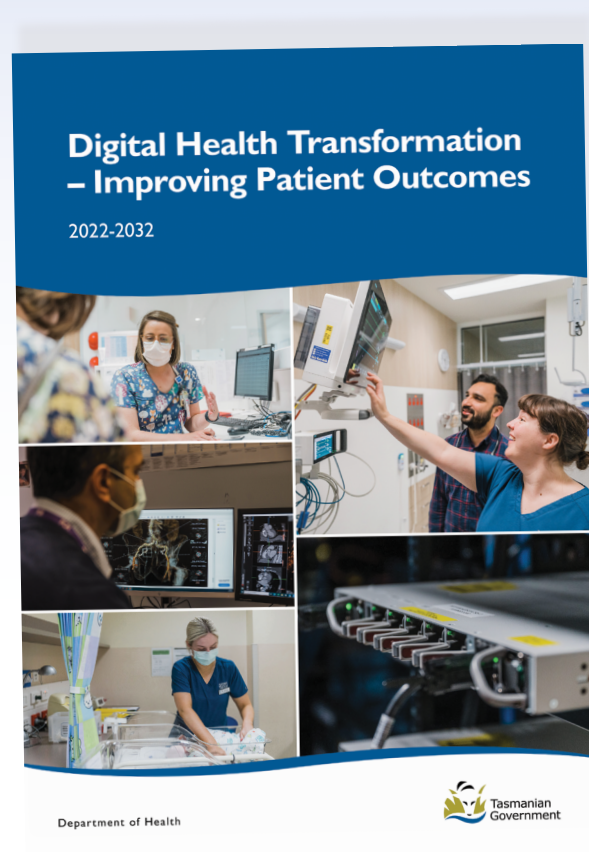


Overview

Digital Health Transformation – Improving Patient Outcomes

The Tasmanian Health System faces structural challenges in the years ahead, with an ageing population and increased rates of chronic disease set to continue to drive up demand for hospital care over the next 20 years.



While we are investing extensively in new and redeveloped hospital infrastructure, in today's rapidly changing health environment, modern digital health infrastructure is just as important as bricks and mortar.

It is anticipated more than \$475 million will be allocated to this project over the next 10 years to 2032, as the strategy is further scoped and developed. By implementing digital technologies, we will transform Tasmania's health system into a modern, integrated care system ready to meet the challenges of the future.

By investing in digital health, we will improve patient care, deliver better health outcomes for patients, and increase capacity in the system so more Tasmanians can get access to the healthcare they need.

This investment will also bring together public and private health services across Tasmania to become the first Australian state to deliver a fully integrated healthcare system, with a single statewide public hospital network, single statewide mental health service and single primary care network.

Why do we need this?

Hospitals, GPs, and community health providers can only work together effectively as a health system if they are joined up as one network.

However, at the moment this is not always happening, with our clinical information systems lacking the ability to share information between systems and often locations.

Our hospitals end up repeating tests – like blood tests and scans – often because our community and hospitals sectors don't talk to each other. This is a tragic waste of time and resources and is inconvenient and annoying for patients.

Health professionals lose valuable consultation hours chasing up paperwork and appointments, taking clinicians away from the job of treating patients. Regularly, appointments are missed and important medical information (like allergies) is unavailable at crucial times, leading to poor patient outcomes.

Disjointed ways of working also leads to Tasmanians travelling to major centres to receive care in hospital settings, when digital technologies could enable services to be delivered in the home or community-based settings and prevent unnecessary hospital visits.

In short, the current system wastes the time of patients. It wastes the time of health professionals. It leads to delays in treatment. And it wastes money.

Patient case studies

Patients are at the centre of everything we do. To illustrate the importance of this digital transformation, here are two versions of typical patient stories that we commonly hear when listening to our patients.

Case Study 1

Alex receives a blood test at her GP where she is diagnosed with anaemia. One day she faints and is taken to the Emergency Department, where she tells them that she has anaemia. However, the hospital can't access Alex's patient records so they keep her in overnight to conduct blood tests again. Alex receives the same diagnosis, but is frustrated at having had to stay in hospital unnecessarily when this information was held by her GP. With an integrated patient record system, this cost to the system and inconvenience to patient could have been avoided.

Case Study 2

Greg lives at home with support from community nursing for a frailty condition. He experiences a fall and is taken to the emergency department, where the hospital team don't have access to Greg's up-to-date medical records. While in hospital Greg is disorientated in this environment and struggles to communicate effectively. Greg is admitted to a medical ward where he stays for several weeks becoming weaker and loses muscle mass. Without an understanding of Greg's previous level of independence and his out of hospital support system, the hospital struggle to plan for his discharge which causes further delays and deterioration. Under our plans, clinicians would have been able to plan for Greg's discharge much earlier leading to a better outcome for him and more capacity within the hospital.

What do we hope to achieve?

With virtual care technology, including telehealth, we can deliver a range of safe, treatment options in our communities. This will improve access to healthcare for more Tasmanians, while delivering more capacity in our health system, and making healthcare more convenient for individuals and families.

We will improve communications and the transfer of information across care settings with a statewide integrated care platform for hospitals, community health, GP, specialists and allied health, to reduce hospital admissions and the cost of care, benefiting both patients and health professionals.

We will also streamline and improve the processing and handling of referrals for outpatient clients, reducing the time to triage and care.

Further, digital health transformation will help improve health professionals decision making through access to advanced data and analytics. With access to the right data, in the right place, at the right time, we will place patients at the centre of everything we do.

To achieve our goals, we will implement a centralised Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system across all THS hospitals and health services to improve the experience and outcomes for patients and improve healthcare delivery. No repeat forms.

Importantly, Tasmania is already a leader in the innovative use of digital health to improve patient outcomes. Most notably, through the COVID@Home program we are providing expert care for those who need it in their own home and reducing pressure on our hospital system.

The announcement

We are launching a 10 year digital health strategy to transform our health system. This is a multi-year journey with an anticipated average of \$47m a year to be allocated to significantly change the landscape of health for all Tasmanians regardless of where they live.

Our roadmap to deliver this transformation includes three key horizons:

- **Horizon 1:** Building digital foundations and targeted investments in modernising clinical information systems across the State. This includes investments in new paramedic electronic patient care record, virtual care and broader eReferral investments, while initiating procurement for an Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system. In addition, we will commence health system-wide integration initiatives.
- **Horizon 2:** Deployment of a statewide EMR including enhanced diagnostic and decision support capabilities. We will also uplift our patient administration technologies equipping Tasmanians with the information they need to be more informed and involved with their care.
- **Horizon 3:** Is where all of the benefits come together, with a modern, highly integrated, patient centric service. The technology and the data facilitate advanced diagnostic and treatment options, such as precision medicine, predictive analytics and genomic technologies.

In the 2022-23 budget we are allocating \$150 million over the next four years to deliver the first of the three horizons. As part of this first horizon we will see:

- Complete procurement of the state's new Electronic Medical Record, as well as a pilot program to inform its statewide deployment in Horizon 2.
- New Ambulance Tasmania, integrated, Electronic Patient Care Record (ePCR).
- A statewide patient record viewer for hospitals, community, GP, specialists, allied health – to better access to clinical information across care settings.

- Improved compliance with national obligations including Medicare revenue and ABF & National Safety and Quality Health Service standards.
- Uplift in existing technology (digital foundations) to improve reliability and scalability of our digital services.

By delivering this first horizon, we will start to see better health outcomes and increased capacity in the health system as clinicians get access to the right data, in the right place, at the right time.

What are the benefits?

For patients:

- Greater equity in health outcomes across Tasmania's dispersed population.
- Improved patient experience with less time waiting for services, less duplication of care and advanced scheduling of appointments
- Improved access to convenient healthcare in local communities and in the home through virtual healthcare and monitoring
- Improved patient outcomes by reducing risk to patients, enabling services to target those who need them most and helping to keep people out of hospital when they don't need to be there.
- Improved communications, with reduction of do not attend episodes.

For health professionals:

- Provide health professionals with the right data, in the right place, at the right time to enable them to make the best decisions on patient care.
- Free up clinicians to spend more time focusing on clinical activities and patient care, and less time on administrative tasks through manual, paper-based processes. In doing so, improve staff satisfaction and employee retention.
- Improved communication and transfer of information across care settings, benefiting both clinicians and nurses.
- Optimise decision-making using advanced data and analytics.



Department of **Health**
GPO Box 125
Hobart TAS 7001

1300 135 513

www.health.tas.gov.au