



Health pathways for refugee and asylum seeker children

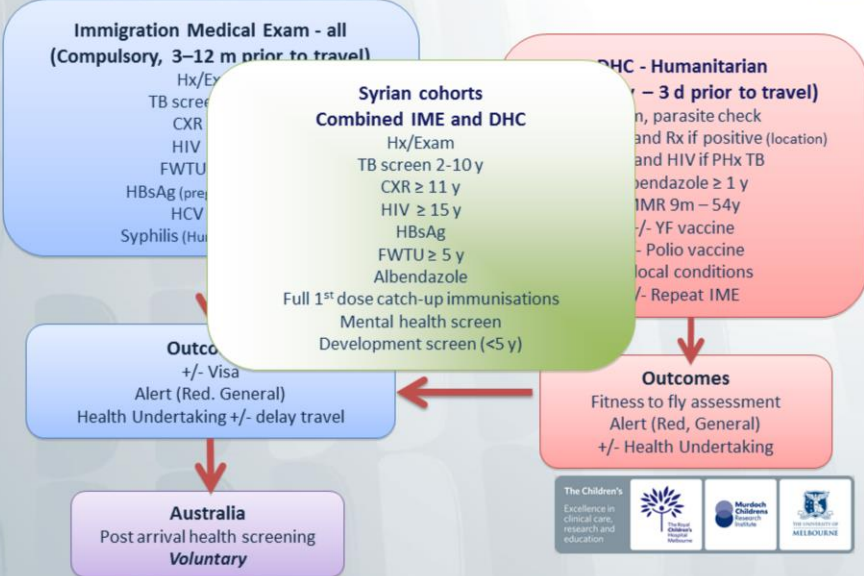
RCH Immigrant Health Service
June 2018
Dr Georgie Paxton



This presentation summaries the health pathways for refugee and asylum seeker children in Victoria.

The areas covered include health screening, access to health care and specific health pathways.

Pre-departure health screen (offshore)





RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMPREHENSIVE POST-ARRIVAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT FOR PEOPLE FROM REFUGEE-LIKE BACKGROUNDS

AUSTRALASIAN SOCIETY FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES
AND REFUGEE HEALTH NETWORK OF AUSTRALIA

2ND EDITION





Maximising referral value

- Make sure country, language, DOB documented
- Include current address, caseworker details
- **Copy of e-medical paperwork**
- **Offshore immunisations – AIR – all ages**
- **Health undertakings**
- Any screening completed
 - Test results
 - Immunisations
 - Progress/reviews/medications
- **Never give original paperwork to health providers!**



There are many different areas that clinical information will be kept and families may have all or none of those listed.

The availability of clinical details, as well as language and caseworker details facilitate a much more effective consultation with the doctor.

Correspondence which outlines a reason for referral improves efficiency.

Has my patient had a refugee health check?

- 3 sets immunisations (~3-4 needles in each)
- Screening blood tests
- Faecal specimen
- Mantoux test (children <5y)

- Check results (i.e. 2 visits)
- Treatment of problems



On-shore, these are the minimum investigations a child will require: please see [http://www.rch.org.au/immigranthealth/clinical/Initial assessment/](http://www.rch.org.au/immigranthealth/clinical/Initial%20assessment/)

ACIR (Australian Childhood Immunisation Register) all immunisation records, even detention

Generally these investigations will yield at least 1 (often more) issues that require follow up. Together with catch-up immunisations, several appointments are often needed to complete the initial health assessment and refugee check.

Specific health issues



- Vaccine preventable diseases
 - Are *you* immunised?
 - Consider schedule vaccines, inc. hepatitis, influenza
- Tuberculosis
 - Latent TB infection
 - Evidence of infection (+ screening test) without evidence of disease based on history, exam, CXR. **Not infectious, 30% world**
 - TB disease
 - Uncommon, rates Victoria steady, household contacts greater risk
- Blood born viruses
 - Universal precautions



The vast majority of cases of tuberculosis are the non-contagious form, of latent TB. Active tuberculosis is very uncommon and those at greatest risk are household contact.

Note that children with active tuberculosis are rarely contagious.



No Jab, No Pay – New Immunisation Requirements for Family Assistance Payments

SUMMARY

From 1 January 2016:

- Only parents of children (less than 20 years of age) who are fully immunised or are on a recognised catch-up schedule can receive the Child Care Benefit, the Child Care Rebate and the Family Tax Benefit Part A end of year supplement. The relevant vaccinations are those under the National Immunisation Program (NIP), which covers the vaccines usually administered before age five. These vaccinations must be recorded on the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR).



Clinical red flags

Vit D deficiency	→	Rickets, bone pain, muscle pain, late teeth late fontanelle closure (low dairy)
TB (active vs latent)	→	Prolonged cough, fever, night sweats, poor growth
Anaemia	→	Irritability, lethargy, developmental delay (prolonged BF, high dairy, low meat)
Gastrointestinal and nutrition	→	Low weight/poor growth, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, epigastric pain, vomiting, poor appetite
Developmental concerns	→	Parent concern, different to siblings, sentences > 3 years, detention, family stress/MH
Mental health concerns	→	Behavioural disturbance: sleep, eating, play, somatisation

Nutrition



Ruhani Kaur / UNICEF / 2006

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Development and disability

- Developmental delay/disability
 - Language, motor, social/play, global
 - Vision and hearing
- Disability
 - Physical
 - Intellectual
 - Sensory impairments (vision/hearing)
 - Function/equipment/supports

MCH, childcare, playgroups



Mike Kepka / The Chronicle



Maternal and child health



- Birth to school age
- Development, parenting, support, +/- immunisation
 - Checks: at birth, 2w, 4w, 8w, 4m, 8m, 12m, 18m, 2y, 3.5y
- Locally zoned
 - <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/findaservice/Home.aspx>



All children should be seen by their local MCHN (including CD)

MCHN are free and are a valuable support for families, monitoring their growth and development at specific intervals



4 yr old kindergarten

- Important! - play based, preparation for school
- Free - kindergarten fee subsidy
 - Refugees/SHP visa 200–217, AS on BV A–F , TPVs 447, 451, 785, RoS visa
 - <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/kindergarten/pages/fees.aspx>
 - CD – via DIBP
 - Pre School Field Officers
 - Help kids with developmental problems
 - Free kindergarten association
- Enrolment – call kinder
 - <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/findaservice/Home.aspx>



Kindergarten is essential for children's development and to prepare them for school. The child's local kindergarten can be found online through the education department's website. There is a fee subsidy available (to specific visa classes). Pre-School Field Officers (PSFOs) are available to help children with developmental problems who are attending kindergarten. Kindergartens make referrals to the PSFO.

Children in community detention require approval by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection in order to attend kindergarten



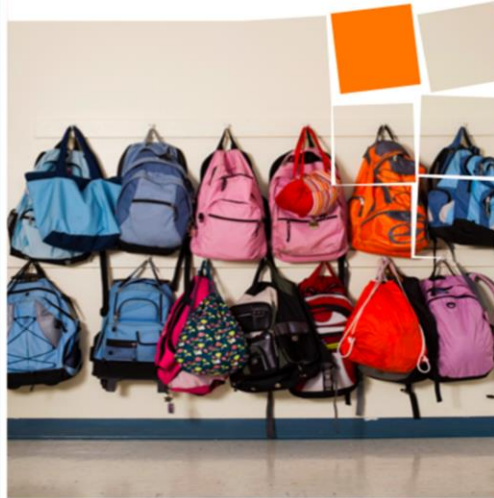
Schools

- **All kids should be at school**
 - **Check age and level** – no rush
 - Think: prep age 6, cut off is 1 May
- Language schools
 - Within 18 m arrival
 - <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/parents/translations/engldet.pdf>
 - Ideally 12m, often 6m, **balance vs missing school**
 - Limited places in North – outpost schools
- Local Government and Catholic schools
 - <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/findaservice/Home.aspx> (Govt)
 - <http://raisingchildren.net.au/myneighbourhood/Default.aspx> (all)



New arrival students from refugee backgrounds (arrival within 18 months) can access intensive English language programs in Victorian Government English language schools or centres. Asylum seekers can attend schools to the end of the school year in which they turn 18. All Schools (including English language schools) can access additional support for students with disabilities. Children in Community detention can attend either Government or Catholic schools.

Support systems are available for children with disability – refer early to a paediatrician



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Refugee Health Program/Nurses



- 16 community health centres
- 50 RHNS in 14 metro sites and 8 rural sites
- Allied health workers, physios, bicultural workers, support workers, case coordinators

The screenshot shows the website for the Victorian Refugee Health Network. At the top, there is a search bar and a 'Health Translations' link. Below this is a navigation menu with links for Home, About, News, e-Bulletin, Publications, Information sheets, and Asylum Seekers. A secondary menu includes Learn, Get involved, Clinical Quicklinks, Refer, and Library. The main content area is titled 'Refer' and contains the following text:

Refugee Health Program (formerly Refugee Health Nurse Program)

Refugee Health Nurses and Allied Health are located in community health centres in areas of high refugee settlement. Refugee health nurses can provide advice on primary and specialist referral, as well as referral to relevant community groups and community services.

To contact a Refugee Health Nurse in your area please refer to the Metropolitan Melbourne Refugee Health Nurse table below or refer to the Rural and Regional Refugee Health Nurse page.

Refer

- Asylum seeker health services
- Bilingual GPs
- Complementary Therapies
- Case Management Quicklinks
- Disability Services

RHNs located in 16 community Health centres . Approx 50 RHNS 14 metro sites and 8 rural sites also Allied health workers physios, bicultural workers, support workers , case co ordinators



Primary care

- **Refugee health teams**- Advice on referral pathways
 - <http://refugeehealthnetwork.org.au/refer/refugee-health-nurse-program/>
- **General Practitioners** - Health screening, general
 - (CD = IHMS accredited)
 - Community Health Centres = free
 - Local – bulkbilling doctors
 - (Local private doctors)
 - Bilingual language doctors http://amavic.com.au/dr_search/
 - *Ideally refugee health experienced*



All families should be linked with primary care.

There is a specific MBS Item number for GP's; "MBS Items 701, 703, 705 and 707 may be used to undertake a health assessment for A Healthy Kids Check for children aged at least 3 years and less than 5 years of age, who have received or who are receiving their 4 year old immunisation. Once only to an eligible patient"

http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health_Kids_Check_factsheet

Immunisation

- GPs, MCHN, LGA/Council – *Opportunistic!*
- Catch-up vaccinations FREE for all refugees and asylum seekers in Victoria
 - Free for all children <10 years of age
 - Free for all children 10-19 years where families receive family assistance payments until end 2017
- SA Immunisation Calculator
<https://immunisationcalculator.sahealth.sa.gov.au/>
- *No Jab No Pay and No Jab No Play*



Allied Health



- Community health centres
 - Often only 0 – school entry
 - Children with developmental problems 1 domain
 - <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/pch/commhealth/directory.htm>
- Early Intervention (0 – school entry)
 - Children with developmental problems > 1 domain
 - All children eligible, including asylum seekers, CD
- Hospital (varies)



Children with developmental issues in more than one domain may be eligible for allied health through Early Intervention Services, although waiting lists are often long. Children of asylum seekers can be referred to hospital based allied health services. School aged children may be able to access allied health through the school system. Private allied health is often inaccessible due to cost and lack of language support. Children in community detention require case by case approval for allied health services from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection



Specialist Paediatric Services

- Anything (anyone) complex, disability, worried
 - ?All Unaccompanied minors
- Refugee specific
 - RCH, Craigieburn, Dandenong/Doveton, Footscray, Reservoir, Melton, Sunshine, Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo
 - http://www.rch.org.au/immigranthealth/about_us/About_the_Immigrant_Health_Service/
- Paediatric hospitals
 - All except RMH, Alfred, St Vincent's, Footscray
- Most community health centres



Specialist paediatric care is recommended for children with complex medical problems, unaccompanied minors or anyone you are worried about. They can be referred via a GP to Refugee health paediatric services as above, or to other paediatric services as needed.

Specialist paediatric outpatient services are accessible at all hospitals in Victoria, except the Royal Melbourne Hospital, Alfred, St Vincents and Footscray. Most community health centres also have visiting paediatricians.

Disability

- All ages
 - GP, paediatrician, eyes, ears, (allowances)
- Early childhood
 - MCH
 - Early intervention
- Kindergarten
 - Aide – PSFO, ISF, FKA
- Schools – mainstream or specialist (ID, ASD)
 - Entry criteria (strict)
 - **Call for help**

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Mental health

- Refugee/CALD specific
 - Vic Foundation for Survivors of Torture (VFST)
 - Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY)
- Mental health general
 - Schools
 - Headspace
 - Community health centres
 - ATAPS scheme
 - (Better Access scheme) – *no interpreters*
 - CAMHS - location and age

http://www.rch.org.au/immigranthealth/clinical/Mental_health_resources/

Refugee children and families subject to high levels of adversity, both before and after arrival in Australia.

Many have experienced past trauma and/or torture and families have ongoing risk factors for the development of mental health problems.

There are a variety of services available, depending on the background of the client and their specific needs.

GP should initiate the appropriate referral.



Acute care

- Ambulance
 - Free in emergency
 - <http://refugeehealthnetwork.org.au/ambulance-transport-for-asylum-seekers-in-victoria/>
- Public hospitals/related services
 - Free (don't forget RVEEH hospital)
 - Refugee health nurse liaison (Monash health)
 - <http://docs.health.vic.gov.au/docs/doc/Guide-to-asylum-seeker-access-to-health-and-community-services-in-Victoria>



Ambulance services are free in an emergency and public hospitals and related services are also free for all refugees and asylum seekers

Some hospitals (e.g. Monash Health) may have a refugee health nurse liaison who can help facilitate post discharge follow up



Patient advocacy/consumer liaison

- Available all hospitals
- Mechanism to progress concerns
- Mandatory reporting systems
- Helpful!
- Consider if:
 - Care declined (**please act**)
 - Language services not available
 - Concerns about care quality
 - Bills being sent incorrectly
 - Positive feedback



Assisting a refugee or asylum seeker family to navigate the required health pathway can be assisted by the patient advocacy/consumer liaison officers who are accessible in all hospitals and are an important resource for progressing concerns or adverse events, or providing feedback.



Eyes

- Vision check
 - Government schools – school nurses
 - Medicare – e.g. OPSPM, Spec savers (any bulk billing)
 - Australian College Optometry – all
- Glasses
 - Australian College Optometry cheapest (\$40/pair)
 - <http://www.aco.org.au/eye-care-services/eye-care-in-melbourne/clinic-locations-and-operating-hours>
 - Specsavers/OPSPM
- Emergencies - RVEEH



Vision checks can be accessed at commercial Bulk Billing optometrists for clients with Medicare Cards or at the Australian College of Optometry, which also has affordable glasses. The college has metropolitan outreach clinics and regional access. School age children may have their vision check at school entry but this is not always in place.



Hearing

- Hearing check
 - Government schools – school nurses
 - Audiologists
 - http://www.rch.org.au/genmed/clinical_resources/Audiology_Services_in_Victoria/
- Hearing aids – Australian hearing
- Emergencies - RVEEH



Hearing tests can be performed at audiology services.
Hearing aids are available through Australian hearing



Teeth

- Priority access
 - <https://www.dhsv.org.au/patients-and-public/refugee-services>
 - All refugees and AS
 - All kids 0 – 12
- Clinics
 - <https://www.dhsv.org.au/clinic-locations/community-dental-clinics>



Free/subsidised dental services are available for all children up to the age of 12 years – and refugees and asylum seekers are identified as one of the priority access groups



Language services

- Right and entitlement
 - Hospitals – should happen (advocate)
 - Community health – should happen (advocate)
 - MCH - VTIS
 - Private GPs – TIS 24 hr line (free)
 - Private specialists – TIS 24hr line (free)
 - Private psychologists/allied health – not available
- Previously universal code – CD/held detention
 - Now closed



Interpreter services are a right and entitlement for families with low English proficiency.

Various services are available depending on the setting. Make sure your clients know they are entitled to an interpreter and make sure you specify the language required, including dialect when required, whenever you make an appointment for them.

General practitioners and [approved medical specialists](#) can use the [Free Interpreting Service](#) when delivering Medicare-rebateable services in private practice to anyone with a Medicare card.

The service is available through [TIS National](#).

Immigrant Health Service

RCH > Division of Medicine > General Medicine > Syrian refugees - key issues

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Syrian refugees - key issues

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education

Medicine



Immigrant Health Service

RCH > Division of Medicine > General Medicine > Caseworker Resources

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Caseworker Resources

This page provides a guide for caseworkers on service access for refugee and asylum seeker children and families. A presentation is available to provide training on service access (see [resources](#)).

- [Acute care access](#)
- [Refugee health screening and immunisation catch-up](#)
- [Primary care](#) (refugee health teams, general practice, maternal and child health)
- [Medications and pharmacy access](#)
- [Allied health](#)
- [Specialist care](#)
- [Mental health](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Other](#) (consumer liaison, language services)
- [Resources](#)

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Choose the places and services that you would like to see on your neighbourhood map

<p>Activities & entertainment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Libraries <input type="checkbox"/> Museums <input type="checkbox"/> Playgroups <input type="checkbox"/> Toy libraries <input type="checkbox"/> Zoos and animals <p>Government services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Centrelink <input type="checkbox"/> Local councils <input type="checkbox"/> Medicare <p>Family services & support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Child counselling <input type="checkbox"/> Community centres <input type="checkbox"/> Family support <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous services <input type="checkbox"/> Relationship counselling 	<p>Child care & schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Child care centres <input type="checkbox"/> Preschools <input type="checkbox"/> Schools <p>General health services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Child health centres <input type="checkbox"/> Dentists <input type="checkbox"/> GP Super Clinics <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitals <input type="checkbox"/> Local GPs <input type="checkbox"/> Medical centres <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacies <p>Special health services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Dietitians <input type="checkbox"/> Disability support <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational therapy <input type="checkbox"/> Physiotherapy <input type="checkbox"/> Reading improvement <input type="checkbox"/> Speech therapy 	<p>Helping Children With Autism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Board-certified behaviour analyst <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational therapy <input type="checkbox"/> Psychology <input type="checkbox"/> Special education teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Speech pathology <p>User-added places/events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Events <input type="checkbox"/> Family-friendly spots <input type="checkbox"/> General services <input type="checkbox"/> Playgrounds <input type="checkbox"/> Special needs 	<p>Better Start Initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Audiology <input type="checkbox"/> Conductive education <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational therapy <input type="checkbox"/> Optometry <input type="checkbox"/> Orientation and mobility instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Orthoptics <input type="checkbox"/> Orthotics <input type="checkbox"/> Physiotherapy <input type="checkbox"/> Psychology <input type="checkbox"/> Social worker <input type="checkbox"/> Special education teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Speech pathology <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher of the deaf <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher of the visually impaired
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The raising children network has fantastic online resource where you can search for local services based on locality.



Paediatric Refugee Health Clinic

Craigieburn Health Services

The Paediatric Refugee Health Clinic is a joint initiative between Northern Health (NH) and The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) to provide specialist paediatric refugee services in Melbourne's North. The clinic provides a multidisciplinary assessment service for recently arrived children of a refugee background. Asylum seeker children and children in community detention are also welcome.

Clinic details

Time: Fortnightly (Fridays), 9.30am to 4pm

Clinician: RCH Paediatric Refugee Health Fellow

Eligibility: All recently arrived children of refugee background, including asylum seekers on bridging visas or community detention who are under 18 years of age.

Issues commonly managed

- Refugee Health Assessment (RHA)
- Learning/behavioural issues and developmental delay/disability
- Adolescent health issues
- Birthdate issues
- Growth/nutritional issues
- Vitamin D deficiency
- Iron deficiency
- Tuberculosis screening and treatment of latent TB
- Mental health issues (medical components of assessment/management)
- Catch-up immunisation planning (unable to administer on site)

To refer

GP referrals are not required. We accept direct referrals from refugee health nurses, settlement agencies, maternal child health nurses, schools, and others.

Referral information should include:

- Reason for referral
- Accurate contact details, including telephone number
- Immigration status (e.g. refugee, asylum seeker)
- Preferred language and interpreter requirement
- Casework contact details if available
- Previous investigations
- Vaccination history
- Immigration health records (pre arrival or detention paperwork)

Referrals should be faxed or emailed to the centralized Northern Health Ambulatory Care Entry and Triage Service (ACETS)

Paediatric Refugee Health Clinic

Attn: Bev Leiper
Fax: 03 9495 3310
Fax/call: 1300 128 139 (referral enquiries only)
Email: ACETS.Helpdesk@nh.org.au



© Northern Health





Fellow positions in Refugee Health

The Victorian Department of Health has funded refugee health fellow positions to build capacity across the state to improve refugee and asylum seeker healthcare

Their roles include:

- Improving coordination of refugee and asylum seeker healthcare
- Providing advice and liaison about clinical issues in people who are refugee background/asylum seekers
- Providing education on refugee health on request

Fellows are happy to speak to either large or small groups, and can travel to outer metropolitan or regional areas if required. They can provide information across a variety of topics, and are happy to complete information on emerging issues.



The Royal Melbourne Hospital

Dr Kudraa Karthika and Dr Joanne Gardiner

Dr Kudraa Karthika and Dr Joanne Gardiner are based at the Victorian Infectious Diseases Service (VIDS) at the Royal Melbourne Hospital (RMH) and the Peter Doherty Institute in Parkville.

Kudraa is an infectious diseases physician with a special interest in infectious medicine, global public health policy and women's health.

Joanne is a GP with a special interest in refugee mental health who also works to community health and at Foundation House. She runs a Refugee and Asylum Seeker GP clinic on Tuesday mornings at VIDS for refugee health assessments, complex problems, mental health and does not follow into a GP.

Available: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday (Kudraa) and Monday - Friday (Joanne)
Email: refugees.fellow@rmh.org.au **Telephone:** +61 3 9942 7000

Monash Health



Dr Mark Timlin

Dr Mark Timlin is a GP at Monash Health Refugee Health and Wellbeing in Melbourne's South East. He has extensive experience in refugee health, having spent some time in Afghanistan, and has a particular interest in mental health.

Available: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday **Email:** mark.timlin@monashhealth.org

Telephone: +61 3 9593 8900 **Mobile:** 0407 501 086

The Royal Children's Hospital



Dr Yoko Asakawa, Dr Dan Mason and Dr Ingrid Laemmle-Ruff

Dr Yoko Asakawa, Dr Dan Mason and Dr Ingrid Laemmle-Ruff are general paediatricians and fellows with the Immigrant Health Service (IHS) at the Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) Melbourne. They provide clinical care for children of refugee and asylum seeker background during the IHS Monday afternoon clinic. They provide outreach clinics in Footscray (Yoko, Crispianum Chan) and Dandenong (Ingrid). They also support other child-related services.

(Schools, maternal/child health nurses, allied health, community groups). They have interests in international child health, medical education and public health.

Available: Monday - Friday
Email: refugees.fellow@rch.org.au **Telephone:** +61 3 9594 5022 (pager 7142)



The Royal Melbourne Hospital



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The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne

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Thank-you

- Questions?
- All located at:
 - http://www.rch.org.au/immigranthealth/clinical/Clinical_resources/
- Also DIY Appointment reminder system (NSW Refugee Health)
 - <http://www.swslhd.nsw.gov.au/refugee/appointment/>
- Please contact us:
 - Refugee Health Fellow 9345 5522 (page 7142)

