

# Working with patients from refugee background

## GP Administration Tips

### Appointments

Consider booking longer appointments to allow time for interpreting and to cover complex health histories and issues. Especially important for the first few visits.

Check what language the patient speaks and book an interpreter through the **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)** - a free service for GPs and their support staff.

#### For immediate interpreting:

- Call 1300 131 450 (Medical Practitioner Priority Line). Usually an interpreter is available within a few minutes for most common languages.

#### For pre-booked phone, onsite or video interpreting:

- Book via [TIS Online](#) with as much notice as possible.

Multiple services book appointments on behalf of their refugee patients - record who made the booking and when, so the service can be contacted if there are any issues. When the interpreter booking is accepted, update this record. If the interpreter cannot attend, notify the GP/nurse as the patient may need a different appointment.

### Attending Appointments

Language can be a barrier to understanding appointment times. Help your patients attend their appointments:

- Provide appointment reminders in the patient's language by creating a translated reminder. You can print, or send via email or SMS using the [Appointment Reminder Translation Tool](#). It's free!
- Call TIS National to call the patient with an interpreter to remind them of their appointment.

### Patient Details

During the early months after arrival in Australia, refugee clients can change their details and may have new phone numbers, new addresses, and new case managers. As with all your patients, make sure you check your patient's details at each visit.

### Medicare/Health Care Card

Most newly arrived refugees have access to Medicare and a Health Care Card.

People seeking asylum in Australia who are not eligible for a Medicare Card can access public hospitals in Queensland free of charge under the [Qld Health Directive](#).

### Things to Remember

Moving to a new country is challenging. Your admin expertise and understanding can help your new patients have the best start in Australia.

#### More Information

See more helpful hints for health administrators via [Refugee Health Network Qld](#)

