

Health Service Directive

Directive # QH-HSD-025:2015
Effective Date: 16 December 2019
Review Date: 16 December 2021
Supersedes: Version 2.0

Patient Access to Emergency Care

Purpose

This Health Service Directive directs Hospital and Health Services to be consistent in their approach to managing patient access and flow, and to facilitate timely access into and through all Queensland public hospitals.

Scope

This directive applies to all Hospital and Health Services (HHSs).

Principles

- Access - optimise patient flow and access across the patient journey from pre-hospital arrival, through to admission and discharge.
- Integration - whole of system approach to equitable patient flow and access.
- Safety - optimise patient safety, quality of clinical care and outcomes
- Effectiveness – achieve effective outcomes with efficient use of resources.
- Collaboration - support collaboration and interface between HHSs the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS), and other partners in health service delivery.

Outcomes

HHSs will achieve the following outcomes:

- Patients who access public health services, who present for treatment, admission or inter-hospital transfer will receive timely and optimal care based on their presenting condition.

Mandatory requirements

HHSs will ensure the following:

- That all patients have access to emergency care regardless of mode of arrival.
- That all patients are triaged on arrival to the Emergency Department (ED).
- Patients are seen in a timely manner according to their clinical urgency, based on the Australasian Triage Scale (ATS).
- The use of best practice models of care will be implemented to support efficient and effective care for patients across the continuum.



- That all patients transferred from another hospital, that do not require a review by the emergency department as deemed appropriate by the receiving Senior Medical Officer, are admitted directly to the inpatient setting.
- Completion of safe, effective and timely clinical handover between all parties as per National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards.
- Where a patient is brought to the Hospital via QAS:
 - The HHS will work collaboratively with QAS to support the timely and safe transfer of care of all patients, to proactively respond to community demand.
 - The HHS will ensure “ambulance bypass” is not utilised except in the event of an internal or external disaster.

That the HHS will provide a single point of contact for the QAS to enable ED access issues to be addressed 24 hours/day as per local escalation processes. HHSs may also adopt (or amend for adoption and implementation) the following Guidelines for implementation:

- Guideline for Inpatient Admission Facilitation QH-HSDGDL-025-3:2015
- Implementation of the Clinical Initiatives Nurse Role in Emergency Departments Guideline QH-GDL- 025-1:2014

Related or governing legislation, policy and agreements

- *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011*
- *Health Services Act 1991*
- *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995*
- *Public Health Act 2005*
- National Healthcare Agreement 2019
- National Health Reform Agreement 2011

Supporting documents

- Protocol for Patient Access to Queensland public hospitals (in progress)
- Metropolitan Emergency Department Access Initiative ambulance ramping report 2012 retrieved from:
<https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/emergency-departments/resource/f1f239cb-e3de-4fcb-a8cc-16e78219ba18>
- Queensland Ambulance Service Public Hospital Clinical Matrix.
- Australasian College for Emergency Medicine Statement on Emergency Department Overcrowding 2011 (revised Nov 2018) retrieved from:
<https://acem.org.au/Content-Sources/Advancing-Emergency-Medicine/Emergency-Medicine-Standards>



- Australian College for Emergency Medicine Position statement on Ambulance Ramping (2018) retrieved from:
<https://acem.org.au/getmedia/9e6c3e78-8cbc-473c-83df-474f6c1eecd/S347-Statement-on-Ambulance-Ramping-Nov-13.aspx>
- Quality Standards for Emergency Departments and other Hospital-based emergency care services (2015) Jointly authored by Australia College of Emergency Medicine and College of Emergency Nursing Australia, retrieved from:
<https://acem.org.au/getmedia/cbe80f1c-a64e-40ab-998f-ad57325a206f/Quality-Standards-1st-Edition-2015.aspx>
- Guidelines for Transport of Critically Ill Patients published by the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists, retrieved from:
<http://www.anzca.edu.au/resources/professional-documents/pdfs/ps52-2015-guidelines-for-transport-of-critically-ill-patients>
- Queensland Health Guide to Informed Decision-making in Healthcare (Second Edition) retrieved from:
https://www.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/143074/ic-guide.pdf
- Implementation of the Clinical Initiatives Nurse Role in Emergency Departments Guideline QH-GDL- 025-1:2014. Clinical Services Capability Framework for Public and licensed Private Health Facilities version 3.2 retrieved from:
https://www.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0013/151213/qh-gdl-025-1.pdf
- Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) (November 2017), National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards, Second Edition ACSQHC retrieved from:
<https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/sites/default/files/migrated/National-Safety-and-Quality-Health-Service-Standards-second-edition.pdf>
- Guidelines for Transport Of Critically Ill Patients (2015); College of Intensive Care Medicine of Australia and New Zealand, Australasian College for Emergency Medicine, and Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists retrieved from:
https://www.cicm.org.au/CICM_Media/CICMSite/CICM-Website/Resources/Professional%20Documents/IC-10-Guidelines-for-Transport-of-Critically-Ill-Patients.pdf
- QAS Clinical Practice Procedures: Other/Inter-facility transfer (2018) retrieved from:
<https://www.ambulance.qld.gov.au/docs/clinical/cpp/InterFacility%20transfer.pdf>

Business area contact

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Review

This Health Service Directive will be reviewed at least every three years.

Date of last review: 06/08/2015

Supersedes: Version 2.0

Approval and Implementation

Directive Custodian

Deputy Director-General, Clinical Excellence Queensland

Approval by Chief Executive

Director-General

Queensland Health

Approval date: 16/12/2019

Effective from: 16/12/2019

Issued under section 47 of the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011*

Definitions of terms used in this directive

Term	Definition / Explanation / Details	Source
Hospital and Health Services	From 1 July 2012, Hospital and Health Services became statutory bodies with Hospital and Health Boards, accountable to the local community and the Queensland Parliament	Health Reform Queensland website http://www.health.qld.gov.au/health-reform/default.asp
Queensland Ambulance Service	A service relating to the work of rendering emergency treatment and patient care to, and the transport of, sick and injured persons	<i>Ambulance Service Act 1991</i>
Ambulance bypass	A situation whereby an emergency department instructs the ambulance service to divert ambulances elsewhere, and hence bypass to the nearest emergency department.	Metropolitan Emergency Department Access Initiative Report, Queensland Health, 2012.

Version Control

Version	Date	Prepared by	Comments
	18/12/2012	Clinical Access &	Patient Access and Flow Health Service



Patient Access to Emergency Care Health Service Directive

1.0		Redesign Unit	Directive developed
2.0	06/08/2015	Healthcare Improvement Unit	Patient Centred Emergency Care Health Service Directive updated
3.0	16/12/2019	Healthcare Improvement Unit	Updates approved through the Patient Access Advisory Committee

