

Metropolitan Retrieval Guideline

January 2013

Retrieval System

Adult Retrieval Victoria (ARV) has been established to provide advice, referral and transport for critically ill and time critical patients where the clinical management of such patients is beyond the resource or clinical capacity of a health service.

Metropolitan Critical Care Transfer Guidelines

Demand for intensive care services is frequently high and there may be periods when individual metropolitan hospital demand for ICU beds or service types exceeds the immediate on-site capacity or capability. In such circumstances, critical patients may be transferred between hospitals. ARV's goal is to service metropolitan retrieval demand for highest-risk retrieval activity. Risk assessment would consider several factors, including: patient complexity, patient stability, impact of staff depletion on the referring hospital / broader metropolitan health system and availability of referral hospital staff of appropriate seniority to perform the transfer. It is expected that prior to consultation with ARV, reasonable efforts will be made by referral sites to accommodate critical care patients within a campus of the health service to which they belong.

Process for Metropolitan Critical Care Retrieval by ARV

- In all cases, appropriateness of transfer and of ICU admission will be formally assessed by the referring hospital at a consultant level.
- Cases will be referred to ARV in the usual way via the Statewide retrieval phone number: **1300 368661**.
- Initial information is collected by a retrieval administrative support officer who will then connect a referring hospital to the ARV critical care coordinator.
- The referrer and coordinator will then discuss the clinical care, transport requirements and destination for the patient.
- Where patients meet the criteria for ARV metropolitan retrieval (below), the ARV coordinator will then facilitate retrieval platform and crew for the case, and advise the referring hospital of expected timing.

Criteria for ARV Metro Retrieval:

1. ARV **medical resource** is available and
2. **ICU review** by a registrar or above at the referral site has occurred
[For hospitals without an ICU, this constitutes registrar or above medical review of the patient and discussion with an authorising consultant]
3. **ICU level of care is anticipated** at the destination hospital, or urgent transfer for evaluation or intervention of a critical or time critical clinical issue is required
4. The referral site has **no planned ICU bed availability** within 6 hrs
[e.g. currently unstaffed beds that will be able to be staffed by recall or the next shift commencing]

Hours of Operation:

08:00-24:00 **Service available**

00:00-08:00 **By exception only**

Overnight retrieval represent increased clinical and logistic risk, however may be considered for:

- Patients referred to receive genuinely **time critical interventions or investigation**, or
- Patients referred from sites which do not have the ability to provide **suitable interim critical care services**.

Balancing state-wide retrieval demand and prioritisation:

Metropolitan retrieval activity is a secondary focus for ARV. ARV's primary focus is rural and regional retrieval (given there are a range of alternative service delivery options in metropolitan Melbourne that are usually not available in regional and rural Victoria).