

# Residential Aged Care Enhanced Response

## What is the RACER pathway of care?

The Residential Aged Care Enhanced Response (RACER) pathway is one of our AV Care Connect initiatives.

It provides an alternative care pathway to better connect and coordinate Triple Zero (000) calls from residential aged care facilities (RACFs) to meet the patient's needs and avoid unnecessary ambulance dispatch and transport to hospital emergency departments (EDs).

The RACER pathway involves AV's Triage Services team, including subject matter experts in aged care services, referring non-urgent and non-emergency patients from RACFs to the most appropriate alternative service pathway, including directly to the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED) so that RACF patients are not unnecessarily transported to hospital EDs.

## What is VVED?

The Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED) is a video telehealth medical consultation service that provides clinical assessment, care and support for patients who do not present with high acuity presentations or require urgent emergency care.

It aims to provide the virtual equivalent of attending an actual ED, except it occurs within the patient's residence, providing a clinical assessment, medical advice, early treatment and – where required – local referrals to Residential InReach (RIR), GP and/or other appropriate services for ongoing management.

## Is the RACER pathway a state-wide pathway?

Yes, the RACER pathway supports all Victorians.

## What are the RACER pathway's hours of operation?

The RACER pathway operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## What are the benefits of the RACER pathway?

Before the introduction of the RACER pathway, all calls made from a Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF) to Triple Zero (000) have historically been triaged via the standard Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA) process. This has meant that over 90% of calls from RACFs that receive an ambulance response result in the patient attending an Emergency Department – which is not always the best place for them – as the risk of delirium and healthcare acquired trauma, infections and mortality can be associated with hospitalisation of older people.

We know we can do better to connect older patients in RACFs to more appropriate care in the first instance to reduce distress, risk of delirium and other hospital-acquired infections, trauma and mortality that can be associated with hospitalisation for this cohort. Beginning in August 2022, AV's Triage Services will refer RACF patients from the non-emergency patient transport booking system directly to the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED) at the point of triage instead of dispatching an ambulance unless the patient:

- has a time critical emergency.
- is likely to require surgical management (e.g. suspected fractured neck of femur).
- does not have access to a suitable device to conduct a video teleconference.

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What is the process for the RACER pathway?



What should Residential Aged Care Facilities do under the RACER pathway?

RACFs should continue to call Triple Zero (000) for residents who present with a time critical emergency, require cardiac monitoring or are likely to require surgical management of an injury. But they need to be aware of the RACER pathway process so that their expectations, and the expectations of the patient/patient's family, are managed.

Ambulance Victoria and the Department of Health strongly encourage RACF nursing staff and GPs to continue referring directly to their local RIR during their operating hours if the resident is not critical but does require acute assessment and treatment of illness or injuries such as:

- Urinary tract infections or urosepsis
- Post falls assessment, including head strike with minor injuries
- Pain and other distressing symptoms
- Acute infections (pneumonia, gastroenteritis, influenza, cellulitis, COVID)
- Acute confusion or delirium
- Acute exacerbation of chronic disease; COPD/CCF/Diabetes/HT
- Urinary catheter care or urinary retention
- End of life assessment and care planning
- Challenging behaviours
- Functional decline

VVED is not intended to replace existing health care services such as RIR but provide supplementary pathways during times where existing services do not currently provide cover (e.g. overnight).



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### What happens if a Residential Aged Care Facility does not have access to video technology?

If a RACF does not have access to video technology, then referral to the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department (VVED) via the RACER pathway cannot occur. RACFs will need to have access to the following to facilitate a VVED consult under the RACER pathway.

- A mobile or tablet smart-device (click here for device information) that:
  - can receive SMS (has SIM card or connected to mobile phone plan)
  - connects to the internet (click here for browser information)
  - has a camera
- A known phone number for the mobile or tablet smart-device
- A known email address for the facility.

### What is AV Care Connect?

AV Care Connect is a program of work introducing more alternative care pathways to AV's service to better connect patients to the care they need. It supports our goal of ensuring patients receive Best Care, every time.

With the introduction of each new alternative care pathway, our service will be supported to better manage growing demand to meet the increasingly complex needs of the community. This is occurring at a time when we know we must make significant operating model reform to ensure we can support the Victorian community in the future.

These alternative care pathways will support some of our most vulnerable patients such as aged care, palliative care, frequent and complex care needs, and mental health patients to remain in their home environment and avoid unnecessary transport to hospital EDs.



### Where can RACFs access more information about the RACER pathway?

AV's external website has been updated with a page relating specifically to the RACER pathway ([LINK](#)) for our RACFs, RACF residents and families of residents to access.

### Who can RACFs contact with questions or concerns about the RACER pathway?

Please email [Olderpersoncareconnect@ambulance.vic.gov.au](mailto:Olderpersoncareconnect@ambulance.vic.gov.au)