

Governance of Outpatient Services

Policy Statement

Outpatient services will be provided in Queensland public hospitals in accordance with the National Healthcare Agreement and the associated Outpatient Services Implementation Standard.

Intent of this policy

The Outpatient 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.

Scope

This policy applies to all facilities that provide Queensland Health public or private outpatient services. Outpatient Services are inclusive of, but not limited to medical, surgical, cancer care, maternity, paediatric, renal, nursing and allied health services.

Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all Queensland Health employees, volunteers, and contractors engaged in the delivery of Queensland Health outpatient services.

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

Legislative or other Authority

- Australian Healthcare Agreement;
- Business Rules for the National Healthcare Agreement
- Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights
- Public Patients' Hospital Charter

Related Policy or Documents

Supporting Documents

- Outpatient Services Implementation Standard
- Attachment 1 – Patients Rights and Responsibilities
- Attachment 2 – Referring Practitioners Roles and Responsibilities
- Attachment 3 – Letter Suite

Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually and revised if there are any significant changes to the Medicare Benefit Schedule.
- This Policy is due for review on: 25 November 2011.

Date of Last Review: N/A

Supersedes: Policy Framework for Specialist Outpatient Services 2005

Policy Custodian

Executive Director, Access Improvement Service.

Responsible Executive Management Team member

Chief Executive Officer, Centre for Healthcare Improvement.

Approval and Implementation

Approving Officer: Chief Executive Officer, Centre for Healthcare Improvement.

Approval Date: 25 November 2010

Implementation Date: 25 November 2010

Glossary of Terms used in this policy and supporting documents

The role and function of outpatient 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.

Term	Definition	Source
Accountable Officer	The designated officer, as nominated by the District Chief Executive Officer, accountable for all aspects of the management and provision of specialist outpatient services at a specific facility.	Policy Framework for Specialist Outpatient Services 2005
Clinical Review (Specialist Outpatient)	Whilst a patient is awaiting the allocation of an outpatient appointment the referring practitioner is requested to maintain a clinical review of the patient's condition. The examination may result in the patient being assigned a different urgency rating from the initial classification if their condition alters during the waiting period. The referring practitioner is requested to contact the facility with any concerns relating to the patient's condition.	Policy Framework for Specialist Outpatient Services 2005
Elective/ planned admission	Care that, in the opinion of the treating clinician can be delayed for at least 24 hours.	Policy Framework for Specialist Outpatient Services 2005

Term	Definition	Source
New non-admitted patient	A new case appointment is a non-admitted patient service under a specialist, consultant physician or health professionals care for a new problem not previously treated and discharged from the same clinical service.	SOAC Sub-committee- Information Management Group
Non-admitted patient	A patient who does not undergo a hospital's formal admission process. There are three categories of non-admitted patient: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Department patient • Specialist Outpatient • Other non-admitted patient (treated by hospital employees off the hospital site- includes community/outreach services). 	Queensland Health Data Dictionary
Not ready for Care	A not ready for care patient is a patient who has been listed for care by a hospital or a community health service, but are not in a position to accept an offer for care/treatment.	Queensland Health- Data dictionary
Outpatient Clinic	An organisational unit or organisational arrangement through which a hospital provides healthcare services in an outpatient setting.	Qld Health Data Standards Advisory Committee
Outpatient Clinic referral-receipt date	The date a referral is received by an outpatient clinic.	Qld Health Data Standards Advisory Committee
Outpatient clinic referral – clinical urgency category	The category which indicates the clinical urgency for care/treatment following assessment of an outpatient clinic referral, as represented by a code.	Qld Health Data Standards Advisory Committee
Outpatient clinic referral-clinical urgency categorisation date	The date on which an outpatient clinic referral is assigned a clinical urgency category.	Qld Health Data Standards Advisory Committee
Outpatient clinic referral- waiting time to receipt	The total number of days from the date an outpatient clinic referral is issued to the date the referral is received.	Qld Health Data Standards Advisory Committee
Outpatient clinic referral-waiting time to clinical urgency	The total number of days from the date a referral is received by an outpatient clinic to the date the referral is allocated a clinical urgency category.	Qld Health Data Standards Advisory Committee
Postponement	A scheduled appointment or proposed admission and/or procedure is delayed or deferred to a later time and/or date.	Policy Framework for Specialist Outpatient Services 2005
Referral (Outpatient Service)	A written request to a specialist outpatient service for either investigation and/or diagnosis, advice on or provision of treatment/management, and/or reassurance and second opinion for the patient.	Queensland Health Data Dictionary.
Source of Referral	The source from which a patient is referred for an outpatient occasion of service.	Queensland Health Data dictionary.
Review/Repeat Case	A repeat attendance relates to all subsequent visits following the new attendance that occurs during an active referral period.	Policy Framework for Specialist Outpatient Services 2005
Specialist Outpatient Waiting List	It is a register, which contains essential details about patients who are awaiting a specialist outpatient clinic appointment.	Policy Framework for Specialist Outpatient Services 2005
Triage Category	The urgency of the patient's need for medical and nursing care.	Queensland Health Data dictionary