

Marrabinya (Indigenous Health Support Service)

Aboriginal people with a diagnosed chronic disease can be referred to Marrabinya by their GP for assistance with specialist appointments, transport, accommodation, and medical aids.

Marrabinya commenced 1 November 2016.

What is the Marrabinya?

Maari Ma Health (under an alliance with Bila Muuji Aboriginal Health Service) has been contracted to implement the Commonwealth's Integrated Team Care (ITC) program by Western NSW PHN. The ITC program aims to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people through better access to coordinated and multidisciplinary care, and improve access to culturally appropriate mainstream primary care services. Maari Ma's ITC funded program is known as 'Marrabinya' which comes from the Wiradjuri language and means '*hand outstretch thee*'.

Who is eligible to be assisted by the Marrabinya?

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people, living in the Western NSW PHN region who have a diagnosed chronic condition, are enrolled for chronic disease management in a general practice or AMS, have a GP management plan in place and are referred by their GP. GPs are encouraged to provide an eligible patient with a Medicare care plan such as, but not limited to an ATSI health check (MBS item 715), GPMP (MBS item 721) and/or Team Care Arrangement (MBS item 723).

The chronic diseases prioritised under Marrabinya are;

- Cardiovascular disease,
- Diabetes,
- Chronic respiratory disease,
- Chronic kidney disease, and
- Cancer

How does Marrabinya work?

Operating as a brokerage service, Marrabinya is accessed via all of the General Practices in western NSW who care for Aboriginal people. A central 1800# (1800 940 757) and a direct email contact have been communicated to all mainstream general practices and AMSs. Any practice with an Aboriginal client eligible for the service can refer to Marrabinya. The referral is assessed within 48 hours and feedback is provided to referring GP. Accepted referrals are assigned to a Local Chronic Care Link worker who follows up directly with the client and keeps the referring GP in the loop.

The types of brokerage assistance provided includes payment of;

- Specialist gap fees
- Diagnostic tests where a fee applies
- Travel and accommodation associated with attending out of town health appointments, and
- Purchase or hire of medical aids where there is no other publicly funded program to provide these items

Case example:

Dr Y will refer an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander patient diagnosed with Diabetes to Marrabinya via the central intake number 1800 940 757. He will ensure the patient has in place a GP management plan which outlines the services the patient needs to access to manage their Diabetes. The plan might include referrals to an endocrinologist, podiatrist, ophthalmologist/optometrist and pharmacist for Webster pack. The referral is assessed and assigned to a Local Chronic Care Link worker. The worker contacts the patient directly to put in place arrangements to pay for fees, travel and accommodation associated with the patient accessing the services. The worker provides feedback to the referring GP on the outcome of the referral.

Are medical aids available?

Yes, where these are not available through any other program in a clinically acceptable timeframe and where the need is documented in the client's care plan. Medical aids may include items such as;

- Dose administration aids
- Assistive breathing equipment (e.g. asthma spacers, nebulisers, CPAP machines and accessories for CPAP machines)
- Blood sugar/glucose monitoring equipment
- Medical footwear prescribed and fitted by a podiatrist
- Spectacles (one off where the wait under the NSW Spectacles program is unacceptable to a limit of \$250)

Do Marrabinya workers become the client's primary care provider?

No, Marrabinya is a brokerage service not a parallel clinical service. Marrabinya staff (Local Chronic Care Link workers) liaise between the client's primary care provider (e.g. general practice or AMS), the client and the service they need and provide information back to the client's primary care provider. Marrabinya staff facilitates the client receiving the care that is deemed necessary by their GP according to their referral and GP management plan.

- For more information regarding patient eligibility, travel, medical aids, other services, gap payments please call **1800 940 757** directly.
- Marrabinya IHSS Referral Form (*on the website this opens in a new tab*)

How to make contact with Marrabinya (IHSS):

Phone: 1800 940 757

Fax: 08 8082 9889

Email inquiries to: indigenoushealthsupportservice@maarima.com.au

Web: www.maarima.com.au

Address all correspondence to:

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