

Tips for General Practice Administration working with patients of refugee background

Making an Initial Appointment

The appointment may be made by a:

- Case Manager from Settlement Agency
- Family/Sponsor
- Refugee Health Connect
- Patient

Ask: Do you have a Medicare Card or are you getting one soon?

NO or unsure?

Contact Refugee Health Connect: 07 3864 7580
Or the Case Manager

YES – Book appointment.

(All first appointments should be long due to language and complexity of health issues).

Consider:

- Prompt the patient to find the best day. (Prompt TAFE classes, child care or religious days).
- Book an interpreter

Tip to ensure patient arrives: Send reminder text to the patient and/or Sponsor (if they have one) the DAY BEFORE the appointment.

Did you know? GP Administration staff can access phone interpreters using the Doctor's Client code.

Suggestions: What to tell the person making the first appointment

- How long the appointment will last.
- How many people the appointment is for. Check if other family members require a separate appointment
- The patient must arrive 15 mins before the appointment time to complete paperwork
- The patient will need to bring any health documentation, such as:
 - Medicare Card
 - Health Care Card/Pensioner Card
 - Visa
 - Health Summary &/or Immunisation History (if they have these)
- If the patient has a Sponsor, they will need to bring the patient to the first appointment
- Ask for the mobile phone number of the patient AND family member supporting the patient, so that an SMS reminder can be sent to both

Need more advice in working with patients of a refugee background in Brisbane?

Contact Refugee Health Connect (07) 3864 7580

Booking an Interpreter

Booking an interpreter through the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) is free to any Doctor in private practice for a consultation claimable under Medicare. Each GP will need to register for a 'TIS National Client Code' first by contacting TIS.

Immediate telephone interpreter:

The Doctors' Priority Line 1300 131 450 (24 hrs / 7 days)

Book 'on-site' interpreters online with as much notice as possible.

General Enquiries: 131 450 www.tisnational.gov.au

When Patients fail to Arrive

If within 10 mins of the scheduled appointment consider ringing the patient with an interpreter as sometimes they are lost.

For patients referred through Refugee Health Connect, call 3864 7580.

For other patients contact the patient directly or their Case Manager or Sponsor, if they have one.

Subsequent appointments?

Contact the patient directly or the Case Manager or Sponsor if they have one.

Changing an Appointment

What can Practice Reception do to change appointment?

- Send a text to the patient or Sponsor (if they have one) OR
- If the patient has limited English, you can call TIS and then call the patient with an interpreter on the line.

What can Practice Reception do if a patient calls in with a telephone interpreter?

- Quote the TIS Client Code for the GP and accept the call. You will be able to talk to the client with the interpreter on the line.

Making Further Appointments

- Ask about other appointments the patient already has (E.g. Prompt TAFE, child care) so that they don't double book themselves!
- Use the Appointment Reminder Translation Tool - Print out some blank copies of the translated appointment letter with your Practice address on it and keep at reception. Fill in the details of the next appointment and give to the patient, at the end of the first appointment. www.swslhd.nsw.gov.au/refugee/appointment
- Give a hard copy of a picture of the clinic and a map of how to find the Practice.
- Send a text message a day before appointments. Patients with limited English still respond well to these texts.