

Specialist Outpatient Waiting Time Report

From 1 July 2018, a Specialist Outpatient Waiting Time Report will be made available on the SA Health [website](#).

What is the SA Health Specialist Outpatient Waiting Time Report?

The Specialist Outpatient Waiting Time Report (the Report) provides information about the average waiting time and maximum waiting time for an outpatient appointment by specialty at each metropolitan public hospital in South Australia.

The Report includes information for 37 outpatient specialties at the Royal Adelaide Hospital, The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Lyell McEwin Hospital, Modbury Hospital, Flinders Medical Centre, Noarlunga Hospital and Women's and Children's Hospital. More outpatient services may be reported in the future.

To find out the average waiting time and maximum waiting time for a range of specialist clinics, see the Report at www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/OutpatientWaitingTimes

Is the Report accurate?

Specialist outpatient waiting times have not been regularly reported by SA Health before. Outpatient reporting is a challenge because different hospitals have different ways of collecting and reporting this information. Therefore not all of the information may be accurate, but it is the best information we have at the moment. Hospitals are working with clinical and administrative staff to improve the accuracy of the report.

As an example, on some outpatient waiting lists there may be patients waiting for an appointment who no longer need it because they have already seen a doctor or a private specialist elsewhere. If this occurs and the hospital doesn't know the patient has been seen, their presence on the list affects the accuracy of the average waiting time.

What is SA Health doing to improve the accuracy of the report?

SA Health is working with clinicians and administrative staff to improve the accuracy of waiting list and develop an outpatient reporting system that will provide timely and consistent information about outpatient waiting times for metropolitan specialist clinics.

With the thousands of referrals in different systems across SA Health, this is a large task and may take some time. Until then, hospitals will continue to review their outpatient waiting lists to confirm that patients on the list still require their appointments and to improve the information reported.

Why is the average waiting time information for Flinders Medical Centre and Noarlunga Hospital not included in this report?

Southern Adelaide Local Health Network (SALHN) has a joint waiting list for Flinders Medical Centre and Noarlunga Hospital. The average waiting time data was not available for Flinders Medical Centre and Noarlunga Hospital at the time of publishing this report. SALHN are working with their teams to provide average waiting times in future reports.



What is SA Health doing to ensure patients are seen in a timely manner?

SA Health is committed to delivering the best care and services to the South Australian community.

We are working with clinicians and administrative staff to put plans in place to reduce the time it takes for a patient to have an appointment based on their clinical need. In some services this may mean looking at different ways to provide services.

What should I do if my patient has been on a waiting list for 12 months or more?

Hospitals regularly review patient referrals on specialist outpatient waiting lists. If your patient has been waiting for an appointment longer than 12 months, you may be contacted and asked to review their condition and confirm that the appointment is still needed.

If following a review your patient's medical condition has changed an updated referral noting the changes in their condition should be sent to the hospital outpatient clinic. A clinician will reassess the clinical urgency of the referral for an appointment with a specialist. This may mean your patient will get an appointment sooner or remain on the waiting list depending on clinical need.

Outpatient referral process

All patients require a valid referral prior to receiving treatment in an outpatient clinic. Referrals must be submitted in writing and must include:

- current patient demographic information and contact details
- date of referral and the duration of the referral
- referring practitioner's contact details
- referring practitioner's provider number
- signature of the referrer
- general practitioner contact details (if not the referring clinician)
- Workcover/Motor Vehicle Accident/Department of Veterans Affairs information (where relevant)
- comprehensive reason for referral
- requirement for interpreter services (where relevant)
- alerts to any infectious status, allergies or communicable diseases that may affect other staff and patients being treated in the same vicinity
- relevant summary information on the patient's medical history, including current medications and allergies
- investigations and treatment undertaken
- relevant psycho-social issues.

In some instances additional clinical information may be required to ensure timely and appropriate decision making.

All referrals received by outpatient clinics will be reviewed to determine the clinical urgency of a patient's condition. All appointments are scheduled based on patient clinical need.

Outpatient referral process (continued)

It remains the responsibility of the referrer to monitor the patient's medical condition while they wait for their specialist appointment. It is important that the hospital is made aware of any significant changes in the patient's condition which may change their clinical urgency category.

It is important that you notify, or ask the patient to notify, the hospital if the outpatient appointment is no longer needed. This helps improve the accuracy of our waiting lists.

For more information visit www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/OutpatientWaitingTimes

For more information

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