


Primary Health Tasmania

Digital Health Strategy 2022–25



1300 653 169
info@primaryhealthtas.com.au
ABN 47 082 572 629

www.primaryhealthtas.com.au

Executive summary

Our digital health vision

“To empower Tasmanian consumer access to and provider delivery of efficient, equitable and safe primary health care supported by meaningful use of data and technology.”

Primary Health Tasmania is uniquely placed to advocate, coordinate and influence the design and implementation of digitally enhanced primary health services in Tasmania. Consumers and providers of primary health services increasingly expect that digital-ready health services will be available, connected, and safe to use. Our organisation plays a key role in ensuring consumer and provider needs align with national, state and local digital health ideas and initiatives that matter most to them.

Our most important role in increasing the maturity of digital health across the primary care sector is the ability to bring the right people to the table at the right time. Design and use of digital health services requires genuine commitment to a co-design approach with primary health providers and consumers.

Primary Health Tasmania has developed and is committed to four underlying digital health principles shaped by the quintuple aim for primary health care (see page 12). From consultation we have undertaken, three strategic priority areas have emerged across digital health that shape our focus until 2025.

Our three priority areas are getting the communication foundations right, improving meaningful use of digital health, and finding and bridging the digital health gaps. Current and future digital health initiatives will be prioritised across these three areas.

Our aim through this *Digital Health Strategy* is to empower Tasmanian consumers and providers to gain access to efficient, equitable and safe digital primary health services.

Digital Health Strategy 2022-25: Summary

Our vision	Our purpose
Healthy Tasmanians	Creating high-quality healthcare solutions with the Tasmanian community

Primary Health Tasmania's strategic goals 2021–25

Health outcomes	Person-centred care	Engaged and skilled workforce	Value, effectiveness and efficiency	Integrated health system
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Digital health strategic vision

To empower Tasmanian consumer access to and provider delivery of efficient, equitable and safe primary health care supported by meaningful use of data and technology.

Digital health priorities

Get the communication foundations right:

- Complete rollout of the Tasmanian eReferral system
 - GP to public hospital outpatient departments
 - GP to non-GP medical specialists working privately
 - Primary Health Tasmania's commissioned services
 - Correspondence and referrals to and from allied health and community health organisations
- Implement National Health Strategy
 - Interoperability and standards
 - My Health Record
 - Electronic prescribing and active script lists
 - Electronic diagnostic requesting (eRequesting)
 - Provider Connect Australia
- Support virtual access to primary care for aged care residents
- Improve general practice data quality

Improve meaningful use:

- Access to clinical decision support tools
 - Primary Sense
 - Tasmanian HealthPathways
 - Mental health common assessment and referral
- Support State Digital Health Strategy
 - Clinical viewer
 - Outpatient improvement program
 - Clinical systems enhancements
- Consistency and reliability of directory information
- Data-informed quality improvement in general practice

Find and bridge the digital health gaps:

- Primary care software vendor relationships
- Listen to and advocate in relation to primary care workflow needs
- Consumer awareness and literacy
 - Collaborate with digital literacy partners/advocates
- Person-centred care
 - Seek and partner with consumer organisations
- Targeted co-design and funding to bridge prioritised gaps
 - Prioritise according to health needs assessment

Digital health principles

Equity, safety and quality	Connected, integrated and secure	Strategic investment and partnerships	Sustainable, value-based solutions
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Background

The health of Tasmania's community¹

The health of Tasmanians is improving, leading to longer life expectancy however, Tasmania still ranks poorly compared with other Australian states and territories on many health measures. This highlights the need for improvement of the state's healthcare system to support the health needs of Tasmanians.

Access to health care is problematic for many Tasmanians, particularly for people living in rural areas; those experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; people from an LGBTIQ+ background; and for people who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Tasmania is home to a regionally dispersed population of over 540,000 people. An ageing population and socioeconomic disadvantage are contributing to significant pressure on our health system. There are 29 local government areas (LGAs) in Tasmania, of which 21 are classified as outer regional or remote.

At the last Census (2021), there were 540,780 people who were residents of Tasmania, approximately 2.1% of Australia's total population. Most of our population lives in or around Hobart, Launceston, Devonport and Burnie.

A definition of digital health and its importance to Tasmania

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare defines digital health as an umbrella term referring to a range of technologies that can be used to treat patients and collect and share a person's health information².

The past two decades have demonstrated how the adoption of technology and digital information have improved the quality, safety and efficiency of health care in Australia³. Recent digital initiatives and health reforms such as My Health Record and Health Care Homes have also clearly shown that technologies adopted in isolation – without consideration of interoperability, governance and change management – can cause significant safety risks and barriers to services, healthcare providers and patients⁴.

It is therefore important to consider digital health an enabler to improving the health system, and not a solution by itself.

With the launch of *Our Healthcare Future*⁵, *Health Workforce 2040*⁶, and *Digital Health Transformation - Improving Patient Outcomes 2022–2032*⁷, the Tasmanian Government has set a strong foundation for digitally enabled health reform in Tasmania. It is essential that these reforms consider and enable the vital role of the primary care sector. This will help allow the health system to function as a connected whole, providing the right level of care for patients at the right time while increasing the sustainability of the Tasmanian health system.

As demand for primary health services in Tasmania increases, digital health innovation can alleviate some of the access challenges consumers face and help unlock capacity.

Background

The state of digital health in Tasmania

Over 490,000 Tasmanians (90% of the population) are now registered for a My Health Record⁸.

Electronic prescribing and dispensing capability is now enabled in all general practices and pharmacies across the state.

General practices predominantly use two major practice software providers, Best Practice and MedicalDirector. Recent years have seen a small number of practices transition to MedicalDirector's cloud-based platform, Helix.

122 general practices are sharing de-identified data with Primary Health Tasmania and aggregated state-level data with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), which highlights significant opportunities to:

increase our understanding of the population health picture in Tasmania

showcase the important role of general practices, and support them to better target care to those who need it the most, and

strengthen support to general practices on data quality improvement.

A select group of practices are working with Primary Health Tasmania to trial linking de-identified general practice data with other datasets to better understand the patient journey across the Tasmanian health system.

One secure messaging solution is installed in over 98% of general practices (HealthLink).

An eReferral system, powered by HealthLink Smartforms, has been developed and trialed in Tasmania and is currently being rolled out. The system will provide eReferral capability for GP referrals to hospitals and enable private primary care referrals. It will underpin important health reforms such as the Tasmanian Government's *Our Healthcare Future* strategy and the mental health Initial Assessment and Referral initiative.

Multiple clinical and patient information systems are used by allied health, private specialists and Primary Health Tasmania-commissioned organisations with differing levels of digital connectivity and capability.

Primary Health Tasmania is working with residential aged care facilities (RACFs) and general practices to support improved telehealth infrastructure, connectivity to My Health Record, and electronic medication management in the sector.

We continue to develop and maintain Tasmanian HealthPathways⁹, a platform to support best-practice clinical decision-making and identify appropriate local referral pathways for patient care. The platform now has over 900 pathways and has established itself as an important tool within the Tasmanian health system.

We have developed a free tool for health organisations to capture patient-reported experience measures (PREMS) and better understand the patient experience of their services. This tool has been redeveloped in the context of COVID-19 and developments in smartphone technology, to make it easier to use.

Throughout the My Health Record rollout, Primary Health Tasmania has continued its commitment to ensuring meaningful use and adoption for both consumers and providers. Significant progress has been made in adoption and the meaningful clinical information available within My Health Record over the last four years, with 440 provider organisations now connected and uploading. As a key implementation partner for the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, Primary Health Tasmania commits to ongoing support for adoption of My Health Record for consumers and providers to increase meaningful use. The *National Digital Health Strategy* for the next five years will be finalised shortly, giving direction and clarity to the focus areas for My Health Record adoption.

COVID-19 impact on digital health

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Tasmania was considered a leader for providing care to the community through digitally enabled services. Wide adoption of digital health services was seen across existing and new tools including the Check In TAS app, vaccination bookings, the COVID@home program, electronic prescribing, and telehealth. This rapid adoption significantly raised expectations by consumers and providers that digitally enabled health services should be available.

We are now presented with an opportunity to capitalise on the possibilities and achievements of digital health adoption seen during the pandemic, as it will increasingly play an important role in making services safer, more efficient, and patient centred.

Background

Digital health and primary care improvement

In considering digital health as an enabler to health system improvement and not a solution in itself, Primary Health Tasmania has recognised the importance of developing the digital health principles for this strategy, through the widely recognised model called the 'quadruple aim of primary health care' which has been adopted as part of the Australian Government's *Primary Health Care 10 Year Plan 2022–2032*¹⁰.

Since 2014, primary health care in Australia has been guided by the quadruple aim model as a way to continually improve and reform¹¹. Across the model, four domains act as a navigator to drive improvements and reforms in primary health:

1. improving population health
2. reducing cost of care
3. enhancing patient experience, and
4. improving provider satisfaction.

Primary healthcare researchers and leaders have suggested a fifth domain is missing from this model and is necessary to address the gaps in health equity. This fifth domain – health equity – is now being adopted in Australia as it ensures our most vulnerable communities are at the forefront of our thinking in accessing primary health services.

The role of Primary Health Networks in digital health

Primary Health Tasmania is one of 31 Primary Health Networks (PHNs) nationally and the only PHN for Tasmania. Primary Health Networks are independent organisations working to streamline health services – particularly for those at risk of poor health outcomes – and to better coordinate care so people receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time¹². As an enabler to safer, more timely and efficient patient care, digital health is therefore a priority area for PHNs.

In the area of digital health, PHNs are implementers and connectors, working in partnership to promote awareness, adoption and meaningful use of digital health tools based on the specific priorities and needs of their catchment areas. While PHNs are not typically funders and developers of digital health systems, if there is a gap and evidence of need, we will work with local system partners to develop standards-based solutions.

Primary Health Tasmania's Digital Health Strategy

In 2015, Primary Health Tasmania released a *Digital Health Strategy* which has been guiding our work in this area. Under this strategy, Primary Health Tasmania:

- increased awareness and adoption of key national digital health infrastructure including My Health Record, electronic prescribing and electronic pathology requests
- led the development and trial of an eReferral system, and
- supported a number of primary care organisations with funding for digital innovation and integration of digital health tools into their workflow.

Primary Health Tasmania has worked to revise our *Digital Health Strategy* to provide a contemporary guide for our digital health investment and activity in Tasmania, and document our key priorities to 2025 in the context of the Australian and Tasmanian digital health strategies. This strategy will provide a mechanism to standardise our organisation's approach to digital health and communicate our vision, role and priorities with system partners.

The strategic context for our *Digital Health Strategy*

Primary Health Tasmania's Strategic Plan

Primary Health Tasmania's *Strategic Plan 2021–25*¹³ describes strategies our organisation is adopting to address primary healthcare issues and priorities in our community.

Our vision is Healthy Tasmanians.

Our strategic goals




Health outcomes – Improved population health and wellbeing outcomes through prioritised investment

Person-centred care – Consumers at the centre of health decisions

Engaged and skilled primary care workforce – Responsive and committed primary care workforce delivering quality care

Integrated health system – Effective, cohesive primary health sector working in partnership with other parts of Tasmania's health system

Value, effectiveness and efficiency – Enduring, value-for-money outcomes

 		Our VISION Healthy Tasmanians	Our PURPOSE Creating high-quality healthcare solutions with the Tasmanian community
OUR STRATEGIC GOALS			
 	01	HEALTH OUTCOMES Improved population health and wellbeing outcomes through prioritised investment	KEY INDICATORS OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS 1.1 Needs assessment and performance data is shared with other parts of Tasmania's health system to inform service planning and delivery 1.2 Investment of resources is aligned to needs assessment priorities 1.3 Improved health outcomes are evident in the services we commission
	02	PERSON-CENTRED CARE Consumers at the centre of health decisions	KEY INDICATORS OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS 2.1 Consumers and carers are partners in all primary health service planning, implementation and evaluation 2.2 Collect, measure and assess consumer experience 2.3 Actions are prioritised, responsive and inclusive in meeting the needs of Aboriginal and other population groups experiencing health inequities
	03	ENGAGED AND SKILLED PRIMARY CARE WORKFORCE Responsive and committed primary care workforce delivering quality care	KEY INDICATORS OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS 3.1 Providers use data to drive healthcare safety and continuous quality improvement 3.2 Providers are supported to access and use tools, systems, models and training to deliver evidence-informed, safe and high-quality health care 3.3 Providers and peak bodies understand and are satisfied with support provided by Primary Health Tasmania
	04	INTEGRATED HEALTH SYSTEM Effective, cohesive primary health sector working in partnership with other parts of Tasmania's health system	KEY INDICATORS OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS 4.1 Documented partnerships evidence one-system thinking 4.2 Primary health providers collaborate with each other and with other parts of Tasmania's health system 4.3 Improved coordination of care for people with complex needs 4.4 Advocating for the role of primary health care as a critical component of an integrated health system
	05	VALUE, EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY Enduring, value-for-money outcomes	KEY INDICATORS OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESS 5.1 Performance-based contract management is driven by efficiency and outcome measures 5.2 Co-designed health pathways are embedded and actively used as a key driver for improved system efficiency and effectiveness 5.3 Program and service evaluation demonstrates value, evidences outcomes, and drives continuous improvement 5.4 Effective use of program funding
Our VALUES RESPECT "We value each other" COLLABORATION "We work together" RESULTS "We get things done" PROFESSIONALISM "We strive for excellence"			

Health in Tasmania: Health needs assessment

The Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care requires each PHN to undertake and maintain an evidence-based health needs assessment to identify unique regional and local priorities guided by national health priorities. Our latest iteration – *Health in Tasmania: Health Needs Assessment 2022–2025*¹⁴ – sets out our priorities for this period to inform our cycle of planning and commissioning health services. It clearly commits our organisation to be a key partner in improving primary care in Tasmania.

One priority area of action committed to as part of the needs assessment work is our digital health program, including:

- improving the use of effective and accessible technology by health professionals and consumers to improve chronic condition management through better communication and information-sharing
- data collection
- improving the use of high-quality data for primary care service quality monitoring and chronic condition improvement
- working with general practices to collect, analyse and report data to undertake activities that will improve quality of care for people with chronic conditions.

National digital strategy alignment

Australia's *National Digital Health Strategy*¹⁵, developed by the Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA), informs the digital health activities of Primary Health Tasmania.

The ADHA is currently developing an updated strategy to be implemented through to 2027. The current national strategy contains seven strategic priority outcomes including:

- health information that is available whenever and wherever it is needed
- health information that can be exchanged securely
- high-quality data with a commonly understood meaning that can be used with confidence
- better availability and access to prescriptions and medicines information
- digitally-enabled models of care that drive improved accessibility, quality, safety and efficiency
- a workforce confidently using digital health technologies to deliver health and care
- a thriving digital health industry delivering world-class innovation.

Primary Health Tasmania continues to be a strong advocate and implementation partner for national digital health priorities and initiatives. Our organisation has assisted providers and consumers to access or upload to My Health Record since the inception of a national electronic health record. We remain committed to driving increased meaningful use of My Health Record over the life of this strategy and in partnership with the Australian Government.

Digital health transformation in Tasmania

Tasmania is at the beginning of a transformation for digitally enabled health services as outlined in the *Digital Health Transformation – Improving Patient Outcomes 2022–2032*¹⁶ strategy by the Department of Health Tasmania. The vision for this digital transformation is “to empower consumers and enable healthcare professionals to deliver better patient outcomes through system-wide, digitally enabled technologies”.

Over the 10-year roadmap for the digital health transformation, incremental outcomes for consumers and providers are planned over three horizons. Between 2022–24, horizon one will deliver information and communication technology foundations, optimisation of existing clinical systems, data quality and standards for interoperability and improved health information sharing.

Primary Health Tasmania plays a key strategy execution role as a trusted partner engaging primary health providers to assess, design, implement and evaluate health services. This involves dedicating resources and playing a key role in developing and implementing strategies in partnership to deliver person-centred solutions for Tasmanian health consumers.

A vision for digital health in Tasmania

As we developed this *Digital Health Strategy*, stories and struggles of consumers and providers navigating the primary health system gave reminders about the benefits yet to be realised in digital primary health services and turning the swathe of health data into usable and useful health information and knowledge. As an enabler, digital health can help underpin the quintuple aim of primary health care across the five domains of continuous improvement.

To remind us of the purpose in achieving the work outlined in this strategy, we have created a digital health vision in Tasmania for primary health services:

“To empower Tasmanian consumer access to and provider delivery of efficient, equitable and safe primary health care supported by meaningful use of data and technology.”

Our digital health principles

Developing digital health principles is essential to provide a consistent guide to our organisation for assessing the strategic benefit and implementation considerations of digital health initiatives and opportunities. These principles also help us communicate clearly to our system partners, vendors and stakeholders our considerations and priorities when working with them on digital health initiatives.

When investing, implementing or partnering in digital health initiatives, Primary Health Tasmania will be guided by the following four strategic principles, aligned with the quintuple aim of primary care:

- equity, safety and quality
- connected, integrated and secure
- strategic investment and partnerships
- sustainable, value-based solutions.

Using the quintuple aim of primary care as a reference has provided the basis for these digital health principles and ensures we are aligned to improving the patient experience, improving the provider experience, reducing healthcare costs, and improving the health of the population.



Our digital health principles

What these principles mean

Equity, safety and quality

We design and invest in digital health activity that supports equity and access for consumers, with a particular focus on those who need it most. Our digital health activity is underpinned by the seven standards in our organisation's Safety and Quality Framework:

- clinical governance
- organised for safety
- person-centred care
- health literacy
- cultural safety
- driven by information
- leadership and culture.



Quintuple aim: Key elements of high quality primary health care

Our digital health principles

Connected, integrated and secure

We prioritise effort and investment towards digital health solutions that are connected, integrated and secure by:

- considering how solutions will impact the consumer journey, existing systems, nationally accepted standards and provider workflow
- integrating and connecting solutions to ensure relevant health information is exchanged with authorised members of the consumer care team, and that our solutions enable efficiency and effectiveness for care providers.

Ensuring the security of consumer information is at the core of our work, and we robustly test to protect the security and privacy of consumers and healthcare providers.

Strategic investment and partnerships

We strategically invest in digital health solutions across primary health that:

- align to our health needs assessment priority action areas
- improve efficiency and effectiveness of services to consumers and providers
- are developed in partnership with consumers, primary health providers and state and federal funders
- are focussed on connecting the state's health system.

Where we identify an urgent and priority digital health gap which is not being addressed, we will innovate and lead with our partners to address it.

Sustainable value-based solutions

We create value for the Tasmanian health system by funding or implementing digital solutions based on evidence and data that shows us there is a problem.

We consider:

- the benefits to providers of health care and patients in solutions we are designing or implementing and communicate these clearly as part of our communication and engagement
- any costs of the solutions we are designing or implementing and how these can be sustained in the long term.

We understand:

- solutions already in the market and leverage existing functionality where possible to reduce duplication and cost
- the problem we are solving, what outcome we want to achieve, how to implement change, and how we will measure success before starting.

Digital health strategic priorities to 2025

Across our *Digital Health Strategy*, three consistent strategic priority areas emerged from our consultation sessions. Within each of these themes, projects and initiatives have been identified to be implemented over the next three years. Working in partnership with our key stakeholders will be important in bringing about meaningful digital health improvements for primary care services across our priorities and projects. Furthermore, it is important that we remain flexible over the life of this strategy to address emerging primary health needs.

This strategy brings together digital health needs and opportunities grouped into the following three strategic priority areas:

1. get the communication foundations right
2. improve meaningful use
3. find and bridge the digital health gaps.

Within these priority areas, the identified initiatives are as follows.

1. Get the communication foundations right

A challenge amongst primary care providers is the ability to effectively communicate with other providers in a timely and reliable manner. Existing processes for referring and communicating are still dominated largely by faxing, emailing or post, with foundational work still required.

1.1 Complete rollout of the Tasmanian eReferral system

Under our previous digital health strategy, Primary Health Tasmania funded and led the development of an eReferral system for Tasmania in partnership with the Tasmanian Health Service and Department of Health Tasmania. Under this strategy, Primary Health Tasmania will:

- complete rollout of the system across the primary care sector
- support rollout to Tasmanian Health Service outpatient departments
- contribute to planning for the next stage of eReferral development within the public hospital system.

Improving the accuracy, reliability and safety of the provider referral information and transmission is a challenge in our health system. Fragmented and outdated mechanisms such as faxing still exist between primary health service providers and hospitals across Tasmania. Encouragingly, several in-flight initiatives are underway that will directly improve this process. Successful delivery of these initiatives will make a sizeable difference in strengthening the confidence in the referral process between providers and organisations across Tasmania.

At the completion of rollout, the system will support the following use cases.

Digital health strategic priorities

1.11 eReferrals from GP to public hospital outpatient departments

Replacing paper-based and faxed referrals with the eReferral system will reduce serious risks around lost referrals, illegible referrals, and the lack of easy one-to-one communication between GPs and non-GP medical specialists. This will drive increased levels of safety and quality across the consumer referral journey and benefits including reducing the time to triage for referrals, and visibility of the referral journey through the outpatient triage process.

By the end of 2023, all Tasmanian general practices will be able to send eReferrals to all Tasmanian Health Service outpatient departments.

1.12 Referrals from GP to non-GP medical specialists working privately

Under our previous digital health strategy, Primary Health Tasmania supported 125 non-GP medical specialist organisations to sign up for the Tasmanian eReferral system via the 'specialist and referrals' directory. We will continue working with additional non-GP medical specialists to complete rollout of the system to all non-GP medical specialists consulting privately in Tasmania.

1.13 eReferrals to Primary Health Tasmania's commissioned services

By 30 June 2023, our new and existing commissioned services will have the ability to correspond with other primary care professionals and receive referrals using the Tasmanian eReferral system. As additional needs arise across these commissioned services (such as mental health assessment and referral), Primary Health Tasmania commits to further developing templates and functionality in the eReferral system to enable a sector-wide platform and solution for eReferrals, avoiding duplication of systems and information silos across primary health providers.

1.14 Correspondence and referrals to and from allied health and community health organisations

Under our previous digital health strategy, Primary Health Tasmania trialled the Tasmanian eReferral system with 53 allied health organisations (including pharmacies) and funded additional system enhancements to:

- make it easier to search for allied health providers and GPs
- build a template allowing health professionals to send a letter instead of a referral.

These enhancements have significantly strengthened the utility of the system for allied and community health providers.

Primary Health Tasmania will complete the rollout of the eReferral system to allied and community providers over the course of this *Digital Health Strategy*. Leveraging the work already done with GPs and non-GP medical specialists, we commit to supporting further adoption and uptake activities across the spectrum of primary care including allied health, mental health and community services. A key task is bringing together the relevant stakeholders such as software vendors and primary care providers to ensure design and workflow are considered.

1.2 Implement the National Digital Health Strategy

The *National Digital Health Strategy* aims to develop, implement and increase meaningful use of digital health infrastructure.

Across the country, PHNs have played an integral role in the implementation of the national strategy. Under our own *Digital Health Strategy*, Primary Health Tasmania will continue to support awareness, change management and meaningful use of national priorities within the updated *National Digital Health Strategy*.

Digital health strategic priorities

1.21 Interoperability and standards

An ongoing area of work in the *National Digital Health Strategy* is furthering the maturity of interoperability standards to allow software vendors for primary, secondary, and tertiary care providers to securely and safely communicate and exchange health information. Interoperability is also a key focus area for horizon one in the Department of Health Tasmania's *Digital Health Transformation* strategy.

By 2025, the Department of Health Tasmania will have defined and designed the interoperability standards and expectations for primary care systems to connect and exchange information electronically. Primary care software providers will need to mature at the same rate to maximise the new interoperability opportunities with public hospitals services following this foundational work.

Our organisation will continue to participate in the ADHA jurisdictional advisory group for Tasmania and partner with the agency and the Tasmanian Government on national digital health infrastructure initiatives with a particular focus on ensuring the change management needs and workflow considerations of primary care providers are considered.

1.22 My Health Record

My Health Record is a consumer-controlled electronic health record which allows authorised health providers providing treatment to upload key health information and access information added by the consumer or uploaded by other providers involved in their care. Recent enhancements to the My Health Record system have included new features to assist healthcare providers to access key information more easily in a single view, reducing the need to browse through multiple documents.

In 2022, the ADHA started moving the My Health Record system to more contemporary infrastructure to enable further features that will benefit providers and consumers by facilitating the right information at the right time. Primary Health Tasmania is supporting this development by communicating key dates, changes and key benefits to primary care providers in Tasmania while continuing to support non-GP medical specialists and allied health professionals to register for and access the system. We will also support the ADHA by providing a channel for awareness and access to My Health Record trials for community and aged care organisations.

1.23 Electronic prescribing and active script lists

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly accelerated the development and adoption of electronic prescribing, which enables increased consumer access to prescriptions and greater flexibility for providers in the modality of consultations.

Token-based scripts allow consumers to receive a QR code for single medications electronically, which can then be used at their chosen pharmacy to access the electronic script.

Consumers can also register for Active Script Lists which allow pharmacies to access a list of all the person's current medications and dispense the medications per the prescriber's instructions.

As of August 2022¹⁷:

- 73% of pharmacies in Tasmania had used Active Script Lists, supporting the registration of 12,639 Tasmanians for the system
- there are 146,293 active scripts available to be dispensed for these 12,639 registered patients - an average of 11.5 active scripts per patient
- of all prescriptions dispensed in Tasmania, 16.87% are ePrescriptions compared to 16.08% nationally
- 28.42% of prescriptions written by doctors in Tasmania are ePrescriptions compared to 31.6% nationally.

Primary Health Tasmania will continue to work with pharmacies and the Tasmanian branches of the Pharmacy Guild and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia to support registration of the remaining pharmacies and encourage the use of electronic prescriptions by prescribers.

Digital health strategic priorities

1.24 Electronic diagnostic requesting (eRequesting)

Similar to electronic prescribing, electronic diagnostic requesting will allow requests for diagnostic tests to be sent securely and electronic to the diagnostic provider, eliminating the current paper-based workflow which typically travels with the patient. eRequesting can also enable some diagnostic results to be sent to My Health Record.

As at August 2022, TML Pathology was able to support electronic pathology requests while Hobart X-Ray, Hobart Dental Imaging, Imaging Plus and X-Ray Newstead were able to receive electronic imaging requests.

Primary Health Tasmania will continue to support the ADHA and diagnostic companies to promote eRequesting readiness and set-up instructions as additional diagnostic companies become eRequesting-ready.

1.25 Provider Connect Australia

Provider Connect Australia is a platform developed by the ADHA to help streamline the process for health organisations to update their service and provider details. Currently, health organisations need to update the same information with multiple entities. On completion, Provider Connect Australia will allow health organisations to update their key information in one place and provide authorisation for accreditation, vendors and support organisations to access.

Primary Health Tasmania will work with the ADHA to promote awareness and use of Provider Connect Australia and, when use of the platform reaches critical mass, we will become a subscriber to this information – reducing the work required in collecting it directly from health organisations.

1.3 Support virtual access to primary care for aged care residents

Improved access to primary care services was a key recommendation from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. This initiative supports participating RACFs to have the appropriate virtual consultation facilities, access to My Health Record and electronic medication management to improve staff and resident access and interactions with primary healthcare professionals.

Primary Health Tasmania will support the ADHA and RACFs to improve telehealth infrastructure, access to national digital health infrastructure, and supporting governance arrangements to enable residents and supporting staff to virtually consult with primary healthcare professionals. We will help ensure these facilities are compatible with the existing virtual consult technology used by providers in Tasmania and are guided by recognised standards such as the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine's *Framework and Guidelines for Telehealth Services*⁸.

1.4 Improve general practice data quality

Complete, coded and up-to-date general practice data underpins:

- the quality and safety of healthcare delivery through complete, accurate and standardised health information in health summaries, referrals and health records
- state and national understanding of the Tasmanian population health picture from a primary care perspective
- the efficiency and sustainability of general practices by decreasing medico-legal risk in the handover of patient care, effectiveness clinical decision support tools and efficiency of data analysis, recalls, reminders and consultations.

It is a priority over the course of this *Digital Health Strategy* to continue working with general practices to increase awareness of the importance of data quality, providing insights and guidance regarding data quality improvement and supporting initiatives to increase the quality of data within general practice.

2. Improve meaningful use

2.1 Access to clinical decision support tools

Clinical decision support tools support the provision of high-quality, appropriate and consistent patient care by providing easy to access, evidence-based, point-of-care prompts and guidance for medical providers and support staff. For clinical decision support tools to be an effective and efficient support to healthcare providers they must be easy to access and navigate, relevant to the patient's context, and not unnecessarily interrupting the workflow of the provider.

Over the course of this *Digital Health Strategy*, Primary Health Tasmania will support the primary care sector with three main clinical decision support tools: Primary Sense, Tasmanian HealthPathways and the mental health Initial Assessment and Referral (IAR) digital decision support tool.

2.11 Primary Sense

Primary Sense is a general practice population analysis tool, based on evidence-based guidelines such as the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners' Red Book¹⁹. It will provide patient insights at the practice level to enable the targeting of proactive care delivery to priority patient groups, and point-of-care support for GPs by alerting GPs to missing information and recommendations based on evidence and information stored in the patient's clinical record.

Primary Sense replaces the Pen clinical audit suite (including CAT4 and TopBar), which we license from PenCS. Rollout of Primary Sense to participating general practices will be completed by June 2023 and will form an integral part of Primary Health Tasmania's general practice engagement and support program.

2.12 Tasmanian HealthPathways

Established in New Zealand during the Christchurch earthquakes and locally adapted for Australian communities by PHNs, HealthPathways offers clinicians locally agreed information to make the right decisions together with patients, at the point of care. The Pathways are designed primarily for general practice teams but are also available to non-GP medical specialists, allied health professionals, and other health professionals in Tasmania.

Primary Health Tasmania continues to invest in HealthPathways with a dedicated team ensuring up-to-date and locally relevant information is available. Over the life of this *Digital Health Strategy*, Primary Health Tasmania will seek out innovative and integrated ways of leveraging HealthPathways to support other digitally enabled health services. Deeper integration with existing solutions such as electronic referrals will maximise the provider workflow experience of HealthPathways and the likelihood of increased adoption.

2.13 Mental health assessment and referral

Primary Health Tasmania is implementing the mental health Initial Assessment and Referral (IAR) digital decision support tool, which aims to standardise the assessment of people presenting with mental health conditions to ensure they're matched to the care that most suits their needs at the time. The IAR tool draws on evidence-based Australian Government guidance that aims to make it easier for clinicians to recommend the most appropriate level of care for a person seeking mental health support.

Following a review and evaluation of the the tool in early 2023, Primary Health Tasmania will collaborate with the Tasmanian Health Service, Department of Health Tasmania, GPs, community service providers and other key mental health service partners for system-wide adoption.

Digital health strategic priorities

2.2 Support the state digital health strategy

As mentioned above, Primary Health Tasmania is a key partner for the Department of Health Tasmania in delivering its *Digital Health Transformation* strategy. Between 2022–24, a number of key foundation initiatives will be delivered as part of the horizon one phase.

2.21 Clinical viewer

For many years, GPs have reported patchy and inconsistent information received from public hospitals for patients under their care. The quality of discharge and consultation summaries has come a long way in providing better information following a patient's health care in hospital, however there are often information gaps that prevent GPs from providing adequate support and clinical follow-up. Basic information such as discharge medications and test results can often be missing from a hospital summary record.

Within horizon one of the Digital Health Transformation strategy there is a key initiative to implement a clinical viewer for GPs to hospital digital medical records to support access to more detailed clinical information following patient hospital treatment. Establishing the clinical viewer capability will be a key focus in the first horizon, with further capabilities being developed in horizon two alongside major procurement activities.

Primary Health Tasmania's role will be to ensure that significant provider input has been given during the design, testing and implementation of the solution, using the wide and strong network of GPs. During 2023, we will work closely with the Department of Health Tasmania's digital health transformation team to advocate, assist, and influence the design of the clinical viewer and input into the implementation planning.

2.22 Outpatient improvement program

As part of horizon one of the Tasmanian Government's digital health strategy, the Department of Health is working to set the future vision for outpatient service delivery in Tasmania and outline service improvements to deliver the service capacity needed to meet the current and future needs of the community.

The Department's outpatient improvement program aims to:

- reduce waiting times: Provide the Tasmanian community with access to outpatient services and support within clinically recommended timeframes
- enable self-management: Improve access to self-management support services to empower people to manage their health on a day-to-day basis and inspire them to take an active role in their health care
- improve consumer and provider experience: Improve the experience of those who receive and provide outpatient care including consumers, their families/carers, clinicians, clinic staff and referring practitioners
- increase efficiency: Use contemporary practice management and quality management system principles to increase efficiency, improve outpatient business processes and enhance people and administrative flows
- strengthen primary care relationships: Improve the interface between specialist outpatient services and primary care, enabling a person's care to be coordinated and managed in the most appropriate setting, strengthening shared decision making and avoiding unnecessary outpatient activity.

Primary Health Tasmania will work in partnership with the Department of Health Tasmania to ensure the needs, issues, communication and change management considerations of the primary care sector are considered in the planning, design and implementation of this program.

Digital health strategic priorities

2.3 Clinical systems enhancements

Horizon one of the Tasmanian Government's digital health strategy also includes a clinical systems enhancements initiative which aims to deliver minor enhancements to existing systems to improve usability, quality of electronic information, and communication with GPs. These enhancements will provide short-term benefits while longer-term system planning and design is undertaken under horizons two and three.

Primary Health Tasmania will work in partnership with the Department of Health Tasmania to ensure the needs, issues, communication and change management considerations of the primary care sector are considered in the planning, design and implementation of this initiative.

2.3 Consistency and reliability of directory information

Primary Health Tasmania's Tasmanian Health Directory is a statewide directory aimed at connecting health professionals with other providers and services, providing better, safer, faster distribution of clinical healthcare information to GPs, specialists and allied health professionals. We commit to ongoing updates and maintenance of the directory to ensure accuracy and usefulness.

Our organisation also plays a key role maintaining information about Tasmanian primary health services and providers in healthdirect Australia's National Health Service Directory, submitting updates to the directory on a daily basis and ensuring opening hours for Tasmanian general practices during major public holiday periods are updated in the directory.

2.4 Support primary health providers to educate consumers on digital tools

As new digital health tools become available, we commit to assisting providers with effective ways to educate consumers in how to use them. During the COVID-19 pandemic, digital health tools were rapidly developed and released. One example is the introduction of ePrescribing, whereby a GP or other medical specialist can opt to send an electronic prescription to a consumer and eliminate paper prescriptions.

Our provider support team is well placed to provide this assistance and education to providers so they can support their own health consumers.

2.5 Data-informed quality improvement in general practice

Providing general practices with support, insights and reports into their local patient population provides opportunities for practices to improve data quality and target care to priority patient health needs, preventive care and servicing gaps, thereby improving quality of care for patients and potentially decreasing avoidable hospitalisations.

Over the course of this *Digital Health Strategy*, Primary Health Tasmania will work with system partners and general practices to identify and support quality improvement initiatives and increase clinical leadership within general practice.

3. Find and bridge digital health gaps

As digital health continues to evolve and become embedded in the lives of providers and consumers, we can play an active role in helping bridge any existing or emerging gaps as they develop. Strengthening relationships across software providers, listening to primary care provider needs, and increasing consumer awareness and literacy are key strategies for Primary Health Tasmania.

3.1 Primary care software vendor relationships

Many individual practice management and clinical systems are in use across the primary care provider sector. The majority of GPs in Tasmania use one of two practice software solutions while non-GP medical specialists use a variety of clinical software solutions. Other primary health providers use a wide range of software solutions.

With such a diverse range of systems in use, we can play a key role in facilitating and advocating provider needs and challenges to commonly used software providers for the purpose of making changes and improvements.

3.2 Listen to and advocate in relation to primary care workflow needs

Existing functions within Primary Health Tasmania, such as those delivered by our provider support team, remain a priority over the life of this *Digital Health Strategy*. Understanding on-the-ground workflow issues and needs for primary health providers are integral to prioritising the most beneficial and valuable initiatives and projects. This informs common workflow issues, system constraints/problems, quality improvement opportunities, and ultimately what is important from a provider's perspective.

3.3 Consumer awareness and literacy

Across Australia, there is an emerging and increasing digital divide in some communities. The people often most at need of health services have the lowest digital health literacy, and therefore risk being excluded from the benefits of digital health services. Digital health literacy for consumers is an area that requires focus and attention.

Primary Health Tasmania commits to working with social and community organisations across Tasmania to improve consumer awareness and digital health literacy. Organisations such as the Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS) and the Good Things Foundation Australia have created practical guidance and tools for organisations and individuals to address health literacy issues.

3.4 Person-centred care

When implemented well, digital tools can be an enabler to person-centred care, connecting healthcare teams together with timely and relevant information and allowing consumers, carers and authorised family members to access and understand their health information and actively participate in their care.

During the course of this *Digital Health Strategy*, Primary Health Tasmania will work with consumer organisations to understand barriers to using digital health tools as well as considerations for including consumer representatives in digital health co-design and improving consumer awareness, access and meaningful use of digital health tools.

3.5 Targeted co-design and funding to bridge prioritised gaps

In addition to the priorities outlined in this *Digital Health Strategy*, there may be additional digital health gaps which can be resolved during the life of this strategy.

Primary Health Tasmania will monitor the national digital health conversation and work with system partners, consumer organisations and peak bodies to increase the voice of providers and consumers in the digital health section of our health needs assessment.

These needs will be considered in the context of short and longer-term activity to understand how identified needs and gaps can be addressed practically and sustainably.

End notes

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