



WAVED

WA Virtual Emergency Department

January 2025

Residential aged care factsheet

What is WAVED?

The Western Australian Virtual Emergency Department (WAVED) provides comprehensive virtual (telehealth) assessment of residents within their own care homes following a triple zero (000) call to St John WA (SJWA).

WAVED improves timely access to specialist emergency assessment and avoids unnecessary delays that may occur when residents are transferred to busy emergency departments (EDs). WAVED clinicians assess the resident's medical needs, in collaboration with their next of kin and care team as appropriate, and may offer an alternative to an ED transfer if this is agreed to be the best option. If the most appropriate option is to transfer the individual to an ED, then this will still occur.

How to access WAVED

Staff in residential aged care homes should continue to request an ambulance via triple zero (000) for residents requiring emergency care.

From there, there are 2 ways the resident may be referred to WAVED:

- **Before an ambulance is sent:** you may receive a phone call from a WAVED staff member offering a virtual (telehealth) consultation with an ED doctor.
- **After an ambulance arrives:** if the attending SJWA ambulance crew believe the patient may benefit from a WAVED consultation, they will initiate a referral to WAVED.

WAVED operating hours

WAVED currently operates 7 days per week, from 8 am to 8 pm.

Using WAVED

Before an ambulance is sent

If the WAVED team identify a resident is potentially suitable for virtual care before an ambulance is sent, a WAVED nurse will telephone the aged care home to discuss this option with the nurse on shift.

If all parties agree to a virtual consultation, a WAVED clerk will briefly confirm some basic information about the resident and send a website link for a Healthdirect Video Call via email or text message. A web-enabled device (computer, tablet or mobile phone) will be needed to access this link and connect the user to the WAVED virtual waiting room, ready for the emergency doctor to start the video call.

It is recommended that a staff member remains with the patient and the device while in the virtual waiting room to ensure that the virtual consultation can begin as soon as possible.

While on the call:

- The WAVED team will provide support and guidance to the patient and aged care nurse throughout the consultation.
- Multiple people can be invited to join the consultation, including family members, general practitioners and other care providers as appropriate.
- The emergency doctor will assess the patient and provide advice regarding management of the patient's condition. This may include prescriptions for medication, referrals for further investigations, and linking with services for follow-up care, including hospital attendance where required.

Requirements to participate

- An internet connection and a mobile computer, telehealth cart or smart device (tablet or smart phone) with a camera, microphone and web browser are required to participate in a WAVED video consultation.
- No special software programs or other technology are required.
- No training is required for staff to access WAVED. The staff will be guided through each step by experienced WAVED staff.

After an ambulance arrives

If an attending SJWA ambulance crew identifies a resident as suitable for WAVED, they will initiate a referral and facilitate the virtual consultation via a SJWA device. The presence of a staff member from the aged care home during the consultation is greatly appreciated, as this will ensure a more comprehensive assessment of the resident's problem and needs.

Supporting services and follow up care

Transfer to hospital

- If at any time during the virtual consultation it becomes clear that transport to hospital is required, this will be arranged in line with usual processes.

Referrals to other services

- WAVED staff can provide referrals to community or hospital-based services as required to ensure the resident receives the follow-up care they need.

Discharge information

- Once the consultation is complete, a discharge summary will be automatically sent to the patient's general practitioner.
- The WAVED team can also send a copy to a nominated email address for the care home to ensure the patient continues to be cared for appropriately.

Care quality

- Safety and quality are at the forefront of the WAVED service. Only residents who do not require urgent transport to a hospital will be considered for referral to WAVED. This will mean improved care for people who would generally have longer wait times for ambulances and for clinical assessment in ED.
- Virtual care through WAVED means these residents will be seen by a specialist emergency physician much earlier than they would when attending an ED. They will also avoid potential complications from attending an ED.
- Patients requiring emergency care for life threatening or urgent conditions and requiring urgent transport to a hospital will not be referred to WAVED.

WAVED performance

Around 70% of aged care residents who receive a WAVED consultation avoid a visit to a physical emergency department.

Some of the feedback from aged care staff and residents' family members includes:

- "I have been impressed every time I have had to use the WAVED service, thank you to all of your team" (aged care staff member).
- "This was a fantastic service!! Very thorough and easy" (aged care staff member).
- "Would definitely recommend Telehealth and staff, very professional and a wonderful service" (family member).

To date, over 90% of aged care staff have rated the overall quality of care provided by WAVED as 'good' or 'very good'.

Feedback and enquiries

Feedback on your experience with WAVED is welcome to assist with improving the service. Feedback can be provided through an online [WAVED survey \(external site\)](#).

For any other enquiries please contact DoH.WAVED@health.wa.gov.au