

Policy

Home Collection Services

NSWHP_PD_025



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1. Purpose

1.1. The aim of this policy is to set out a consistent statewide approach for the delivery of safe, reliable and effective home collection services.

2. Background

2.1 In-home collection service allows patients who are unable to attend an Approved Collection Centre due to illness, immobility, infirmity or other medical condition, to have their pathology collections undertaken in their primary place of residence.

2.2 In-home collections present different risks and challenges for staff compared to in-hospital or collection centre collections. Additional requirements and precautions are needed to ensure the safety of both the patient and the pathology collector.

2.3 In-home collection service requirements vary considerably between sites and operational areas, impacting decisions regarding patient eligibility, the management of patient and home collector safety, or compliance with other work health and safety requirements including infection control, specimen storage and travel.

In-home collection services are provided in consultation with the Local Health District and other healthcare providers. Each request for service is considered on a case-by-case basis.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all In-home collections performed by NSW Health Pathology staff.

4. Definitions

ACC	Approved Collection Centre
Approved Collection Centre	A specimen collection centre for which an approval under section 23DNBA of the <i>Health Insurance Act 1973</i> is in force.
eMR	electronic Medical Record.
Home Collection Service Manager	A NSWHP manager or delegate, however named, with the overarching responsibility for the management and delivery of In-home collection services.
In-home collection	Pathology collections that occur in the person's primary place of residence including a residential aged care facility within the meaning of the <i>Aged Care Act 1997</i> , or other institution.

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LHD	Local Health District
LIS	Laboratory Information System.
Private hospital	A facility for which there is a: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) declaration in force that the facility is a hospital under subsection 121-5(6)(a) of the <i>Private Health Insurance Act 2007</i>; andb) statement that the hospital is a private hospital under subsection 121-5(8) of the <i>Private Health Insurance Act 2007</i>.
Recognised hospital	A facility for which there is a: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) declaration in force that the facility is a hospital under subsection 121-5(6)(a) of the <i>Private Health Insurance Act 2007</i>; andb) statement that the hospital is a public hospital under subsection 121-5(8) of the <i>Private Health Insurance Act 2007</i>.
Treating practitioner	The medical or dental practitioner, participating midwife or participating nurse practitioner who is the treating practitioner for the purposes of section 16A of the <i>Health Insurance Act 1973</i> .

5. Policy Statement

5.1. In-home Collection Services

5.1.1. The provision of In-home collection services is subject to:

- a) the availability of NSW Health Pathology staff who have been trained and certified competent, and who have the equipment and safety devices required in **Appendix A**, to perform In-home collections, and
- b) the patient meeting the eligibility requirements set out in 5.2, and risk assessment requirements set out in 5.3.

5.1.2 This policy does not apply to pathology collections undertaken at:

- a) an Approved Collection Centre, or
- b) the premises of a Recognised hospital, being premises at which hospital treatment is provided to the patient as an inpatient, or
- c) a Private hospital in which the person is a patient.

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5.2. Eligibility of the Patient

- 5.2.1. Referrals for In-home collections can only be made by the patient's Treating Practitioner on the patient's behalf. Home Collection Services Managers can also request this at their discretion. Self-and/or family or carer referrals may be accepted for repeat appointments as requested by the referrer. This will be at the discretion of the local service.
- 5.2.2. To be eligible for In-home collection services, the patient must be unable to attend an ACC independently or with family or carer support due to:
- age, immobility and infirmity, or
 - chronic illness or medical condition, or
 - post-operative restrictions up to six (6) weeks after surgery, or
 - significant physical or mental factors that prevent the patient from leaving their place of residence, or
 - other extenuating clinical circumstance, or
 - access to the patient's closest Approved Collection Centre is restricted due to its physical configuration or location.
 - where the procedure can be carried out safely by NSWHP staff in the home environment.
- 5.2.2 Preference for In-home collection services or convenience are not adequate reasons to justify eligibility for In-home collection.
- 5.2.3 The referral for In-home collections must be in writing or confirmed in writing or be reflected in the pathology request form submitted manually or via an E-order system and document the following:
- the patient's eligibility as outlined in 5.2.2, and
 - the anticipated duration that In-home collection services will be required.
- 5.2.4 The Treating Practitioner's referral must be provided to the Home Collection Services Manager prior to the first visit.
- 5.2.5 A copy of the Treating Practitioner's referral must be filed or scanned electronically in the relevant LIS or Home Collection Management System.
- 5.2.6 NSWHP staff must reconfirm the patient's eligibility for In-home collection services at each subsequent In-home collection request pursuant to 5.2.2, unless services are no longer required.

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- 5.2.7 Notwithstanding 5.2.1 – 5.2.6, where a further pathology collection is required due to an error or omission by NSW Health Pathology staff, NSW Health Pathology staff may arrange an In-home collection on a one-off basis.

5.3 Eligibility for Home Collection

- 5.3.1 All referrals, including patients referred under 5.2.7, must be assessed to confirm the eligibility for In-home collection services and to undertake a preliminary Home Collection Request - Criteria Assessment about the status of the patient and the environment in which the collection will occur (**Part A of Appendix B – NSWHP F 060**).
- 5.3.2 Once eligibility has been confirmed, NSW Health Pathology staff should contact the patient to confirm the address, visit time and understand any specific needs of the patient.
- 5.3.3 Where a patient is deemed ineligible pursuant to 5.2 or the Referrer Request and Criteria Assessment does not support the provision of In-home collections, the Home Collections Service Manager must contact the referring Treating Practitioner or LHD clinic to advise them that the service is not available, the reason why and offer alternative options.
- 5.3.4 Reasons for the service being declined must be documented in the LIS or Home Collection Management System or as per local procedures.
- 5.3.5 A Home Collection On-site Risk Assessment must be undertaken at the time of the initial In-home collection visit (**Part B of Appendix B - NSWHP F 061**).
- 5.3.6 All staff must be provided with a personal duress alarm and training on its use. A nominated person must be the contact point for an alarm activation and have access to the GPS tracking system.
- 5.3.7 If the NSW Health Pathology collector has concerns with respect to health, safety or security, the In-home collection will not be performed or will be immediately suspended.
- 5.3.8 Where a scheduled In-home collection is not performed based on assessment in 5.3.5, or not completed due to 5.3.6, the Collection Service Manager or delegate, must be advised.
- 5.3.9 The Collection Service Manager or delegate must:
- document the reason(s) for the service being declined in the LIS and/or Home Collection Management System,
 - contact the Treating Practitioner to explore other options for pathology collection,
 - advise the patient and/or carer or family members of the outcomes and agree alternatives available to them.

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- 5.3.10 A copy of documents, Part A and Part B of the Home Collection Request - Criteria Assessment and On-Site Risk Assessment and any documented reasons for In-home collections being declined, must be:
- filed electronically in the relevant LIS or Home Collection Management System or as per local procedures,
 - retained for three (3) years,
 - be used for future audit and review purposes as required.
- 5.3.11 The Home Collection Request - Criteria Assessment must be updated every three (3) months or earlier if the patient's circumstances change, unless In-home collection services are no longer required e.g. the patient is no longer eligible for In-home collections.
- 5.3.12 Prior to the first In-home collection visit, an On-site Risk Assessment must be undertaken (**Part B of Appendix B - NSWHP F 061**). On repeat visits, the collector must take note of any changes and if any are noted, document on the On-site Risk Assessment form. Where there are no observed changes the On-site Risk Assessment is only required every 3 months.

The Unable to Complete Collection record must be completed if the visit is not continued or cannot be completed (**Part C of Appendix B - NSWHP F 062**). If the collection cannot be completed the appropriate action must be taken as outlined in the **Home Collection Procedure**.

5.4 Compliance with Legislative, Regulatory and Standard Operating Procedure Requirements

- 5.4.1 In-home collection services must be performed in accordance with current NSW Health or NSW Health Pathology policy, procedures and guidelines regarding:
- venepuncture and positive patient identification
 - hand hygiene,
 - work, health and safety,
 - transportation of pathology specimens,
 - mobile phone usage,
 - motor vehicles and
 - remote duress alarm usage.
- 5.4.2 Any NSW Health Pathology staff member providing In-home collection services who incurs a traffic fine or infringement notice while providing that service, will be liable for any expenses or enforcement action.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- 6.1 All NSWHP staff involved in the provision of In-home collection services must comply with this policy and the Home Collection Procedure - NSWHP PR 041

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- 6.2 In each NSWHP site delivering In-home collection services, local implementation must comply with this policy and the Home Collection Procedure.
- 6.3 Operations Directors and/or Managers of In-home collection services must ensure that:
- a) the requirements of this policy are applied, achieved and sustained, and
 - b) all staff are made aware of their obligations in relation to this policy, and
 - c) all staff receive appropriate training and competency assessments to enable them to carry out their obligations in relation to this policy.
 - d) all staff are provided with and carry safety devices to ensure their location is known in the event of an incident.
 - e) Records are kept as per the Requirements for the Retention of Laboratory Records and Diagnostic Material for all activities undertaken within the home collection service.

7. Legal and Policy Framework

National Pathology Accreditation Advisory Council (NPAAC), Requirements for Medical Pathology Services (Second Edition 2018)

National Pathology Accreditation Advisory Council (NPAAC), Requirements for the Retention of Laboratory Records and Diagnostic Material (Seventh Edition 2018)

Fatigue – Preventing & Managing Work Related Fatigue: Guidelines for the NSW Public Health System
GL2007_023

Infection Prevention and Control Policy, PD2017_013

Labelling Requirements for Pathology and Forensic Specimens, NSWHP_PD_023

Motor Vehicles – Use of Within NSW Health, PD2014_051

National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards, September 2012

National Pathology Accreditation Advisory Council (NPAAC), Requirements for the packaging and transport of Pathology specimens and Associated Materials (Fourth Edition 2013)

Chapter 16, NSW Health Protecting People and Property Manual

Preventing and Managing Violence in the NSW Health Workplace – A Zero Tolerance Approach, PD2015_001

Work Health and Safety - Blood and Body Substances Occupational Exposure Prevention, GL2018_013

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8. Related Legislation and Supporting Documents

Aged Care Act 1997

Health Insurance Act 1973

Private Health Insurance Act 2007

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed by 30 June 2026.

10. Risk

Risk Statement	Ensuring a consistent statewide approach to home collection will ensure the delivery of a high-quality service that meets the needs of eligible patients and ensures the safety and wellbeing of patients and staff performing in-home pathology collections.
Risk Category	Clinical Care and Patient Safety; Work Health and Safety

11. Further Information

For further information, please contact:

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12. Version History

The approval and amendment history for this document must be listed in the following table.

Version No	Effective Date	Approved By	Approval Date	Procedure Author	Risk Rating	Sections Modified
V1.0	24/03/2020	SLT	24/03/2020	Lead, Pre and Post Analytical Clinical Stream	High	New policy
V2.0	27/02/2023	Director Clinical Services and CMIO	23/02/2023	Director Pre and Post Analytics	High	Changes, reflect a review of pre-visit assessments, risk matrix and current practices

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APPENDIX A – STAFF COMPETENCY AND EQUIPMENT REQUIRED FOR HOME COLLECTIONS

Staff Competency

Includes but is not limited to:

- Competencies aligned to the requirements of 5.4.1
- Accurate transcription of patient information into eMR scheduler or scheduling system in use.
- Geographical mapping of patient locations using GPS navigator system and/or street map
- Run sheet preparation and printing
- Completion of Risk Assessments
- Collection of statistics as required

Equipment

Includes but is not limited to:

- NSW Health Pathology motor vehicle with tracking and contact/communication capacity from base capacity
- Collection Kit approved for In-home collections
- Personal protective equipment
- Mobile phone
- Personal duress alarm

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APPENDIX B – HOME COLLECTION RISK ASSESSMENT

[NSWHP_F_060 - Home Collections Request - Criteria Assessment \(Part A\)](#)

[NSWHP_F_061 - On-site Risk Assessment \(Part B\)](#)

[NSWHP_F_062 - Unable to Complete Collection \(Part C\)](#)

[NSWHP_F_063 - Incident Risk Assessment and Review \(Part D\)](#)

Adapted from the NSW Health Pathology Safety Risk Assessment Record. See also Chapter 16 – Working in the Community of the NSW Health Protecting People and Property Manual