

Virtual Care

System Performance Support

2 June 2025



Acknowledgment of Country

I'd like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today. I would also like to pay my respects to elders past and present. And to extend that respect to other Aboriginal people and colleagues present today.

The **Walking Together: Pathways to Healing.**

This artwork represents the evolving journey of healthcare, deeply rooted in the values of connection, Country, community, and health.

The artwork and icons used on this page are created by **Bindi Bindi Art**, with permission from the artists.



ALTERNATIVE CARE PATHWAYS NSW SINGLE FRONT DOOR

WHY

- Healthcare is complex for consumers to navigate
- Primary care access challenges
- Increased ED presentations for lower acuity issues

WHAT

- **One contact for urgent, unplanned health needs**
 - Information, advice, assessment and triage by RNs
 - Connection to clinically appropriate care
 - Unify and scale care options - primary, urgent, virtual models – does not replace existing services
- **Access is quick, easy and free**
 - Phone/web/app, language and hearing support, all ages, no cost, 24/7/365
 - 1800 022 222
 - healthdirect.gov.au: self-triage, service finder, health information

WHO

- Led by NSW Health, delivered by Healthdirect Australia and NSW Health
- Healthdirect
 - Non-profit, national virtual public health info service; co-owned by state, territory and Cwlth governments; robust clinical governance

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

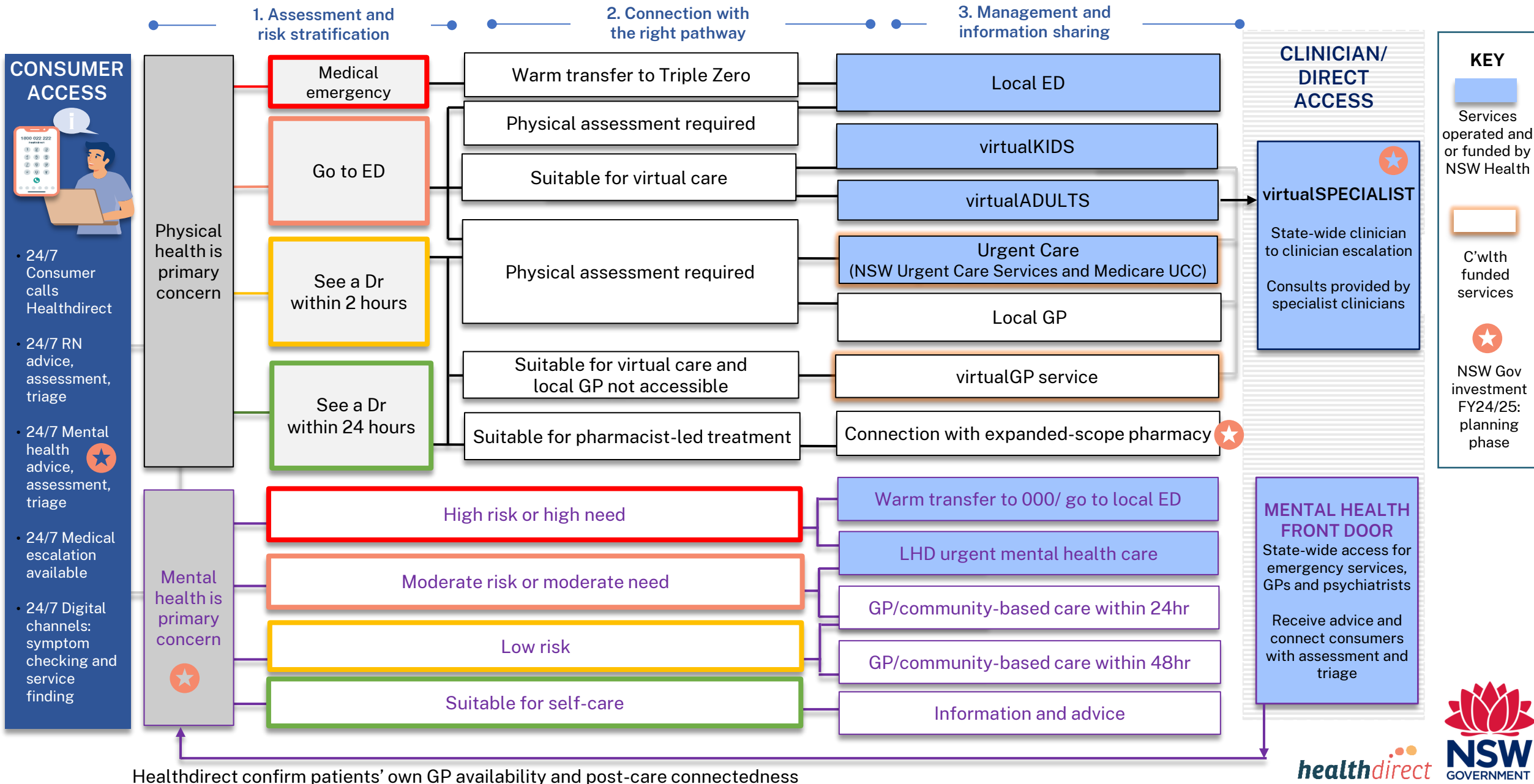
- Regional health strategic plan: Priorities 2, 5
 - Future Health: Strategic objectives 1,2,5,6
- Virtual Care Strategy 2021 – 2026: All focus areas
- Elevating the Human Experience 2020: Focus areas 1, 3, 4, 5, 6
 - NSW Health Strategic Framework for Integrating Care
- NSW Aboriginal Health Plan 2013-2023: Strategic directions 3, 5
 - National Digital Health Strategy
 - NSW Digital Government Strategy

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

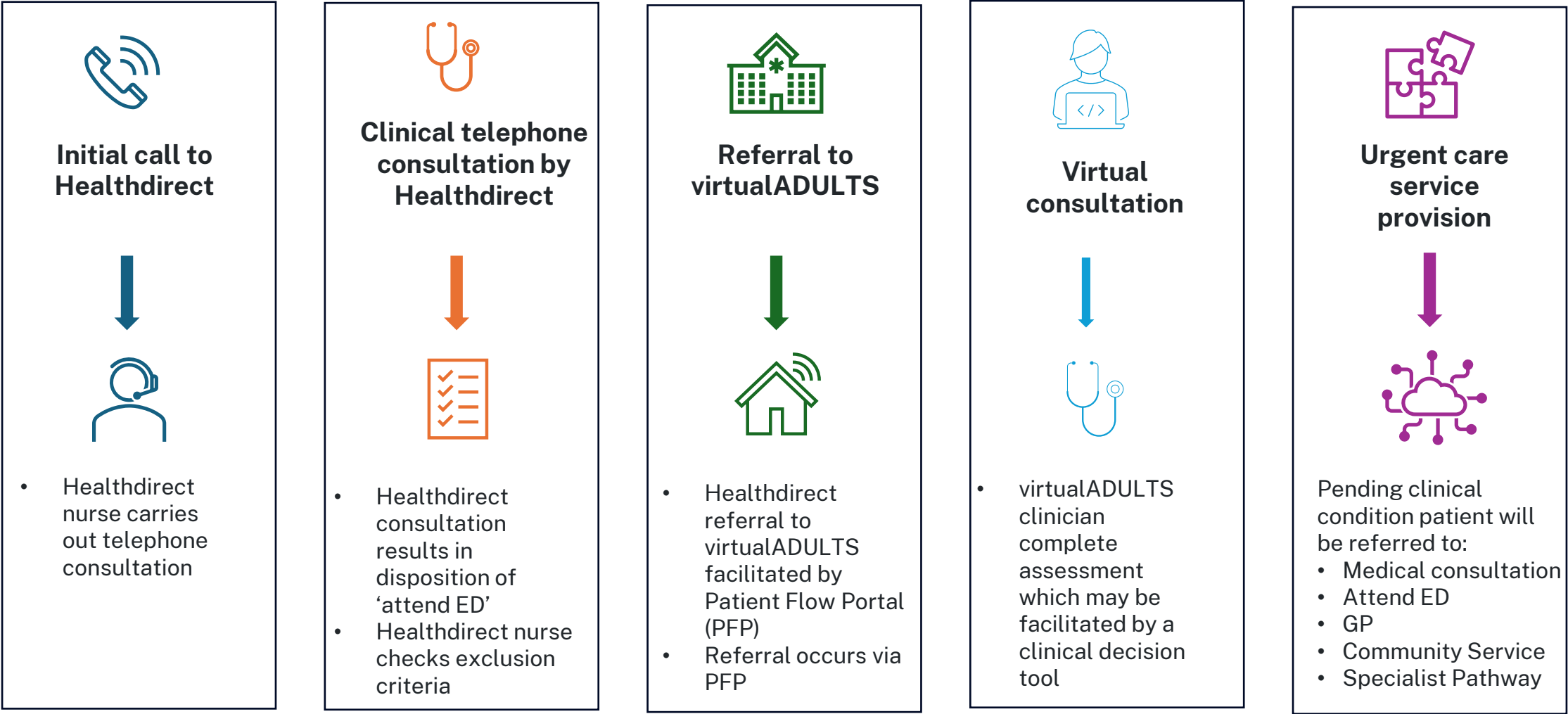
- Reduce avoidable ED demand
- Improve the experience of care for patients
- Improve equity of access with virtual options.

health.nsw.gov.au/callhealthdirect
health.nsw.gov.au/Performance/Pages/single-front-door

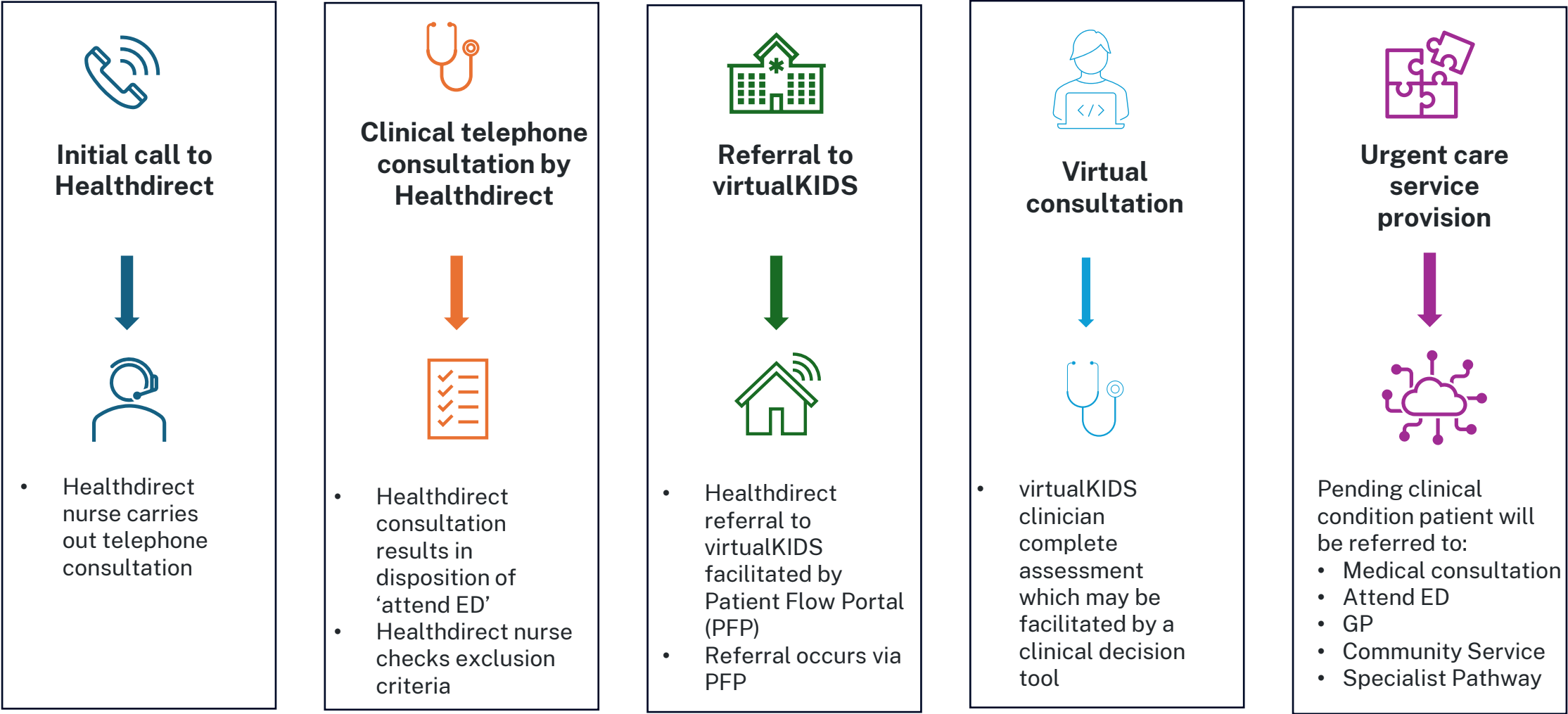
SERVICE LOGIC AND REFERRAL PATHWAYS NSW SINGLE FRONT DOOR



Service Model



ED Relief Alternative Care Pathways – virtualKIDS Service Model



- Primary care safety net program
- 24/7 access to urgent GP appointments virtually via Healthdirect helpline
- E-script and e-medcert capability
- Criteria: callers who are triaged to see GP <24hr and who can't access a GP locally
- Depending on acuity, callers receive GP callback within 30-120 minutes
- Funded under Cwlth Primary Care Pilot
- Evaluation due July 2025: early data
 - More than 44,000 callers were referred to vGP in NSW CY2024
 - Of these, more than 15,000 callers were headed to ED before they were assessed and diverted to vGP
 - Of vGP pts, nearly 80% were referred to non-ED outcomes post-consultation (self-care or GP follow-up)
 - High levels of consumer satisfaction

Hospital in the Home (HITH)

ED Relief Creating Inpatient Capacity – Hospital in The Home (HITH)

Enhance and build on existing services, extending the existing HITH services to increase the number of patients receiving appropriate care in their home



Goals

- Reduce preventable ED presentations, hospital admissions and decrease length of hospital stay
- Provide 7-day per week, district-wide clinical service availability with robust medical oversight
- Access to multi-disciplinary Clinical team of Medical, Nursing, and Allied Health
- Support patients via adaptive and integrated care models
- Provision of services utilising virtual capability



Key focus

- Development of HITH policy and framework
Development of a new statewide HiTH policy and framework to support the reform program, recently released February 2025.
- Allocation of funding to LHDs/SHNs
Funding allocation will enhance and build on existing services, establish new services and enable virtual care
- Alignment with Commonwealth's Strengthening Medicare Package
HiTH expansion aligns closely with the aged care services in the package including - Aged Care Outreach and Virtual Specialist Geriatric Care Services

ED Relief Creating Inpatient Capacity – Hospital in The Home (HITH)

HITH Policy Fundamentals



Governance and reporting structures

- Integration with inpatient operational governance, including demand and patient flow strategies
- Dedicated AMOs with pathways for shared care
- District/ network wide access
- Operate 7 days a week



Referral Pathways

- Clear pathways for direct referrals to the HITH service
- Centralised triage and referral point
- Timely access to specialist reviews as required



Virtually enabled

- RPM, video and digital diagnostic enabled
- Hybrid model: Virtual- First when safe to do so



MDT approach

- MDT approach to care, inclusive of:
 - Medical
 - Nursing
 - Pharmacy
 - Allied health
 - Aboriginal health



Admitted model

- Admitted service with 7-day medical coverage
- Acceptance of a wider range of care types: acute, sub-acute, non-acute and mental health