

STATEWIDE REFERRAL CRITERIA FOR SPECIALIST CLINICS COMMUNICATIONS PACK: February 2026

Lung Nodule

Are your local care pathways ready?

Please check that your region's local care pathways are ready before publishing.

Background information

The new Lung Nodule statewide referral criteria will assess high and very-high risk lung nodules found on imaging in all Victorian public hospitals as an extension to the [National Lung Cancer Screening Program](#) implemented last year.

The aim of statewide referral criteria is to streamline access to specialist clinics in public hospitals in Victoria, by reducing inappropriate referrals and overall wait times for patients. Statewide referral criteria assist referring clinicians to know when a referral to a public specialist clinic is appropriate and the information that should be included in the referral.

The Victorian Department of Health has developed and published a new statewide referral criterion for lung nodule:

- Lung Nodules

All statewide referral criteria can be found at:
health.vic.gov.au/statewide-referral-criteria/specialties

GPs and other primary care providers are encouraged to check [HealthPathways](#), [Gippsland Pathways](#) or [SEMPHN clinical and referral pathways](#) when making referrals – this will be the quickest way to understand a local public hospital's requirements. It is also a helpful way to troubleshoot management of these conditions when a referral to specialist clinics is not indicated.

The benefit of local care pathways

Local care pathways offer specific clinical advice, including alternative conservative management options and referral pathways, such as suitable allied health referral options.

Referrals that do not meet the criteria will be declined and returned to the referrer. Referrers should receive a letter from the health service clearly stating why the referral has been declined.

This project is supported by the Victorian Government

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Referrers can seek guidance from Victorian Pathways to:

- review referral criteria
- support the safe management of patients in primary care when referral to a public specialist clinic has been declined or is not yet indicated.

PHNs have been funded to support the adoption of statewide referral criteria by primary health providers by including the criteria in [local care pathways](#) that are available across Victoria through HealthPathways websites for Eastern Melbourne PHN, North Western Melbourne PHN, Murray PHN, and Western Victoria PHN, Gippsland Pathways and South Eastern Melbourne PHN clinical and referral pathways.

Alternatively, the statewide referral criteria can be viewed on the official Department of Health website at health.vic.gov.au/statewide-referral-criteria.

Key messages

What is the main information for GPs?

- New statewide referral criteria for referrals to **lung nodule services** are now in effect.
- These criteria provide clear and concise guidance that a referral for specialist opinion is needed for high and very-high risk lung nodule(s) found on imaging.
- To ensure patients are able to be placed on a specialist clinic waitlist, referrals should include all information outlined in the new criteria.
- Statewide referral criteria apply to public hospitals and health services only. They do not apply to private hospitals.
- GPs and other primary care providers should check their local [HealthPathways or their local pathways equivalent](#), [Gippsland Pathways](#) or [SEMPHN clinical and referral pathways](#) when considering a referral. If the referral is not accepted, GPs can find up-to-date clinical advice on how to effectively manage these conditions within the community.
- GPs can visit health.vic.gov.au/statewide-referral-criteria to view the criteria.

News item for GP newsletters

Title: Statewide Referral Criteria – lung nodules.

New statewide referral criteria for referrals to lung nodule services are now in effect.

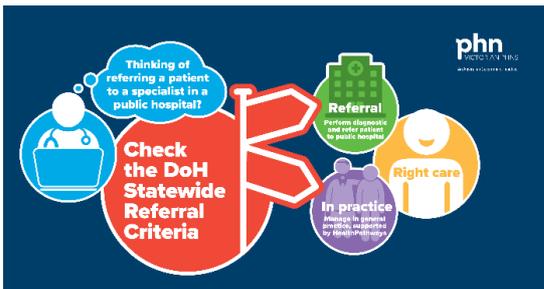
Patients can be placed on a specialist clinic wait list when a referring GP provides information that shows the referral meets the statewide specialist referral criteria.

The criteria identify the information that should be included in a referral to assess the referral and direct the patient to the best service available.

This new adult lung nodule criteria sits within respiratory conditions, a suite previously developed and published by the Victorian Department of Health in 2024.

Social media messages and graphics

Message 1:



Statewide referral criteria is now in effect for adult lung nodule conditions in public hospitals.

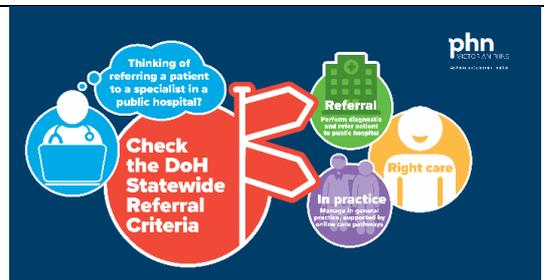
The Victorian Department of Health has developed and published statewide referral criteria for lung nodule condition.

The aim of statewide referral criteria is to improve access to public hospitals in Victoria by providing clear and concise guidance on when a referral for specialist opinion and management is indicated.

Visit health.vic.gov.au/statewide-referral-criteria/specialties when considering a referral for a patient.

Read more: [link to news item]

#StatewideReferralCriteria #ClearConsistentCriteria



Alternative care pathways graphic for SEMPHN and GPHN

Message 2:



Statewide referral criteria is now in effect within Victorian public hospitals for lung nodules.

Referrals for specialist management of lung nodules will be assessed against the statewide referral criteria.

These criteria provide clear and concise guidance that a referral for specialist opinion is needed for high and very-high risk lung nodule(s) found on imaging.

Check your local [HealthPathways](#) or [online care pathways website](#) or visit health.vic.gov.au/statewide-referral-criteria when considering a referral for a patient.

Read more: [link to news item]

#StatewideReferralCriteria #ClearConsistentCriteria