

QUEENSLAND HEALTH

DRAFT HOSPITAL OUTPATIENT AND AMBULATORY SERVICES GOVERNANCE POLICY

Effective: In Draft

Review: This document will be reviewed annually

Last Reviewed:

Supersedes: New Policy

POLICY

Hospital outpatient and ambulatory services will be provided in Queensland public hospitals in accordance with the *Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights* and the associated implementation standards.

Scope Of Outpatient And Ambulatory Services:

Specialist medical and other ambulatory care is an essential part of contemporary health care. These services should be provided in convenient locations such as specialist rooms or other community settings. *Hospital-based* specialist outpatient and ambulatory service provision is desirable where there is a need for a critical mass of expertise, specialist equipment or where optimal care requires multidisciplinary input. Clinical education and training must be considered as a vital component in the context of this policy.

Generally, the ongoing management of patients should be undertaken in primary care settings, principally by the patient's General Practitioner (GP) or other primary health care worker. Similarly, if a patient has an ongoing clinical condition requiring specialist consultation, they would also normally require regular GP review.

As the Commonwealth Government has responsibility for ambulatory care, outpatients and ambulatory services should be bulk-billed to Medicare Australia where consistent with the Australian Health Care Agreement.

The role and function of outpatient and ambulatory services covers:

1. specialist assessment (including related diagnostic services and patient review);
2. standalone treatment/intervention service;
3. where appropriate, ongoing specialist management of patients with complex conditions;
4. care required before and after an acute admission which cannot be delivered in another setting (pre-admission and post discharge follow up);
5. In small rural settings, primary medical care; and
6. conducting clinical research and training in clinics established for this purpose.

Note: This policy does not cover ambulatory services to patients treated in an emergency department.

Framework

The Hospital Outpatient and Ambulatory Services Governance framework consists of the policies, processes and accountabilities that are directed at improving the quality and timeliness of outpatient services provided through Queensland public hospitals. It does not replace, but is additional to, the professional self-regulation and individual accountability for clinical judgement that are an integral part of health care.

Implementation

The following implementation standards specify the requirements that must be met to support the intent of the policy and framework:

NB: These implementation standards are currently under development

1. [Maximum waiting times policy for specialist outpatient services](#)
2. [Policy for the Management of Specialist Outpatient Services](#)
3. [Transparency and reporting of waiting times information](#)
4. [Conversion to bulk-billing clinics, including active life of referrals](#)
5. [Specialist outpatient services minimum reporting requirements](#)

Related Documents:

[Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights](#)

Responsible Business Area:

Policy Sponsor: Chief Executive Officer, Centre for Healthcare Improvement

Policy Contact: Hospital Access Unit via e-mail HAU@health.qld.gov.au

Further Information: See links (below)

[Procedures](#)

[Work Instructions](#)

[Forms](#)

[Related Documents](#)