



COVID-19 UPDATE

COVID-19 PATIENT REFERRAL PROCESS

31 December 2020

Contributors: R Holgate, K Smith, S Cassim, M Stander, S Naicker

Given the pressures on hospital beds and the dependency that the COVID-19 surge places on referrals between facilities in similar regions, the process flow below is designed to correlate with the ER24 Bed Availability support hotline and assist hospitals to describe the high level steps to be followed should COVID-19 beds be required.

The purpose of the ER24 Bed Availability Hotline (010 205-3007) is to:

- Support all Mediclinic hospitals in finding beds for patients in their facilities at an appropriate level of care in other facilities
- Facilitate patient transfer in-line with funder guidelines
- Logging a call (010 205-3007) is the preferred means of communication with the bed availability support team.

*This is not a service to the general public/GPs and other hospitals that need to refer patients into Mediclinic hospitals

Other hospitals may require access to Mediclinic hospitals (Contact 0861 00 00 24):

- This service is to assist other hospitals or funders in finding beds at Mediclinic hospitals.
- It is not a support line for individual doctors or GPs that need to refer their out-patients for admission.
- Sourcing a bed may take time, hence the service is not intended to assist a GP whose patient should be managed according to their usual primary response/ referral process.

WhatsApp groups have been created in certain regions to enhance communication during COVID-19. Bed resources are discussed on the created groups, and the ER24 team will endeavour to monitor the discussions. However, the preferred communication is to call 010 205-3007.

Referrals across provincial borders or across hospitals in different regional groups should not take place via WhatsApp groups, as these are mostly regional in nature.

Multiple attempts to source a bed may be required, thus the referring facility may continue to search for a bed (as this mechanism can prove more effective in some circumstances) in addition to the ER24 Bed Availability Support Hotline team. Regardless of who is successful in finding a bed, a doctor to doctor discussion is critical for continuity of patient care.

The process diagram illustrates the steps to be followed with Medical Aid or insured patients. This process excludes Namibian hospitals, routine referral processes should be followed in these hospitals.

Referring a Medical Aid patient to a state hospital due to lack of beds

Referral of Medical Aid patients to state hospitals should only be considered as an absolute last resort. The hospital and regional command structures should be informed prior to this taking place.

In the Western Cape this process should occur through Metro Control contacted on 021 931 9027. Should they be able to find a bed, the clinician to clinician discussion will still need to take place prior to sending the patient. In other provinces the individual hospitals will need to be contacted.

Referring a public sector/state patient in a Mediclinic facility back to the public sector

Referral for public/state patients from a Mediclinic facility to government facility should follow normal referral processes. These patients should be assessed and stabilised in the Emergency Centre as per routine Emergency Centre processes. The private hospital should then contact an appropriate government hospital for a bed. The referral discussion should take place between the referring clinicians.

What is the role of the corporate command structure?

The corporate command centre structure is intended to review referrals of public sector patients into the private sector. These contracts currently only exist between Mediclinic and the Western Cape DOH and not in other regions.

The corporate command structure should be informed in the referral process in keeping with the process depicted in the referral diagram below. Its role is not to look for beds for outside referring doctors or facilities that are looking for beds for medical aid patients.

BED SOURCING FOR MEDICAL AID/ INSURED PATIENTS

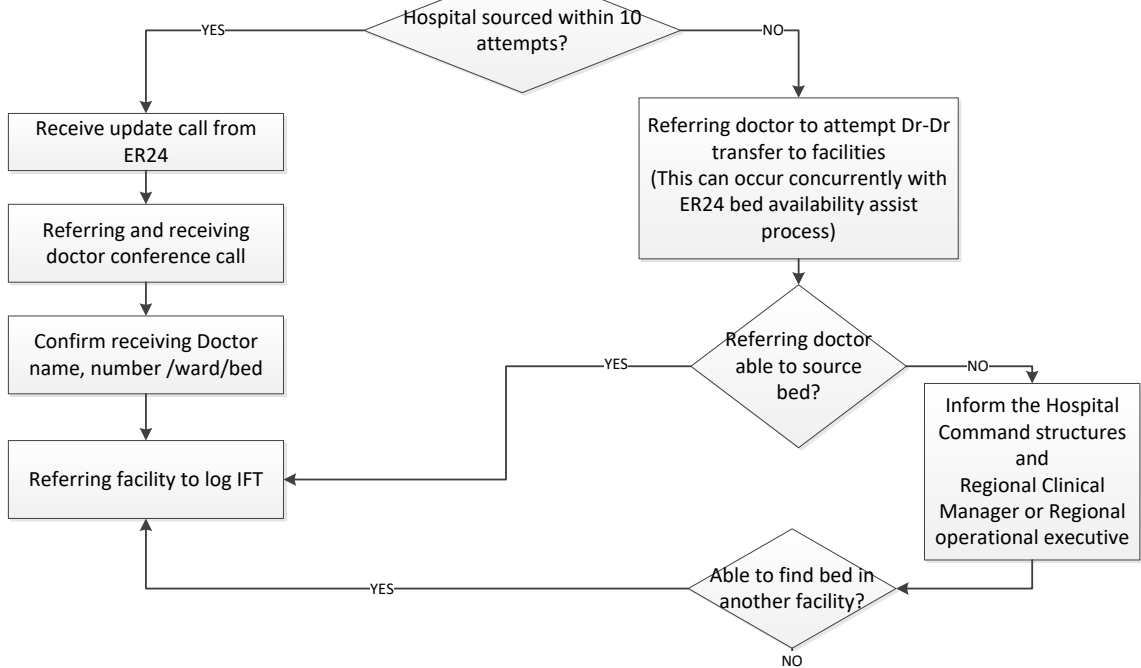
<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">PATIENT IN A MEDICLINIC FACILITY PART OF A COORDINATION WHATSAPP GROUP</p> <p style="font-size: small; margin: 5px 0;">These hospitals are in the cities where there is a larger Mediclinic footprint with a greater volume of Mediclinic facilities to liaise between:</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">Western Cape Whatsapp: Mediclinic EC/ICU Cape Town COVID Cape Town, Cape Gate, Constantiaberg, Durbanville, Hermanus, Louis Leipoldt, Milnerton, Paarl, Panorama, Stellenbosch, Vergelegen, Worcester</p> <p style="margin: 10px 0 5px 20px;">Northern Region Whatsapp: MCSA Northern Region Assiest All Northern Region Hospitals</p> <p style="margin: 10px 0 5px 20px;">Tshwane Whatsapp: MC TSW EC Coordination All Tshwane Region Hospitals</p> <p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 10px 0;">*Please Note: There are Whatsapp Group volume limitations, please ensure the correct individuals in your hospitals are on the group</p>	<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">PATIENT IN A MEDICLINIC FACILITY THAT IS NOT CONNECTED TO A WHATSAPP GROUP</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">WC Coastal: George, Geneva, Klein Karoo, Plettenberg Bay *Excludes Namibia</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">WC Inland: Upington</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">Central: Bloemfontein, Hoogland, Kimberley, Newcastle, Pietermaritzburg, Victoria, Welkom</p>
---	---

<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Request to be sent to the appropriate Mediclinic Whatsapp Group.</p> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 5px 0;">NB: If there is no co-ordinator response in 10 minutes then please call ER24 bed availability support hotline on 010 205 3007</p>	AND/OR	<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Contact ER24 bed availability support hotline on 010 205 3007</p>
---	--------	--

Discussion with Contact Centre Agent:

- Provide ER24 Contact Centre with key patient specifics and identify type of bed required (Demographics/ medical history/ COVID relevant history: Percentage and or Flow of O2/ Type of O2 delivery/ vital signs/ funding details)
- Please note: you may be required to provide this info on more than one occasion.
- Details of hospital based contact person for further communications
- Provide contact number for doctor for referral conference call
- Highlight three preferential referral sites (if feasible)

Receive feedback from ER24 Team Leader roughly every 30 minutes (Please ensure that they have been given the correct contact number)



INFORM

A) Mediclinic Corporate Command Centre
B) Update ER24 contact centre and inform of the plan

Only as a last resort, revisit state facility availability or alternatives such as the patient remaining at facility