Health system

An integrated healthcare system is integral to promoting wellbeing, delivering healthcare, connecting healthcare and pursuing innovation.
Health system

Queensland’s healthcare system ranks among the best in the world however it faces significant challenges from a growing and ageing population, and high rates of obesity and chronic disease. Queensland’s health system is open, transparent and responsive to innovation aiming for continued improvement and to meet health challenges.
Australia and Queensland’s health systems

The Australian Federal Government’s Medicare provides citizens and permanent residents with universal access to free healthcare treatment in public hospitals and subsidies for medical services and pharmaceuticals.

State and territory governments own and operate public hospitals and, in addition to delivering medical and surgical services, have responsibility for the delivery of mental health, dental, health promotion, school health and community health programs. Patients can choose to be treated in a public hospital for free, be treated as a private patient in a public hospital or to be referred to a private hospital.

Integrated healthcare

Australia has a strong primary healthcare sector with general practitioners (primary care doctors), dentists, nurses and allied health professionals playing a key role in diagnosis, treatment and management of patients with acute and chronic illnesses. Primary care clinicians can refer patients for specialist secondary healthcare or directly to hospital (tertiary healthcare) if required. This model of integrated healthcare underpins the Australian healthcare system.

Queensland Health

Queensland Health comprises the Department of Health and 16 individual Hospital and Health Services (HHSs). The Department of Health is responsible for the overall management of the Queensland public health system.

This system enables Queensland Health to achieve its vision that by 2026 Queenslanders will be among the healthiest people in the world. The primary model of care is integral to promoting wellbeing, delivering healthcare, connecting healthcare and pursuing innovation.
Figure 1: Primary model of care:

1. **Primary healthcare**
   - Non-emergency patients will enter the healthcare system via a primary care clinician. This clinician may be a doctor, dentist, nurse, allied health professional or pharmacist.
   - Primary healthcare is provided in a general practice, community or allied health clinic or an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health clinic.

2. **Secondary healthcare**
   - Secondary healthcare is provided by a medical specialist or other health professional that is not the first point of patient contact such as a specialist doctor, a psychiatrist, physiotherapist or other allied health professional.
   - Secondary care may be provided in a hospital or clinic but may also be provided in the community.

3. **Tertiary healthcare**
   - Tertiary healthcare is highly specialised healthcare, mostly provided as a hospital in-patient on referral from a primary or secondary health professional. This can include complex medical or surgical procedures.
   - In an emergency, a patient may be admitted directly to a tertiary hospital via an emergency department.
   - In Queensland, a patient will be referred to their local HHS for treatment. If more complex treatment is required, the patient will be transferred to a larger hospital.
Queensland’s health capabilities

Digital health

Quality healthcare delivery and management is underpinned by digital innovation. Queensland Health has developed an eHealth Digital Innovation Strategy focussed on precision medicine, integrated care, population health, intelligent enterprise and reliable enterprise. This strategy is supported by an eHealth Investment Strategy which sees investment in quality, innovative information communications technologies (ICT) as an enabler of integrated, quality and safe health services.

Public-private partnership case studies

**Mater Group**  
[www.mater.org.au](http://www.mater.org.au)

Mater Health delivers public and private healthcare services focussing on cancer, medical/chronic disease, mothers, babies and women’s health, neurosciences and surgical/acute care. Mater aims to improve healthcare by strategic integration and co-location of health, education and research.

Mater Education is a hospital based registered training organisation and offers courses from entry level students through to experienced clinicians.

Mater Research is a leader in bench-to-bedside medical research and has formed an alliance with The University of Queensland to achieve the best possible research discoveries in health. This public-private partnership enables all members of the community to benefit from the highest quality healthcare.

**Icon Group**  
[www.icongroup.global](http://www.icongroup.global)

In partnership with Queensland Health, Icon Group, Australia’s leading provider of specialist cancer care (radiation oncology and day oncology services) provides radiation oncology services at Cairns Base Hospital and the Gold Coast University Hospital. Icon is the only private operator to provide Level 6 Radiation Oncology Services in Australia and has delivered public radiation therapy services for Queensland Health since 2007. Icon Group is the largest dedicated provider of private cancer care in Australia, expanding into Asia with centres in Singapore and a growing list of developments in China.
Disaster management

Queensland Health has significant expertise and experience in disaster and emergency management for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. Researchers are working in collaboration with government to ensure best practice and facilitate evidence-based decision making. Queensland has regular exposure to disasters and emergency incidents, including natural disasters, cyclones, pandemic and infectious disease arrangements, mass casualties and major events. Furthermore, Queensland’s population is highly decentralised across a large geographic area.

Queensland Health provides clinical and statewide forensic services for disaster response and recovery, on-site medical and health support and clinically coordinates aeromedical transport throughout the state. The focus is on re-establishing business-as-usual health and medical services to the community as soon as possible, and assisting affected communities with public health, mental health and human/social recovery post-event.

Queensland Health Disaster Management Unit


Major incident medical management courses are delivered by the Health Disaster Management Unit, which runs the State Health Emergency Coordination Centre. These internationally recognised courses are delivered under licence and designed to teach healthcare professionals how the health service response integrates into the emergency services response during a mass casualty incident.

The unit also has expertise in exercise development, including use of the Emergo Train System (a simulation system), as well as Emergency Operations Centre development and training consistent with the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System and post-event analysis.
Queensland Health Retrieval Services

Retrieval Services Queensland (RSQ) delivers all statewide retrieval services. RSQ coordinates Queensland Health’s aeromedical responses to multi-casualty incidents and disasters in conjunction with other Government agencies, working with the Queensland Ambulance Service, other retrieval service operators and retrieval transport providers.

RSQ is responsible for the coordination and clinical governance of over 20,000 referrals for advice and patient transport every year, across multiple aviation platforms and road ambulance. Queensland’s aeromedical system model is regarded as a best practice model, with strong interest from other Australian jurisdictions and internationally.

Many Queensland hospitals are equipped with a helipad to enable direct transfers for patients in need of critical care.

Partner with us

Queensland Health, through the Health Innovation, Investment and Research Office, is looking for opportunities to collaborate with government agencies, entrepreneurs, industry and research institutions to expand our vibrant health sector to improve the wellbeing and healthcare of Queenslanders.

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Health system

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