.

Further information on these services is available [here](#).

Maternity Services will transition to exclusively using electronic referrals by March 2022. Hence, they are no longer utilising their patient online maternity booking form. Further information on this service is available [here](#).

***** Please note that we are moving towards including several of the above services in e-referral. Information will be provided as it becomes available*****

Which medical software is compatible with e-referral?

Medical Director (Version 3.17 and above), Best Practice (Lava and above), Genie and MedTech Evolution.

Is Helix compatible with e-referral?

No, Helix is not currently compatible software. However, you can still submit forms electronically via the HealthLink Portal.

What happens if I don't have conformant software to send an e-referral?

Please register for a 'free' HealthLink Portal licence by completing the [online registration form](#) and notate in the **Comments/Message** field that you would like to use the **SmartForms**. Once HealthLink receives your completed registration application this will be processed, and portal details will be forwarded to you.

Do not email any referrals to email addresses as they are not encrypted. Referrals sent by post will also be declined and will be requested to be re-sent via HealthLink SmartForms.

Are you going to accept faxed referrals after December 1st 2021?

All GP clinics with compatible software will be required to send all acute specialist clinics referrals via e-referral. Practices with non-compliant software will be required to send referrals electronically via the HealthLink Portal.

If you are unable to use e-referral or the portal, you can call the GP hotline number on 9194 7900. Hours of operation are 0830-1800 Monday to Friday and 0900- 1230 Saturdays.

What is the HealthLink Portal?

MyHealthLink Portal is a stand-alone, web based system designed to enable medical practices and individual healthcare providers, who do not have conformance software (i.e. Medical Director, Best Practice, Genie, or MedTech Evolution), an alternative solution to electronically refer and submit patient referrals via HealthLink SmartForms to Eastern Health.

Quick Start Guides for the HealthLink Portal is available [here](#).

To register for a 'free' HealthLink Portal licence, an [online registration form](#) must be completed with notated in the **Comments/Message** field that you would like to use the **SmartForms**. HealthLink will process the completed registration application form, and portal details will be forwarded to you.

Does e-referral auto- populate patient information?

Patient demographics, active medications, past history and practice details all auto populate for conformance software users. Please note: This is different to the Portal, and unfortunately all patient information will be required to be entered manually.

Can I refer to 2 specialists/ specialities on one referral?

No, you will need a separate e-referral for each clinical referral.

How do I attach investigation results?

You can attach results, reports etc. in the format which is highlighted on the SmartForm

Attaching file from Clinical Information System (CIS) support: gif, html, jpeg, doc, docx,pdf, txt, rft,tiff

Attaching file from computer (desktop) supports files that end in types: doc, docx, gif, htm, html, jpeg, jpg, pdf, rtf, tif, tiff, text

For **Best Practice** and **Medical Director** users, please ensure all plain text investigation includes the header.

Include Header in Best Practice:

The screenshot shows the HealthLink SmartForm interface. At the top, there is a menu bar with 'Inbox', 'File', 'Edit', 'Utilities', 'View', and 'Help'. Below the menu bar, there is a toolbar with various icons. The main content area displays a patient referral form for 'Mousse, Mickey Middle' on 22/08/2017. The form includes fields for patient address (124-134 Selkirk Avenue, Cecil Park, 2178), phone number (982 6 2535), birthdate (10/10/1948), sex (M), Medicare Number, Your Reference, Lab Reference (1780919), Laboratory (Dr Edward Chandraratnam), and Referred by (Dr Catherine TURNER). The Name of Test is Histopathology, and the Reported date is 22/08/2017 at 00:00. The diagnosis section is highlighted in yellow and contains the text: 'DIAGNOSIS Biopsy from gastric antrum - CHRONIC INACTIVE GASTRITIS OF MILD SEVERITY. - POSITIVE FOR HELICOBACTER PYLORI.' Below the diagnosis section, there are several sections for 'This result is:', 'Action to be taken:', 'Store result in:', and 'Store for location:'. The 'Store for location:' dropdown menu is set to 'HealthLink Message' and the 'Include header' checkbox is checked. At the bottom of the form, there are buttons for 'Send Message', 'Add Reminder', 'Add Past History', 'Add INR', 'Graph', 'Add Action', 'ABCT result', 'Previous', 'Next', 'Skip', and 'Finish'. The status bar at the bottom indicates 'Currently logged in: Dr Demo Doctor (HealthLink Messaging Testing Clinic)'.

Include/Exclude Header in Medical Director:

Tools -> Options -> Investigations

What do I do if I cannot attach documents?

Contact HealthLink on 1800 125 036 or email HelpdeskHL@healthlink.net

I can see this message at the bottom of my referral when previewing and it says there is “no attachments”. How do I know if my referral has been received with all the attachments included?

File Attachments - No files attached

This message relates to file attached ‘from your desktop’ not the patient’s clinical file.

If you have attached documents/reports from your patient’s clinical file, you will see the following example message:

Diagnostic Reports / Patient Documents

Date	Name	Comments	Size
25/02/2020	AduroForm.pdf	SR Specialists & Referrals	40 KB
24/04/2019	Report1.PDF	DISCHARGE SUMMARY	812 KB
16/04/2019	Result.RTF	DISCHARGE SUMMARY	3 KB
16/04/2019	Report1.PDF	DISCHARGE SUMMARY	808 KB

How long does it take to confirm receipt of the referral and method of confirmation?

You will be notified that the referral has been received within seconds.

Please note that this does not mean the referral has been accepted; only that it has been received.

What happens if the HealthLink referral fails to send?

You will be notified if the submission fails. The e-referral will be parked and available to re-open and resubmit later. When delivered it will generate and send back an acknowledgement to you.

For any issues relating to this, contact HealthLink directly on HelpdeskHL@healthlink.net or 1800 125 036

How do I access HealthPathways Melbourne ?

Send a request to info@healthpathwaysmelbourne.org.au or complete this access form:

<https://melbourne.healthpathways.org.au/LoginFiles/RequestLogin.aspx?topic=Request Access>