

# Vhi HomeCare

Vhi HomeCare is a NEW clinical service available to eligible Vhi Healthcare members requiring certain treatments as deemed suitable by the referring Consultant or General Practitioner.

## SECTION A

### Overview of the Service

Vhi HomeCare is a unique Hospital in the Home (HITH) service. This allows suitable patients requiring intravenous antibiotic therapy to be treated by doctors and nurses for specified conditions in their own home rather than remaining in or attending hospital. This care is equivalent in standard to that provided while in hospital and involves the following:

- Treatment of patients with acute conditions who would otherwise have required treatment in a hospital bed.
- Provision of the level and type of services that would normally be provided in a hospital bed.
- Provision of those services within the home.
- Provision of an appropriate level of emergency back up.



## What conditions are currently eligible for treatment?

Vhi HomeCare provides treatment to patients who have been identified by you, the physician, and the Vhi HomeCare team as suitable for home treatment. This patient group typically requires intravenous therapy coupled with additional clinical treatments.

### These conditions currently include:

- Pneumonias
- Lower respiratory tract infections
- Urinary tract infections
- Cellulitis (severe inflammation and infection of the skin)
- Exacerbations of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Osteomyelitis
- Endocarditis
- Post Operative Infection
- Anti-coagulation
- I.V Hydration

Vhi HomeCare will be expanding their list of suitable conditions for home treatment

## Who can refer patients to the service?

1. General Practitioners in the Dublin region.
2. All consultants attached to any one of the following hospitals:
  - Beaumont Hospital
  - St James's Hospital
  - St Vincent's Hospital
  - Mater Misericordiae Hospital
  - James Connolly Hospital, Blanchardstown
  - Adelaide and Meath Hospital, incorporating the National Children's Hospital, Tallaght.
  - St Michael's Hospital Dun-Laoghaire
  - Naas General Hospital
  - Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital Drogheda
  - Beacon Hospital

### From one of the following routes:

- Accident & Emergency Department
- From the hospital in-patient wards
- Consultant Rooms

#### NOTE:

When referring a patient to Vhi HomeCare, please include your assigned Vhi Doctor Code number on the letter of referral.

*A public hospital Consultant who holds a Type A Contract, who has not previously registered with Vhi Healthcare should do so by contacting Vhi Healthcare's Medical Relations Department as follows:*

By E-mail: [medical.relations@vhi.ie](mailto:medical.relations@vhi.ie)  
By Telephone : 01 7994029, 01 6477756 or 01 6477757  
By Fax: 01 8090564 or 01 8090585



## Who determines patient suitability for the programme?

All Patients must have been deemed suitable by their managing Consultant / GP and considered suitable for treatment at home. All potential patients for the Vhi HomeCare programme will be reviewed by the Vhi HomeCare Hospital Liaison Nurse Manager on site at the hospital or GP's surgery and in consultation with the patient's GP / Consultant and his/her team, will determine that the following criteria are met:

# INCLUSION CRITERIA

For ALL patients, regardless of diagnosis

- Patient must hold current appropriate Vhi cover for Vhi HomeCare Services.
- Patient must have been reviewed by a Consultant / GP. The referring Consultant / GP will make a primary diagnosis and highlight the patient as being suitable for Vhi HomeCare.
- Patient (and patient's family) must be happy for the patient to be treated at home.
- Patient or family member must have access to a telephone.
- Patient's home must be accessible to the Vhi HomeCare team and reside in covered area.
- Patients need to be over 16 years of age.
- The Patient is discharged to the care of referring Consultant or GP after completion of Vhi HomeCare treatment.

# EXCLUSION CRITERIA

For ALL patients, regardless of diagnosis

- Acute or unstable chest pain.
- New onset or unstable cardiac arrhythmia.
- ECG changes suggestive or acute ischaemia or infarction.
- Acute or decompensated cardiac failure, renal failure, liver failure.
- Poorly controlled or unstable diabetes melitus.
- Profound respiratory failure ( $\text{PaO}_2 < 7.0 \text{ kPa}$ ,  $\text{pH} < 7.30$ )  
*There may be patients who are on long-term oxygen therapy who have chronic hypoxaemia but are still suitable for Vhi HomeCare. Individual cases may be discussed with the Physicians or Clinical Nurse Manager on the Vhi HomeCare team.*
- Worsening hypoxaemia or hypercapnia.
- Acute or worsening confusion.
- Impaired level of consciousness.
- Severe electrolyte imbalance (e.g. profound hypokalaemia).
- Uncertain diagnosis
- Ongoing alcohol or drug dependence.





## Who is covered for Home treatment?

The service is exclusively available to Vhi Healthcare members (other than children under the age of 16).

## SECTION B – FAQs

### The Modus Operandi of the Programme

#### How can you refer a patient into the programme?

All referrals into the programme must be made by the Consultant either directly or via his / her medical team or via GP. All referrals must however be signed off by the Consultant / GP.

Any referral should be made via the Vhi HomeCare Hospital Liaison Nurse Manager attached to your hospital / catchment area. All relevant medical staff in the hospital setting / GP Surgery will be able to readily contact this individual to discuss any particular patient regarding the service.

The Vhi HomeCare Hospital Liaison Nurse Manager will be contactable by mobile telephone. The mobile number for your Vhi HomeCare Hospital Liaison Nurse Manager is detailed on page 12 of this booklet and on the Vhi HomeCare posters displayed throughout your hospital / GP Surgery.

**Any specific enquiries that you have regarding either a potential referral or a patient who has been referred from a particular hospital / GP Surgery will be dealt with by the Vhi HomeCare Hospital Liaison Nurse Manager.**

Once contacted, the Vhi HomeCare Hospital Liaison Nurse Manager will liaise with you, the physician, to consider the patient for admittance into the service.

This will include a “check list” regarding the inclusion and exclusion criteria as described in Section A.

Once the patient is deemed suitable for the service by the managing physician, the Vhi HomeCare Hospital Liaison Nurse Manager will confirm arrangements for the transport of the patient from the hospital / GP Surgery to their home for continuation of their treatment.



## Hospitals currently eligible to refer to the service:

The service is available to suitable Vhi Healthcare members attending any one of the following hospitals.

- Beaumont Hospital
- St James's Hospital
- St Vincent's Hospital
- Mater Misericordiae Hospital
- James Connolly Hospital, Blanchardstown
- Adelaide and Meath Hospital, incorporating the National Children's Hospital, Tallaght.
- St Michael's Hospital Dun-Laoghaire
- Naas General Hospital
- Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital Drogheda
- Beacon Hospital

## How often will a patient be seen at home?

In all situations the patient is seen by a member of the Vhi HomeCare team at least once a day, and up to 4 times a day where required. In some situations patients may be requested to attend a diagnostic centre/hospital (transportation will be provided where necessary).

## Do patients remain under the care of the referring physician?

All patients accepted into the programme are deemed to be under the direct care of the Vhi HomeCare Medical Director:

While the actual care plan, required therapy and prescription will initially be the decision of the referring physician, this therapy may be changed by the Vhi HomeCare physician in consultation with the referring consultant / GP.

At all times the best clinical interest of the patient is central to the operation of the service. All referring physicians will be readily able to contact the Vhi HomeCare Liaison Nurse Manager through the relevant channels to discuss or monitor patient progress.

## Are medications and equipment provided?

Yes, all medication and equipment are provided by the Vhi HomeCare team. Patients referred from hospitals will have a care plan agreed, in consultation with the referring hospital physician and initial doses of medication administered before discharge.

## How are patients transported from and to the participating hospitals/diagnostic centres?

As part of the service, a dedicated fleet of patient transport vehicles are being provided.

Each referring hospital / catchment area will have a vehicle attached to its nursing team with the nursing team themselves transporting patients from emergency departments, wards and GP surgeries to home, where necessary.

In the event that a patient requires specialised medical transport the usual ambulance services will be utilised.



## If a patient requires re-admission to hospital, what is the procedure?

Data suggests that a percentage (between 4 and 6%) may require re-admission to hospital while being cared for in the programme. Re-admission protocols exist for all clinical conditions treated. A decision on re-admission is made by the Vhi HomeCare Medical Director in consultation with the medical and nursing team attending the patient.

## How are patients discharged from the service?

Patients will be discharged from the service by the Vhi HomeCare team directly to their General Practitioner or other appropriate managing physician. A discharge letter will be sent to the referring Consultant and the patients General Practitioner, following the patients discharge from the Vhi HomeCare programme.

## SECTION C

### The Vhi HomeCare Team

The Vhi HomeCare medical team works in close co-operation with our nursing teams that are assigned to each hospital / catchment area. A team of full time specialist nurses and doctors will provide services to your patient in their own home. Our medical team is led by our Medical Director, Professor NG McElvaney

#### *Vhi HomeCare Medical Director*

Professor NG Mc Elvaney MB,  
FRCPI, FRCPC, Professor of Medicine, Chairman,  
Dept of Medicine, RCSI.

The Medical Director's role is to provide regulatory and high level input and guidance to the other medical and nursing members of the Vhi HomeCare team. The review and adaptation of protocols and the evaluation of the programme on an ongoing clinical basis are also within his remit.

#### *Vhi HomeCare Medical Team*

The medical team consists of suitably qualified and experienced physicians. The team provides on site assessment of patients admitted into the programme and medical support and services to the nursing teams. The role and responsibilities of the medical team is broadly similar to that of a hospital based physician.

If you have any further questions about this service, please contact the Vhi HomeCare Hospital Liaison Nurse Manager.

**Southside**  
**086 7728850 / 086 7708255**

**Northside**  
**086 7728844 / 086 0250758**