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| Displaced Ukrainian nationals in Victoria without Medicare |
| Interim guidance for Victorian health services – June 2022 |
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## Background

In March 2022 the Federal government announced that it would support displaced Ukrainian nationals to come to Australia. According to the Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs), almost 3,000 displaced Ukrainians have arrived in Australia since the conflict began. Ukrainian community and service providers estimate that about 1,000 people have already arrived in Victoria.

In contrast to other refugee cohorts, most displaced Ukrainians will arrive on tourist visas (subclass 600) and be placed on Temporary Humanitarian Stay visas (subclass 449) without access to Medicare.

## Provision of healthcare to displaced Ukrainians

Victorian health services are asked to provide full medical care to Medicare-ineligible displaced Ukrainians, including as admitted, non-admitted or emergency patients, similar to the arrangements outlined in the [Hospital access for people seeking asylum](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/hospital-access-for-people-seeking-asylum) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/hospital-access-for-people-seeking-asylum>.

**Displaced Ukrainians should not be invoiced for this care**. Funding is as per usual emergency and general public patient throughput arrangements. This cohort can be recorded as MF Public: ineligible asylum seeker.

Displaced Ukrainians will not have consistent forms of evidence confirming their status. The following would be acceptable forms of evidence:

* a valid Ukrainian passport with recent date stamp
* a letter from Home Affairs confirming the patient’s temporary humanitarian visa application (visa subclass 449 or 786)
* a letter from a Ukrainian community organisation, AMES Australia or refugee health provider confirming their status as a displaced Ukrainian.

If an individual is unable to show evidence of their immigration status, health services may need to exercise discretion or seek advice from AMES Australia.

Like all linguistically diverse patients, displaced Ukrainians should be offered an interpreter so that they can make informed decisions about their healthcare, as per the department’s [Language Services Policy](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/language-services-policy) <www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/language-services-policy>. Family members should not be asked to interpret.

## Additional considerations prior to discharge

Health services are asked to consider the extenuating needs of displaced Ukrainian nationals prior to discharge.

Displaced Ukrainians in Victoria are predominately women and children, and a small number of older people. Many left Ukraine in urgent and distressing situations and were forced leave family and friends behind in unsafe circumstances.

Most were unable to bring adequate possessions, including clothing, medicine, and infant and children’s supplies, and are now residing in temporary accommodation around the Melbourne CBD and Greater Melbourne.

They may have a range of unidentified health care needs, including medication and diagnostic requirements related to chronic health conditions. Many will need catch-up vaccination, and influenza and COVID-19 vaccination should also be offered.

## Assistance with other health and wellbeing needs

Displaced Ukrainians have generally arrived through non-humanitarian visa pathways and may not be aware of their visa options or eligibility for settlement support.

**AMES Australia** is contracted by Home Affairs to deliver the Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) in Victoria, including for essential registrations, accommodation, and school enrolment. Individuals can be referred to AMES Australia for support. Contact AMES Australia on 0429 538 085 or at the [AMES email address](mailto:HSPIntake@ames.net.au) <HSPIntake@ames.net.au> for enquiries during business hours.

For additional health support in the community, contact your local Victorian government funded [**Refugee Health Program**](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/community-health/refugee-health-program) provider <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/community-health/refugee-health-program> or [email the Statewide Facilitator](mailto:Kath.Desmyth@cohealth.org.au) <Kath.Desmyth@cohealth.org.au> during business hours, Monday to Thursday.

The Victorian government funded [**Refugee Health Fellows Program**](http://refugeehealthnetwork.org.au/engage/refugee-health-fellows/)<https://refugeehealthnetwork.org.au/engage/refugee-health-fellows/> delivered through Royal Children’s Hospital, Royal Melbourne Hospital and Monash Health can also provide clinical advice, including on diagnosis, healthcare and appropriate referral options for displaced Ukrainian nationals.

Translated resources can be accessed via [Health Translations](https://www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au/) <https://www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au/>.

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