REFERRALS: PHYSIOTHERAPY

**Keywords:** Physiotherapy, physio assessment, hours of service, hospital physiotherapy, outpatient physiotherapy, physiotherapy after childbirth

**AIM**

- To ensure that referrals to the department are received and responded to in a coordinated, timely and clinically appropriate way.

**GENERAL SERVICE**

Physiotherapy assessment and treatment is available to KEMH patients requiring Women’s Health and Neonatal services. These services are delivered on an inpatient and outpatient basis at KEMH. The level of service is dependent on the availability of staff and resources and patients are prioritised according to their clinical need.

**PHYSIOTHERAPY DEPARTMENT CONTACT DETAILS**

- Telephone 9340 2790
- Fax number: 9340 2793

**Ward physiotherapist pager numbers**

- Ward 3 3134
- Ward 4 3122
- Ward 5 3351

- Ward 6 / ASCU 3120
- Paediatrics / SCN 3121

**OUTPATIENT PHYSIOTHERAPY**

Individual outpatient appointments are available for Paediatric and Women’s Health Physiotherapy every weekday.

**Women’s Health Outpatient referrals**

- Referrals are accepted from medical / nursing and midwifery staff in KEMH outpatient clinics. A Consultation Request form or Physiotherapy Referral form should be completed and either mailed or faxed to the Physiotherapy Department.

  Self-referrals are accepted from antenatal women who are giving birth at KEMH and postnatal women for up to six months after giving birth at KEMH.

**Paediatric Outpatient referrals**

Physiotherapy is available to infants born at KEMH up to one year corrected age who meet the following criteria:
- Preterm and Low Birth Weight infants who have developmental delay.
- Long term oxygen dependent infants
- Those infants with neuromuscular and/or musculoskeletal problems.

- Referrals are accepted from consultants, registrars and residents, Visiting Midwifery Service and other Allied Health staff.
- Self-referrals are accepted from parents whose infant was an inpatient in the KEMH NICU (until one year corrected age).

**PROCESSING OF REFERRALS FOR OUTPATIENT PHYSIOTHERAPY**

On receipt of a referral, the referral is reviewed and triaged by the Head of Department or one of the Senior Physiotherapists in the department. Details of the referral are then entered onto the departmental referrals spreadsheet by Administrative staff. Referrals for patients considered to be high risk or requiring urgent attention are prioritised and those patients are contacted by telephone to arrange an appointment as soon as possible.

For all other non-urgent referrals, patients are sent a letter asking them to contact the department for an appointment. Once the patient contacts the department, the next available appointment will be allocated dependent on clinical need and staff availability.

If a patient doesn’t respond to the initial contact letter within four weeks, a sticker is placed on the original referral stating that the patient is discharged from Physiotherapy due to the non-contact. The referral is then filed in the medical record. The patient can be re-referred at any time.

As a means of outpatient waitlist management, patients living outside the KEMH catchment area may have their referral transferred to physiotherapy services at other hospitals if they can receive appropriate care in those settings. Referrals from clinics where KEMH is the state-wide provider of a particular service will generally not be transferred.

Patients will be advised by letter if their referral has been transferred to another hospital or health service and a sticker is placed on the original referral which is then filed in the medical record to advise the referring doctor of the transfer.

**INPATIENT PHYSIOTHERAPY**

**Inpatient referrals**

- There is a blanket referral system for all inpatients.
- A specific referral may be made if the woman needs other than routine physiotherapy treatment.
- A physiotherapy referral book is available on each ward. Place a medical record sticker in the referral book. The book is checked and signed each morning by the ward physiotherapist.
Verbal referrals are required from medical and nursing / midwifery staff if physiotherapy is required on a particular day and the physiotherapy referral book has already been checked.

Self-referrals are accepted by the department.

Patients are prioritised for treatment according to workload demands with preference given to those with acute conditions.

AFTER HOURS AND WEEKEND SERVICE

WEEKEND SERVICES
Weekend services are available to patients where there is a high clinical need. A physiotherapist is rostered to work for 3 hours each morning from 0830-1130 on weekends and public holidays. They are then on call until 1630. Weekend outpatient treatment for new patients will only be accepted by referral from medical or nursing / midwifery staff in Special Care Nursery, Visiting Midwifery Service or the Emergency Centre for women requiring treatment for breast engorgement or mastitis.

Weekends / public holidays: Criteria for new referrals
- The referral must be authorised by the Consultant, Registrar or Physiotherapist
- The patient needs to be at risk of deterioration if no physiotherapy is provided.
- The request must be documented in the medical notes
- The physiotherapy Referral book on each ward is not checked on weekends or public holidays.
- If new patients require urgent physiotherapy treatment, hospital staff should contact the switchboard to check which physiotherapist is currently in the hospital.
- New referrals should not be left on the Physiotherapy Department answering machine as it is not checked on weekends and public holidays.
- On call services to inpatients are available on Saturdays and Sundays until 1630 hours, but only if authorised and documented in the medical notes by a Consultant or Registrar. After 1630 hours all services are restricted to emergency situations and are arranged as call back via the switchboard.

AFTER HOURS SERVICE AT KEMH
Physiotherapy treatment is only available after 1700 hours on a call-back arrangement. As an after-hours service is rarely required at KEMH, physiotherapists are not rostered to provide this service.

If it is known that a patient will require treatment after hours, it is the responsibility of the ward physiotherapist to notify the Physiotherapy Head of Department, who will
organise a staff member to provide this service. The frequency of treatments will be determined in discussion with the appropriate Registrar / Consultant and the physiotherapist.

If the after-hours treatment is not planned, organisation for a physiotherapist to be called back is via the Hospital Clinical Nurse Manager and / or Physiotherapy Head of Department.

Criteria for After Hours Referrals

- The referral needs to be authorised by the Consultant, Anaesthetist or Registrar.
- The patient must be at risk of deterioration overnight if no physiotherapy is provided.
- The request must be documented in the medical notes.

REFERENCES / STANDARDS

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<th>National Standards</th>
<th>1- Care Provided by the Clinical Workforce is Guided by Current Best Practice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legislation</td>
<td>Nil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Related Policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other related documents —</td>
<td>• KEMH Patient Brochure: <a href="2013">Physiotherapy After Childbirth</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <a href="www.bladderbowel.gov.au">Continence Foundation of Australia</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• [Private Women’s Health Physiotherapy](Australian Physiotherapy Association: Find a Physio)</td>
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RESPONSIBILITY

OGCCU / Physiotherapy Department

Policy Sponsor

Nursing & Midwifery Director OGCCU

Initial Endorsement

September 2001

Last Reviewed

June 2015

Last Amended

Review date

June 2018

Do not keep printed versions of guidelines as currency of information cannot be guaranteed.

Access the current version from the WNHS website.