

## Hearing Health Referral Pathways

<b>Target Audience</b>	All Clinical Employees
<b>Jurisdiction</b>	Primary Health Care Remote CAHS; Primary Health Care Remote TEHS
<b>Jurisdiction Exclusions</b>	N/A
<b>Document Owner</b>	Amarjit Anand Manager NT Hearing Services
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Amarjit Anand Manager NT Hearing Services
<b>Author</b>	Continuous Quality Improvement Manager, Hearing Health Program

The attributes in the above table will be auto-filled from the PGC System. Do not update in this document.

### Scope

The way that hearing health referrals are made has changed recently in order to reflect the current service delivery model and referral pathways. The Hearing Health Program (HHP) is an outreach service providing ear and hearing care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the Northern Territory. HHP coordinate and deploy three outreach services;

- Teleotology: a store and forward ENT telemedicine service
- Audiology Outreach: Diagnostic Audiology
- Community level support of Primary Prevention and Early Intervention

New referral addresses have been created in PCIS and Communicare to provide direct referral pathways to these services.

**Teleotology<sup>1</sup>** has expanded remote health's access to ENT services and has begun to address an area of significant need. To improve access to this service, a new referral address has been created outside of the Medicare / hospital framework in order to allow both Medical Doctors in Primary Health and Hearing Health specialist service providers to refer directly to Teleotology. This allows patients who do not have regular access to a Medical Doctor to access Teleotology via ENT Nurses, Audiologists, Child Hearing Health Coordinators and Aboriginal Youth Hearing Health Coordinators who work for the Hearing Health Program.

**Audiology Outreach** services have historically been provided by NT Hearing and Commonwealth Hearing services. With the aim to provide services with consistent reporting and service delivery, the Hearing Health Program now deploys all outreach Audiology services for both adults and children. There has been a new referral address created to reflect this service.

**Child Hearing Health Coordinators (CHHC)** support families and Primary Health in providing the best pathway of care for children under 5 who have been identified as having Otitis Media (OM). CHHC's are fundamentally important for supporting Primary Prevention and Early Intervention for infants and young children with OM. There has been a new referral address created to allow Primary Health to refer directly to CHHC's to access this support.

### Purpose

The purpose of this document is to clearly outline hearing health referral pathways in the NT and to provide guidance for Remote Health around how to access each of the Hearing Health services in the Northern Territory.

### Definitions and Search Terms

Preferred Term	Description
<b>Diagnostic Audiology</b>	includes relevant audiological assessments and is the service required in the first instance to establish the need for tertiary intervention, ie, Rehabilitative Audiology, education support.
<b>Rehabilitative Audiology</b>	a tertiary service required for those who have already been established as having a significant bilateral hearing loss (+35dB in the better ear). This service is provided by Australian Hearing
<b>Teleotology</b>	store and forward ENT telemedicine. Information is captured in community and sent to ENT Specialist. Service includes an ENT Specialist review and an Audiology consult.
<b>Case Management</b>	coordination and support for families and Primary Health to help improve outcomes for high priority children with established complex ear disease.

**NOTE:** When primary health refer to Audiology Outreach they are requesting a diagnostic service. Primary health should not be referring to tertiary services (Australian Hearing) in the first instance.

<sup>1</sup>Teleotology is in early stages of implementation in Alice Springs/ Tennant Creek regions. Contact HHP for further information and updates

Summary Table of Hearing Health Referrals for Remote Health

Referral Address	Service Eligibility	Who Can Refer	Referral Address	Referral Type	Clinical Referral Recommendations
<b>Audiology Outreach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ATSI</li> <li>• All ages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Medical Doctors</li> <li>- Audiologists</li> <li>- Speech Pathologists</li> <li>- RAN's</li> <li>- AHP's</li> </ul> <p style="margin-left: 150px;">} CARPA</p>	<p><i>Search term: 'Hearing'</i> Double click on Hearing Health Program, select <b>'Audiology Outreach'</b> and press 'to'</p>	Hearing Health	<p><b>CARPA / OATSIH:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- OME longer than 3 months</li> <li>- Recurrent AOM (3 episodes of AOM in last 6 months, or 4 episodes in last 12 months)</li> <li>- CSOM longer than 3 months</li> <li>- Dry Perforation longer than 3 months</li> <li>- Speech and Language delay</li> <li>- Family / School concerns</li> </ul>
<b>Teleotology (ENT telemedicine service)</b> <i>Note: This service includes <b>Audiology</b></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ATSI</li> <li>• Aged 21 and under</li> <li>• Routine ear related ENT conditions only</li> <li>• This is a non-Medicare referral- not valid for hospital visits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Medical Doctors</li> <li>- Hearing Health Program Clinicians (ENT Nurses, Audiologists, Child Hearing Health Coordinators and Aboriginal Youth Hearing Health Coordinators)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Search term: 'Hearing'</i> Double click on Hearing Health Program, select <b>Teleotology, ENT Outreach'</b> and press 'to'</p>	Hearing Health	<p><b>RDH ENT DEPT <sup>2</sup>:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Persistent OME - Bilateral for &gt;3 months with hearing loss concerns (referrals for under 12 months acceptable)</li> <li>- Recurrent AOM - 3 episodes in 6 months / 4 episodes in 12 months (referrals for under 12 months acceptable)</li> <li>- CSOM longer than 3 months – aged 5+ years</li> <li>- Perforation longer than 3 months – aged 5+ years</li> <li>- Clearance for Hearing Aid fitting</li> </ul>
<b>ENT- Hospital OPD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All ages and demographics</li> <li>• All ENT related conditions</li> <li>• Any 'urgent' conditions</li> <li>• A Medicare referral, required for all hospital events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Medical Doctors</li> </ul>	<p><i>Search Term: Relevant hospital ie Royal Darwin, Gove</i> Double click on hospital name, select <b>Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist</b> and press 'to'</p>	Ear Nose and Throat	<p><b>AT DOCTORS DISCRETION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All those aged 22 years and over (ie not eligible for Teleotology)</li> <li>- Any non-ear related ENT conditions</li> <li>- <b>'Urgent' ear conditions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ AOM with complications</li> <li>~ Unsafe attic perforations or retractions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Child Hearing Health Coordinator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ATSI</li> <li>• Aged 5 and under</li> <li>• Requires case management due to chronic and complex middle ear disease</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Medical Doctors</li> <li>- RAN's</li> <li>- AHP's</li> </ul>	<p><i>Search term: 'Hearing'</i> Double click on Hearing Health Program, select <b>Child Hearing Health Coordinator</b> and press 'to'</p>	Hearing Health	<p><b>FOR CASE MANAGEMENT SUPPORT:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Priority 1: Infants under 12 months with recurrent AOM or CSOM or abnormal NHS findings<sup>3</sup></li> <li>- Priority 2: Children aged 1 to 3 years with recurrent AOM, persistent OME or CSOM</li> <li>- Priority 3: Children aged 3 to 5 years with recurrent AOM, persistent OME or CSOM</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> These referral guidelines are specific to the Top End Hospital Network only.

<sup>3</sup> Referred from Newborn Hearing Screening Program for further testing.

## Summary Of Hearing Health Services

Diagnostic Audiology Services	ENT Services
<p><b>Remote (Outreach Visiting Specialist Service)</b></p> <p><b>1. Hearing Health Program (HHP)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deploys all Outreach Audiology services for adults and children to remote communities. Offers regular service to all major communities and homelands</li> <li>• REFERRALS: are made to hearing health addresses outlined above and can be sent via SEMS or Fax to be received by HHP head office at Block 4, RDH</li> <li>• CONTACT: Hearing Health Program Manager, Block 4, RDH ph: (08) 8985 8023, fax: (08) 8985 8016</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Australian Hearing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides rehabilitative Audiology for those with established significant hearing loss bilaterally</li> <li>• REFERRALS: Should not be made from Primary Health. HHP audiologists refer to Australian Hearing</li> <li>• CONTACT: Darwin: ph: (08) 8920 5900, fax: (08) 8945 5522</li> </ul>	<p><b>Remote (Outreach Visiting Specialist Service)</b></p> <p><b>1. Teleotology - ENT Telemedicine</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deployed by HHP and RDH to provide ENT outreach service via store and forward telemedicine to those aged 0-21 years. Offers regular service to all major communities and homelands in the Top End hospital regions. Currently in early stages of implementation in Central Region.</li> <li>• REFERRALS: are made to hearing health addresses outlined above and can be sent via SEMS or Fax to be received by HHP head office at Block 4, RDH</li> <li>• CONTACT: Hearing Health Team Manager, Block 4, RDH ph: (08) 8985 8023, fax: (08) 8985 8016 Note: Contact HHP for information regarding Teleotology in Alice Springs / Tennant Creek regions.</li> </ul> <p><b>2. SONT (Specialist Outreach NT) - face to face ENT Specialist Visit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• REFERRALS: are captured by hospital systems from ENT OPD referrals</li> <li>• CONTACT: Clinical Nurse Coordinator, ENT Susan Mc Minn (RDH) ph: (08) 8944 1374 <a href="mailto:Susan.McMinn@nt.gov.au">Susan.McMinn@nt.gov.au</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Urban</b></p> <p><b>Northern Territory Hearing Services (NTHS)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diagnostic Audiology service</li> <li>• Universal Newborn Hearing Screening (NHS) Service</li> <li>• REFERRALS: are via Fax, Phone or self referral</li> <li>• Offices based in major urban centres: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Darwin ph: (08) 8922 7110, fax: (08) 8922 7444</li> <li>~ Katherine ph: (08) 8973 8587, fax: (08) 8973 8620</li> <li>~ Tennant Creek ph: (08) 8962 4215, fax: (08) 8962 4207</li> <li>~ Alice Springs ph: (08) 8951 6728, fax: (08) 8951 6727</li> </ul> </li> <li>• CONTACT: Manager and Principal Audiologist Amarjit Anand- <a href="mailto:Amarjit.anand@nt.gov.au">Amarjit.anand@nt.gov.au</a> ph: (08) 8922 7113 NHS Screener: ph: (08) 8922 9645</li> </ul>	<p><b>Urban</b></p> <p><b>Hospital Outpatients Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• REFERRALS: For all ENT hospital OPD and surgical events, a Medicare referral from a medical doctor is required. Use existing OPD referral procedures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ RDH</li> <li>~ GDH</li> <li>~ KH</li> <li>~ ASH</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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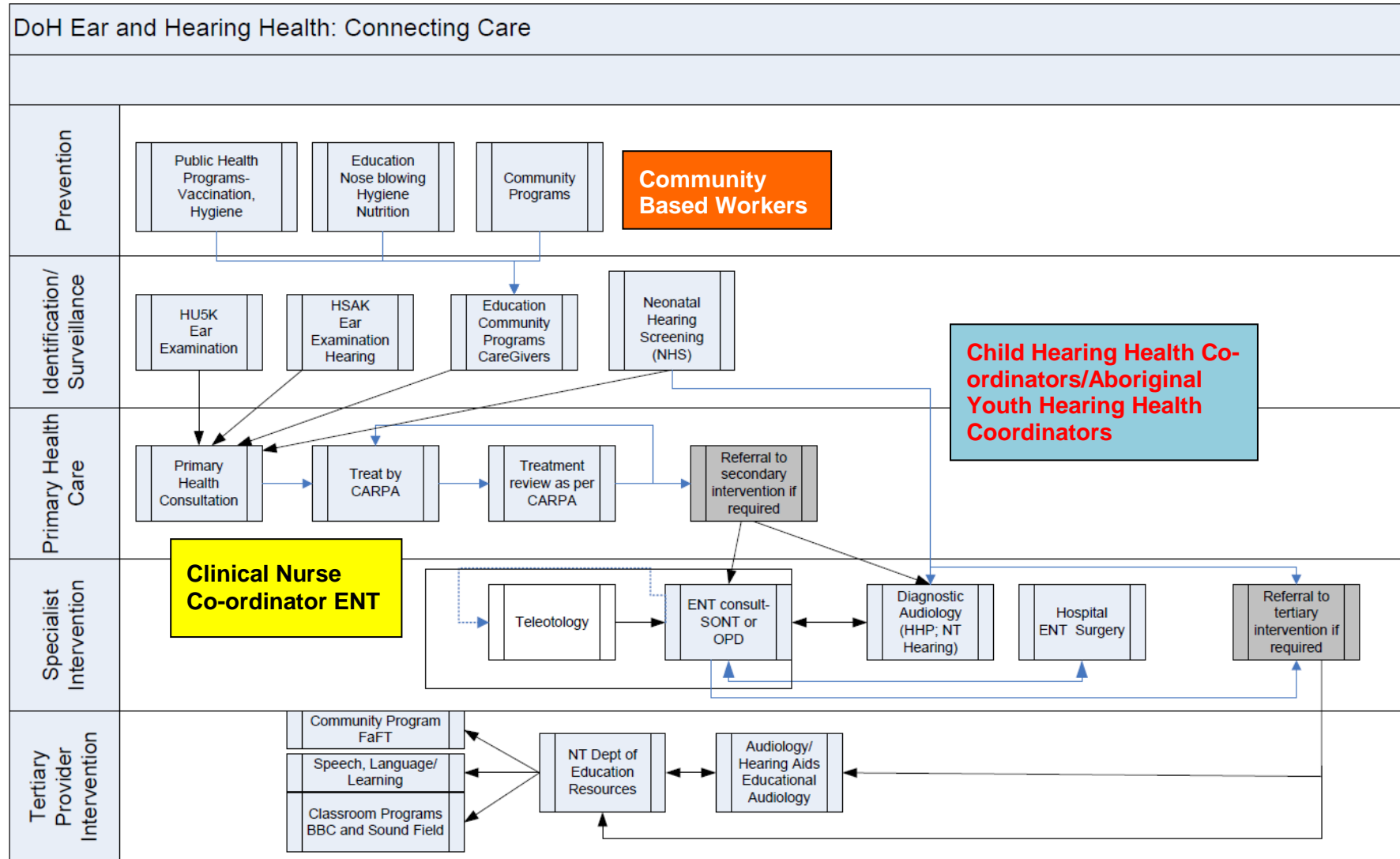
TRIM: | Version: 3.0 | Approved Date:17/08/2015 | Last Update: 12/08/2015 | Review Date: 17/08/2019

Page 4 of 6

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Page 5 of 6

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### Implementation, Review & Evaluation Responsibilities

	Method	Responsibility
<b>Implementation</b>	Document will be available for all staff via the PGC and the Remote Health Atlas.	Health Policy Guidelines Program & Atlas Development Officer
<b>Review</b>	Document will be reviewed within a period of 4 years or as changes in practice occur.	Continuous Quality Improvement Manager, Hearing Health Program
<b>Evaluation</b>	All adverse events relating to the referral of clients to the Hearing Health Program are to be reported to the Quality Improvement Manager.	All employees

### Key Associated Documents

<b>Key Legislation, By-Laws, Standards, Delegations, Aligned &amp; Supporting Documents</b>	N/A
<b>References</b>	N/A

### Alternative Search Terms