After-hours toolkit guide for residential aged care homes

An instructional guide to help residential aged care homes understand the importance of after-hours action-planning, where to find after-hours resources, and how to use and keep them up-to-date.

After-hours refers to outside regular hours (ie the night time period and weekends).

Background

Primary Health Networks received funding to support the Australian Government's response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

A key objective is for primary health networks to bring greater awareness to residential aged care homes (RACHs) about the after-hours services provided by general practitioners and other health professionals.

These services can reduce hospital presentations for RACH residents, through providing appropriate care in the facility.

North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network and South Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network have developed an after-hours toolkit, comprising 5 key resources to support RACHs in the after-hours period. These are intended to better prepare staff to identify which after-hours service is best to access depending on the nature of the incident.

How to use the after-hours toolkit

The after-hours toolkit has been developed following consultations with RACHs in metropolitan Melbourne about how to support after-hours processes in facilities to reduce emergency presentations. It is informed by evidence-based resources to support RACHs to enhance access and use of after-hours services.
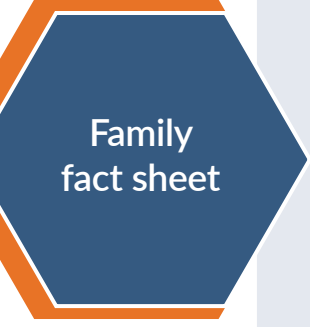
The toolkit:

▸ provides guidance on creating appropriate after-hours plans for residents

▸ educates staff on after-hours health care options and processes

▸ encourages procedures for keeping residents' digital medical records up to date, particularly following an episode where after-hours care was required

▸ supports engagement between RACHs and their residents GPs' and other relevant health professionals as part of after-hours action plans.

The resources and templates are designed to be dynamic documents, meaning plans should be revised and updated regularly to reflect policies and procedures, available services, and changes in care.

This guide explains how to implement, use and update the toolkit components.

Tools included in after-hours toolkit

After-hours toolkit items	Purpose of tool, how to use and keep up-to-date	Where to access
After-hours action planning audit tool	This enables RACHs to self-assess their current after-hours preparedness, identify gaps in after-hours capabilities, and identify which resources, processes and procedures could be adopted to improve access to appropriate medical care for residents. Use this to assess the status of your RACH's after-hours preparedness. It contains links to other helpful after-hours resources.	Downloadable and printable version can be found on PHN webpage.
Medical support checklist	This tool is a checklist, based on the **ISBAR communication tool**, to aid staff when a resident is unwell and support is required. To use it, complete the form and contact any service where you need to provide information on a patient's condition, such as a GP, locum service or VVED. For more information on examples of types of low to medium acuity conditions referred to in this resource, please visit **Medical referral options for residents in aged care homes**. It can be printed as an A4 notepad or used digitally and distributed to all nursing stations. If there is a clinical symptom a resident presents and you do not know which service to contact, call your Registered Nurse or NURSE-ON-CALL to confirm.	Downloadable and printable version can be found on PHN webpage. Printed A4 notepad version available from your PHN upon request.
Family fact sheet	This is a fact sheet that informs family members and carers of RACH residents about: ▸ What happens if someone falls ill at night, or on the weekend. ▸ What families can do to help. This fact sheet is also available in Vietnamese, Mandarin, Italian, Arabic, Greek, Punjabi, Turkish, Cantonese, Maltese, and Hindi.	Downloadable and printable version can be found on PHN webpage.

Tools included in after-hours toolkit (continued...)

After-hours toolkit items	Purpose of tool, how to use and keep up-to-date	Where to access
Service directory	This assists staff to identify services available in your region in the after-hours period. It has two components: 1. A locum or deputising and pharmacy service directory in which to list relevant services and contact details. 2. A standardised after-hours service directory detailing Residential In-Reach services (by postcode), Victorian Virtual Emergency Department contact details and broader services. Keeping these updated and available to all staff is essential.	Downloadable and printable version can be found on PHN webpage.
Person-centered after-hours action plan	This enables staff to summarise key information explaining a resident's after-hours care plans, for quick and simple reference during an emergency. The plan should be placed where staff can easily access it at all times, while also respecting the resident's right to privacy. It should be regularly reviewed and updated.	Downloadable and printable version can be found on PHN webpage.