
Smart Referrals

Initiative Type

Service Improvement

Status

Close

Added

18 October 2017

Last updated

07 November 2024

URL

<https://clinicaexcellence.qld.gov.au/improvement-exchange/smart-referrals>

Summary

The Smart Referrals program will provide GPs and other referrers with rapid, real-time access to referral information at any point in the referral pathway, allowing those involved in patient care to better manage and optimise the patient journey, improve patient safety and reduce specialist outpatient wait times. Components of the Smart Referrals program include:

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- **GP Smart Referrals** - Provides seamless integrated capability allowing GPs to create and submit electronic referrals from their existing practice management software.
 - **Referral Service Directory** - Provides an integrated directory of HHS specialist services to better inform and direct clinical care, ensuring patients are referred to the right location the first time.
 - **Smart Referral Workflow** - Provides the capability to support the registration and triage of referrals in line with HHS workflow requirements.
 - **Referral Lodgement and Tracking Capability** - Provides statewide technical capability to facilitate lodgement and tracking of external GP and internal HHS referrals.
 - **Reporting & Analytics Capability** - Provides the ability to collect data, report and analyse specialist outpatients data for real-time clinical decision support and secondary clinical services and process improvement use, supporting health system capacity and performance management, as well as population health management analysis.

Key dates

Jul 2017

Jun 2019

Implementation sites

The Smart Referrals program has commenced with the development of five projects across four HHSs (Children's Health Queensland HHS, Metro North HHS, Metro South HHS and Sunshine Coast HHS) currently underway.

Partnerships

E-health Queensland, Children's Health Queensland HHS, Metro North HHS, Metro South HHS and Sunshine Coast HHS

Key Contacts

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Aim

Provide rapid, real-time access to referral information at any point in the referral pathway, allowing those involved in patient care to better manage and optimise the patient journey, improve patient safety and reduce specialist outpatient wait times.

Benefits

- Improved patient safety through greater accuracy of referral content
- Improved patient outcomes through enhanced workflow processes
- More informed clinical decision-making through the introduction of new tools that will enable better referral practices
- Cost savings for General Practitioners and HHSs through a reduction in administration, processing and paper
- Enhanced communication between healthcare providers
- More efficient healthcare service delivery through a reduction in avoidable specialist outpatient appointments.

Background

In 2016, Queensland Health facilities received nearly two million referrals for outpatient appointments. Approximately 60 per cent of these referrals were generated by a source external to Queensland Health such as general practitioners (GPs), 30 per cent generated within an individual facility or Hospital and Health Service (HHS) [internal referrals] and 10 per cent generated from other

Queensland Health facilities/HHSs. This process of referral is currently a manual process. Under the Specialist Outpatient Strategy: Improving the patient journey by 2020, the Healthcare Improvement Unit is working in partnership with HHSs, Primary Health Networks and relevant health stakeholders to implement a statewide Integrated Referral Management Solution (Smart Referrals) that will improve management and tracking of patients across all stages of their health journey, from GP visits through to outpatient appointments and discharge.

Further Reading

[Queensland Health Specialist Outpatient Strategy: Improving the patient journey by 2020](#)

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