

# PARTNERING WITH US:

## A Guide for Healthcare Professionals



03 8405 8962



[vsc@nh.org.au](mailto:vsc@nh.org.au)



[www.vsconsults.org.au](http://www.vsconsults.org.au)



Virtual Specialist Consults acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we live and work across Victoria. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and community, and pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and to Elders past and present.

# PURPOSE

Virtual Specialist Consults (VSC) aims to defragment care, build partnerships and centre patient care in the community. Our clinics are designed to support Victorian community healthcare practitioners accessing hospital specialist advice in a timely manner. The structure of the clinic was co-designed with GPs in the community and further feedback is always welcome.

## Benefit to the Patient

- Faster access to specialist advice: co-consults are usually available within 1-4 weeks
- Access from anywhere: patient can join from the clinic, bush nursing centre, residential facility or from home
- Less need for outpatient referrals: 68% of in-person outpatient referrals are able to be cancelled following a co-consult
- Less delays in care: early investigations and management decisions can be made synchronously and collaboratively
- Positive patient experience: 99% of patients agree or strongly agree that VSC was a positive experience



## Benefit to the Clinician

- Joint decision making – primary care providers, patients and hospital specialists can make synchronous and collaborative decisions on diagnosis, investigations and management
- Partnership and skill building – health professionals can meet and create working relationships which can lead to shared care and patient advocacy
- CPD recognition – VSC consults can be claimed as Reviewing Performance CPD



# ACCESS MODELS

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## Case Conference

- Three care providers are present for the consult (the primary care provider may invite the additional care provider, or VSC can recommend and organise one if required)
- The patient does not have to attend
- Case conferences are typically 20–30 minutes long
- Item numbers 735/739 can be claimed based on time (visit [MBS Online](#) for specific criteria)





# ACCESS MODELS

## Co-Consult



- Primary care provider, VSC specialist and patient are present for the consult
- The primary care provider can have the patient in their rooms or have them join virtually via telehealth video call by forwarding them the link
- Billing is dependent on location or mode of communication (visit [MBS Online](#) for specific criteria)

## eConsult

- E-Consults are a service that allows short, written communication between community and hospital clinicians. Clinicians can submit a clinical question electronically, and a hospital specialist will review the information and respond within three business days.
- This service is ideal for general or non-urgent clinical questions. To protect patient privacy, submissions must not include any patient-identifying information. At this stage, supporting documentation or photos cannot be uploaded. The specialist's response will be based solely on the details provided in the written query.
- E-Consults offer a convenient, timely way to access advice and support patient care.



# SPECIALIST CLINICS

## ADULT SPECIALITIES

- Advance Care Planning
- Cardiology
- Dermatology
- Endocrinology
  - Diabetes
  - General
- Gastroenterology
- General Medicine
- Geriatrics
- Haematology
  - General
  - Thrombosis
- Infectious Diseases
- Nephrology
- Neurology
  - Epilepsy
  - General
- Ophthalmology
- Perioperative ENT
- Physiotherapy
- Palliative Care
- Psychiatry
  - Adult (18-65)
  - Older Adult (50+)
- Respiratory
- Rheumatology
- Sexual Health
- Women's Health
  - Contraception Counselling
  - Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTOP)
  - Menopause
  - Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)
- Wound



## PAEDIATRIC SPECIALITIES

- Allergy
- Asthma
- Complex Adolescents
- Continence
- Endocrinology
- General Paediatrics
- Respiratory and Sleep



# ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

## Dedicated Clinics

If your practice regularly sees high demand for a particular specialty, you may be interested in a dedicated VSC clinic.

These are pre-arranged, recurring sessions where all patients are seen virtually by the specialist. The entire clinic is reserved for your practice, enabling more streamlined care for your patient cohort.

To express interest or learn more, contact us at [vsc@nh.org.au](mailto:vsc@nh.org.au)



## Continuing Professional Development (CPD)



RACGP and ACRRM members can claim CPD points for case conferences and co-consults under the Reviewing Performance category, provided a reflection and learning summary are included.



# FEEDBACK

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*I wanted to give feedback that **VCS has been a life saver for a regional GP like myself.***

*I use your service a lot. Medicine is getting so much more complex and I can only know so much. Some things are pretty straightforward and it's clear it needs specialist input but some issues are not. This is when VSC is really useful – when I need a second opinion from an expert in the field to just reassure me that I am on the right track and not missing something disastrous and it's reasonable and safe for me to continue care in the primary care setting.*

*Additionally, I learn so much from the specialists when I sit in the co-consults and really enjoy it to be honest!*

*Dr Catherine Chu, Riddells Creek*



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# ENGAGEMENT

We are committed to continuously improving access to virtual collaborative care and welcome feedback on what is working well and where there may be opportunities for refinement. Your insights help us ensure the service remains responsive, effective, and aligned with the needs of both clinicians and patients.

If you participate in a clinic, you will be asked to complete a survey after the visit. Please take 5 minutes to provide us your feedback as this allows us to iterate our service responsively and continue to meet the needs of our community partners.

Alternatively, you can always reach out to us with specific suggestions and feedback through [vsc@nh.org.au](mailto:vsc@nh.org.au)



**VIEW CLINICS &  
BOOK ONLINE:**

