



Queensland Government
Queensland Health

POLICY FRAMEWORK

FOR

SPECIALIST OUTPATIENT

SERVICES

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Introduction – Policy Framework for Specialist Outpatient Services

The *Policy Framework for Specialist Outpatient Services* provides a consistent, structured approach to assist Queensland Health staff in the coordination and management of specialist outpatient services and waiting lists. The *Policy Framework* supports the *Smart State: Health 2020 Directions Statement* and the *Queensland Health Strategic Plan 2004-2010*.

Specialist outpatient services for the purposes of this document are those medical and surgical outpatient clinics provided by health practitioners.

The *Policy Framework* provides instruction, information and guidance to all Queensland Health employees and other practitioners involved in the provision of specialist outpatient services. The *Policy Framework* can be seen as the definitive source of information for the implementation and maintenance of specialist outpatient systems and management processes within Queensland Health. Compliance with the *Policy Framework* will enable hospitals to deliver consistent, appropriate and efficient specialist outpatient services. These policies also provide a basis for attainment of Queensland Health principles – supporting equity, quality, respect for individual consumers, and functioning as one organisation.

The *Policy Framework* provides a number of individual policies and policy statements dealing with specific aspects of specialist outpatient systems and processes. It is intended that hospitals will develop protocols and procedures that will promote use of the policies within local settings.

The Queensland Health Policy Framework for Specialist Outpatient Services supersedes the previous Queensland Health publication: *Guidelines for the Management of Specialist Outpatient Clinic Waiting Lists*.

POLICY QUALITY SPECIALIST OUTPATIENT SERVICES

Queensland Health facilities will provide quality specialist outpatient services to maximise patient outcomes and achieve service efficiency.

Scope

This policy applies to all Queensland Health facilities that provide specialist outpatient services.

Compliance

All Queensland Health employees and agents (including visiting medical officers and other partners in care, contractors, consultants and volunteers), involved in the delivery of specialist outpatient services and the coordination and maintenance of specialist outpatient waiting lists.

Patient Focus

Patients and carers are the primary focus of specialist outpatient services.

- Patients and carers should be informed, educated and supported throughout the process.
- Patients and carers should participate in decision making and be actively involved in their health care management.
- Patients should receive information that outlines patients' rights and responsibilities, consumer advocacy and the process for lodging complaints.

Cooperative Networks

Specialist outpatient services are provided in a cooperative network of services, which promotes access for all Queenslanders and the most effective and efficient use of resources for overall benefit.

Referring practitioners and other relevant health care professionals will be involved in, and informed about specialist outpatient services.

Quality Improvement

Specialist outpatient services are constantly evaluated and improved within a quality framework.

- Queensland Health specialist outpatient services and systems will be managed in accordance with policy and standards outlined in the Queensland Health *Quality of Health Services Framework*, including principles of consumer involvement, access, appropriateness, safety, effectiveness and efficiency.
- For further information see Qld Health intranet site:
<http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/hsd/procurement/quality/publications/qst/9120gh&bhsf.pdf>

Risk Management

Decisions involving specialist outpatient services will be made within an integrated risk management framework.

- Queensland Health specialist outpatient services and systems will be managed in accordance with policy and standards outlined in the Queensland Health *Integrated Risk Management Framework for Clinical and Corporate Services*.
- For further information see website: <http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/hssb/risk/home.htm>
- A sample specialist outpatient risk assessment scenario is contained in Appendix II.

POLICY SPECIALIST OUTPATIENT CLINICAL PROCESSES

Queensland Health facilities will maintain clinical processes to support quality specialist outpatient services

Scope

This policy applies to all Queensland Health facilities that provide specialist outpatient services.

Compliance

All Queensland Health employees and agents (including visiting medical officers and other partners in care, contractors, consultants and volunteers), involved in the delivery of specialist outpatient services and the coordination and maintenance of specialist outpatient waiting lists.

Policy Statement – Evidence-based Service and Patient Consent

Specialist outpatient services will be evidence-based, with due consideration of treatment options, and with the consent of the patient.

Evidence-based Clinical Practice

Evidence-based clinical practice is the integration of best research evidence with clinical expertise and patient values. Queensland Health promotes evidence-based clinical practice in all services, including specialist outpatient services.

Decisions to undertake assessments and treatments within specialist outpatient services are made with due consideration of expected benefits, the attendant clinical risks, and opportunities for alternative treatments.

Informed Consent

Informed consent must be obtained from the patient, guardian or attorney prior to undertaking designated treatments or procedures. Informed consent must comply with relevant Queensland Health policies and legislation. For details on requirements, see website: <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/informedconsent/>

Policy Statement – Specialist Outpatient Categorisation

All patient referrals will be assigned a clinical urgency category within five working days of being registered on a specialist outpatient waiting list.

All referrals received by specialist outpatient clinics will be categorised according to clinical urgency. The categorisation of referrals facilitates equitable and timely access to appropriate services according to urgency of need.

All referrals will be registered as 'UC' – unclassified, until categorised by the delegated medical officer. Once categorisation has taken place the category will be updated on the waiting list register. Patients requiring appointment allocation but not requiring clinical classification (eg. antenatal referrals) are classified as 'Other'.

Clinical urgency categories have been defined for use in specialist outpatient clinics undertaken in Queensland public hospitals.

Category 1

- Criteria:
- Appointment within 30 days desirable; and
 - Condition has the potential to require more complex or emergent care if assessment is delayed; and
 - Condition has the potential to have significant impact on quality of life if care is delayed.

Category 2

- Criteria:
- Appointment within 90 days desirable; and
 - Condition is unlikely to require more complex care if assessment is delayed; and
 - Condition has the potential to have some impact on quality of life if care is delayed.

Category 3

- Criteria:
- Appointment not required within 90 days; and
 - Condition is unlikely to deteriorate quickly; and
 - Condition is unlikely to require more complex care if assessment is delayed.

Allocation of the clinical urgency category requires the fulfillment of all criteria for that category. If a patient does not fulfill all criteria for Category 1, Category 2 is considered. If the patient does not fulfill all criteria for Category 2, then the patient is allocated Category 3 status.

Responsibility for categorization

The medical officer responsible for the specialty should undertake categorisation. The task of categorisation may be delegated to a nominated officer (eg. medical registrar, resident or senior registered nurse) where clearly defined categorisation protocols have been documented.

Policy Statement – Prioritising Specialist Outpatient Appointments

Allocation of specialist outpatient appointments will be prioritised primarily on the basis of clinical urgency.

Allocation of appointments for patients on the specialist outpatient waiting list is based on prioritisation according to clinical need. It is acknowledged that this process may be complex and influenced by a range of factors.

The prioritisation process should occur in a systematic manner so that urgent patients are treated sooner, and waiting time to consultation is minimised.

In cases where factors other than clinical urgency and waiting time influence patient selection for specialist outpatient consultation, it must be possible to demonstrate that no patient with similar characteristics has a higher urgency category or has waited longer for an appointment.

Prioritisation Based on Clinical Urgency

Clinical urgency is the primary consideration in assigning an appointment date for specialist outpatient waiting list patients.

Patients with a higher clinical urgency category are scheduled for an appointment date ahead of patients with lower clinical urgency (*i.e. Category 1 before Category 2, Category 2 before Category 3*).

Prioritisation within clinical urgency categories

Factors that may influence prioritisation of patients within clinical urgency categories on the specialist outpatient waiting list include:

- Patient co-morbidities;
- Medication requirements;
- Patient social and community support;
- Patient access factors (eg. distance of residence from the treatment centre, availability of transport and accommodation).

Waiting time

- Patients within the same urgency category who have waited longer should receive priority when all other relevant factors are equal.

Previous postponements

- Patients whose specialist outpatient appointments have previously been postponed for clinical reasons or for hospital-related reasons will be given priority and should be rescheduled for the next available appointment.

Within each clinical urgency category, a number of the abovementioned factors should be considered when selecting patients from the specialist outpatient waiting list.

Outpatient Appointment Scheduling

Appointment scheduling occurs after an urgency category has been assigned and prioritisation of patients has occurred (see: *Prioritisation Based on Clinical Urgency*, page 4).

Category 1 patients are assigned an appointment when placed on the specialist outpatient waiting list.

Category 2 and 3 patients are assigned appointments using a partial booking system. The partial booking system integrates waiting list and appointment scheduling processes. Patients should be allocated an appointment no more than 4 weeks in advance of their appointment date. This provides a number of benefits:

- Reduction in the frequency of rebooking and rescheduling of appointments;
- Assistance with reallocation of appointments as a result of clinic rescheduling;
- Reduction in administrative workload that rescheduling incurs;
- Decrease in number of patients who fail to attend;
- Potential to improve access to specialist outpatient services;
- Allowance for improved planning of clinics;
- Ability to incorporate an auditing process within the proposed appointment scheduling changes;
- Decrease in pressure and stress on administrative staff that currently notify the patients of cancellations and rescheduling.

Although this booking system applies to new case appointment scheduling, this principle is suitable for use in the scheduling and management of review cases. The benefits as listed equally apply.

Patient Listing Status – ‘Ready for Care’ Status

A patient may be ‘ready for care’ or ‘not ready for care’.

In the context of specialist outpatient clinics, ‘ready for care’ patients are those who are prepared to attend the outpatient clinic. To be ‘ready for care’, a patient must:

- Have been assessed as requiring a specialist outpatient appointment by an attending medical officer;
- Be available for specialist outpatient appointment (with reasonable leeway for negotiation on specific appointment dates).

‘Not ready for care’ patients are those who are not in a position to accept the offer of appointment to attend the outpatient clinic. These patients are either:

- Patients whose health status precludes them from accepting an appointment;
- Patients who wish to defer their appointment for personal reasons.

‘Not ready for care’ status must be supported by reason for inability to accept the outpatient clinic appointment.

The application of ‘ready for care’ status is patient focused, and is not dependent upon the availability of health service resources such as human and material resources.

Policy Statement – Timeliness of Specialist Outpatient Assessment

All facilities will manage procedures to maximise the number of patients seen within the recommended times and to expedite appointments for any patient not seen within time.

Designated staff are responsible for arranging outpatient appointments, based on priorities described in the section entitled *Prioritisation Based on Clinical Urgency* on page 4.

Selection of patients from the specialist outpatient waiting list on the basis of clinical urgency category and waiting time (see: *Appointment Scheduling System*, page 14) will assist in maximising the number of patients seen within recommended times.

Processes that may assist in maximising the number of patients seen within recommended times include:

- Appointment scheduling on the basis of patient lists, identifying patients by urgency category and by waiting time.
- Appointment scheduling on the basis of patient lists, identifying patients who are not allocated a date, are ready for care, and will be recognised as ‘long wait’ patients.

Designated staff have the initial responsibility for arranging appointments within the desired time limit for the patient’s assigned urgency category. Should the designated staff be unable to arrange appointments in the recommended timeframe, the accountable officer (see: *Specialist Outpatient Accountable Officer*, page 10) assumes responsibility for expediting access to outpatient services.

Patients waiting longer than recommended times may be offered the following opportunities:

- Transfer from one consultant to another within the same specialty;
- Transfer to another public hospital that provides the service and where a shorter waiting time to a specialist outpatient appointment is available.

Where patients accept an offer for transfer to another medical officer or hospital, appropriate arrangements will be made for:

- Notification to the referring practitioner;
- Documentation of the transfer in the patient medical record and specialist outpatient waiting list system.

Policy Statement – Clinical Monitoring

All facilities will oversee a system of clinical monitoring to ensure appropriate clinical management of patients on the specialist outpatient waiting list.

Clinical monitoring of patients on the specialist outpatient waiting list is required to assess changes in patients' clinical status.

Clinical monitoring is appropriately conducted by the referring practitioner. Designated staff must communicate with the referring practitioner to ensure that adequate clinical monitoring is maintained (see: *Methods of Communication*, page 19 and *Information to Referring Practitioners*, page 20).

The need for clinical monitoring assessment should be considered, documented and recommended (if necessary) in the following circumstances:

- Category 1 patients who have waited more than 30 days since last review;
- Category 2 patients who have waited more than 90 days since last review;
- Category 3 patients who have waited more than 12 months since last review;
- On the request of the attending medical officer.

Policy Statement – Continuum of Care

All facilities will manage specialist outpatient services to ensure coordinated care, appropriate discharge planning and clinical follow-up.

Specialist outpatient services:

- Primarily focus on patients and carers;
- Involve and inform all relevant health care professionals;
- Should be constantly evaluated and improved.

Initial Consultation

Specialist outpatient consultation is conducted for the purposes of specialist assessment and management, which is not available within primary care settings. This may include:

- Investigation and diagnosis;
- Advice on treatment and management;
- Reassurance for the patient and second opinion.

Appropriate request forms may be provided to the patient to enable required investigations to be performed before the clinic appointment.

During the initial consultation with the patient an agreed pathway of care and treatment is developed, implemented and documented.

Following the initial consultation, the patient may be returned to the referring practitioner with recommendations for ongoing management; admitted to the hospital; placed on a waiting list for elective admission; or followed-up in specialist outpatient clinics.

Discharge Planning

Discharge planning is a process that commences during the initial specialist outpatient service event, and continues through to patient return to the referring practitioner.

Discharge planning aims to identify issues relevant to each patient's discharge back to the referring practitioner and to initiate action to address these issues so that discharge is not delayed.

Patients should be discharged from specialist outpatient clinics when the episode of care is completed or when another provider can more appropriately provide the service. A discharge/transfer summary should be provided to the referring practitioner and the ongoing service provider as appropriate.

Emergency or Elective Admission

Some patients will require admission to hospital from specialist outpatient clinics, or will have a need for future admission identified. Decisions to admit are made with due consideration of expected benefits from the admission, the attendant clinical risks, and opportunities for alternative treatments.

Admissions from specialist outpatient services should be organised so that the patient is transferred to the appropriate ward or procedural area (i.e. patients should not have to be admitted through the emergency department).

Placement on a waiting list for admission for elective surgery requires specific criteria and processes to be fulfilled (see: Queensland Health *Policy Framework for Elective Surgery Services*).

Following an inpatient episode of care, a specialist outpatient clinic appointment will be required.

Clinical Follow-up

Clinical follow-up after an initial consultation, or after an admission, may be required for a defined period.

Decisions to undertake clinical follow-up in specialist outpatient clinics should be made with due consideration of the expected benefits and the opportunities for accessing appropriate alternative services.

Patients for whom ongoing specialist outpatient care may be appropriate include:

- Patients with rare and complex conditions;
- Patients with unresolved clinical problems for which the patient was originally referred;
- Patients undergoing monitoring of novel and/or potentially toxic therapy that cannot be achieved in other services;
- Patients who are part of a funded and approved research protocol;
- Patients with conditions unable to be treated by another service.

To optimise continuity of care, specialist outpatient clinic procedures should facilitate patients being seen by the same clinician or specialist team at each appointment where possible.

Appropriate request forms may be provided to the patient to enable required investigations to be performed before each clinic appointment.

Appropriate communication with the referring practitioner and other relevant services will be required during the period of clinical follow-up (see: *Information to Referring Practitioners*, page 20).

POLICY SPECIALIST OUTPATIENT ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES

Queensland Health facilities will organise administrative processes to support the provision of quality specialist outpatient services.

Scope

This policy applies to all Queensland Health facilities that provide specialist outpatient services.

Compliance

All Queensland Health employees and agents (including visiting medical officers and other partners in care, contractors, consultants and volunteers), involved in the delivery of specialist outpatient services and the coordination and maintenance of specialist outpatient waiting lists.

Policy Statement – Specialist Outpatient Accountable Officer

All facilities will identify an accountable officer who is responsible for specialist outpatient services.

Specialist Outpatient Accountable Officer

The identification of an accountable officer responsible for specialist outpatient services in each hospital acknowledges the need for performance accountability with respect to specialist outpatient services in Queensland Health facilities.

The appointment and term of the accountable officer for specialist outpatient services is determined by the District Manager of the health facility.

Specialist outpatient accountable officers:

- Work with clinical staff to instigate positive change and enhance specialist outpatient performance and throughput;
- Initiate clinical reform in order to improve patient access, maximise patient outcomes and support the provision of consistent high quality and efficient specialist outpatient services.

Policy Statement – Specialist Outpatient Referral

Referrals to specialist outpatient services will contain necessary information, and acceptance of referrals will be subject to consideration of service location and patient status.

Referral Sources

Patients may be referred to specialist outpatient services from:

- General practitioners;
- Medical officers within the hospital (eg. emergency department, other specialist outpatient clinics, inpatient units);
- Medical officers' private rooms;
- Medical officers in other hospitals (transfers);
- Other health care professionals (eg. optometrist referral to ophthalmologist).

Referral Content

Referrals to specialist outpatient services must be in writing (eg. letter, facsimile, electronic file) and contain the following:

- Patient demographic information and contact details;
- Referring practitioner contact details;
- Relevant information about the patient's condition and the need for specialist services;
- Investigations and treatment undertaken;
- Past medical and surgical history;
- Current medications;
- Patient status;
- Relevant psycho-social issues;
- Signature of referring practitioner; and
- Date of referral.

The use of standardised referral formats will facilitate the provision of adequate referral content. A sample referral form containing essential patient details is provided in Appendix III.

Hospitals should have in place systems and processes to ensure referrals contain adequate information to allow categorisation, prioritisation and direction of patients to appropriate services.

- Hospitals may need to implement procedures to inform referring practitioners with respect to appropriate referral content and relevant investigations, to assist categorisation, accurate assessment, and treatment.
- Referring practitioners should be encouraged to meet referral requirements through regular feedback processes (e.g. telephone contact, facsimile or letter).
- Hospitals will also need to have processes in place to identify inadequate or incomplete referrals and where necessary, return the letters for more complete information.

Active Life of Referrals

Referrals for specialist outpatient services remain valid for a single course of treatment (an episode of care), or for a period of twelve months from the initial specialist outpatient consultation, whichever is the lesser.

- An episode of care commences at the initial consultation, continues through treatment, and concludes when the patient is returned to the care of the referring practitioner.

On the occasion of referral for a chronic or long-term condition that will extend beyond twelve months, an indication from the referring practitioner is requisite detailing that the patient's clinical condition will require continuing care and management by a specialist consultant physician. Examples of such conditions could include but are not limited to the specialties of Renal and Oncology. In these instances wording on the referral must indicate that the referral is valid for an indefinite period.

The presentation of an unrelated illness or condition will initiate a new course of treatment (episode of care), in which case a new referral is required.

Service Provision

Provision of specialist services in Queensland public hospitals is according to details contained in the *Australian Health Care Agreement*, zonal clinical service plans, and the *Queensland Health Selected Specialist Services Direction Statement*.

In most cases, patients will be referred to specialist services at a facility near to their place of residence (eg. their 'home' district) or in a facility linked by zonal service networks.

Hospitals must have in place processes to identify referrals that would be most appropriately transferred to other facilities.

- Where a referral is received that must be passed to another district or zonal facility (eg. service is not provided at the hospital), designated staff must contact the referring practitioner to arrange appropriate transfer of the referral.
- Where a referral is received that could be provided at a facility closer to the patient's place of residence, designated staff may contact the referring practitioner to arrange appropriate transfer of the referral.

In situations where specialist services are provided through a cooperative arrangement between facilities (eg. outreach services), a service agreement should clearly identify the service with responsibility for each aspect of clinical and administrative service provision.

Patient Status

Hospitals must have in place processes to identify all patients referred to specialist outpatient services as eligible or ineligible, compensable, and public or private. Charges apply to some specialist outpatient services and other non-admitted patient services.

- For further information see website: <http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/hssb/hfsd/nonadmitted.htm>

Patient Eligibility

Eligible patients include Australian citizens and visitors from countries with which Australia has a Reciprocal Health Care Agreement.

- Eligible patients may choose to receive public hospital services free of charge or as a private patient in a public hospital.
- For further information see website: <http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/hssb/hfsd/accom.htm#2>

Ineligible patients include all overseas students and visitors from countries that do not have a Reciprocal Health Care Agreement with Australia.

- Ineligible patients may be charged for public hospital service.
- For further information see website: <http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/hssb/hfsd/accom.htm#3>

Compensable Patients

Compensable patients fall into four broad categories:

- Department of Veterans' Affairs;
- Motor Accident Insurance Commission;
- Work Cover;
- Other Third Party.

A compensable patient is entitled to compensation that includes the cost of their public and/or private hospital care (see website: <http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/hssb/hfsd/accom.htm#6>).

Private Patients

Patients referred to a nominated hospital staff specialist or visiting medical officer with right of private practice, may elect to receive treatment as a private patient.

- Private patients may be charged an amount determined by Queensland Health (see website: <http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/hssb/hfsd/accom.htm#1>).
- Participation of specialists in the private practice scheme in no way compromises or adversely affects the treatment of public patients.

Policy Statement – Specialist Outpatient Waiting List System

All facilities will maintain a waiting list system to register essential details about all patients requiring specialist outpatient consultation.

A specialist outpatient waiting list contains details about all patients who require an outpatient appointment, from the time that the hospital accepts the referral until the initial appointment has been allocated, or the patient has been removed from the waiting list.

The system to register patients on the specialist outpatient waiting list may be manual or electronic. The type of system is dependent upon the size of the hospital and the demand for specialist outpatient services.

Essential Waiting List Details

When registering patients for the specialist outpatient waiting list, essential details are required to accurately record and track their progress on the waiting list.

The essential details to be collected include:

- Patient identification details;
- Patient contact details;
- Referring practitioner details;
- Date referral written;
- Date referral received.
- Triage category (see *Specialist Outpatient Categorisation*, page 3)
- Allocated specialty (consultant name if applicable/known)

Designated Staff

Designated staff ensure that accurate specialist outpatient waiting lists are compiled and are responsible for coordinating the maintenance and management of the waiting list.

This function is overseen by an accountable officer, and fulfilled in hospitals by a variety of staff, dependent on the size of the facility and the nature of services provided.

Privacy

Patient information contained in the waiting list register must be handled in accordance with relevant legislation and Queensland Health policies. For further information, see website: <http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/privacy/>

Policy Statement – Specialist Outpatient Appointment System

All facilities will maintain and manage an appointment scheduling or booking system to ensure appropriate appointment allocation for patients referred to specialist outpatient services.

Appointment Scheduling System

The appointment scheduling or booking system allows patients to be allocated an appointment from the specialist outpatient waiting list. The appointment scheduling system records relevant details about the patient and the outpatient appointment. Patients listed on the appointment scheduling system will therefore be a subset of those on the specialist outpatient waiting list.

The system for appointment scheduling or booking patient appointments in specialist outpatients may be manual or electronic. The type of system is dependent upon the size of the hospital and the demand for specialist outpatient services.

The appointment scheduling or booking system will facilitate the immediate booking of Category 1 patients when they are placed on the waiting list, and the use of a partial booking system for Category 2 and 3 patients (see also: *Outpatient Appointment Scheduling*, page 5).

Appointment Times

Appointment times should be allocated in a patient-focussed manner:

- Patients must be booked into staggered appointment times rather than booking all appointments at the clinic commencement time.
- Where possible, appointment times should be arranged to facilitate patients being seen by the same clinician or specialist team at each appointment.
- Other relevant factors may be considered in the allocation of appointment times (eg. social and geographic circumstances).

Missed Appointments - Non Attendance

Hospitals will inform and educate patients about the effects of non-attendance, in order to minimise the occurrence and consequence of missed specialist outpatient appointments.

Education may include the provision of information about patient responsibilities and the effects of missed appointments on service provision. Other measures to reduce missed appointments include:

- Keeping the patient and the referring practitioner informed through written and verbal communication;
- Confirmation of offer of appointment;
- Telephone or written reminder of booked appointment 7 days prior;
- Redirection of referrals to hospitals with the service closer to the patient's home address, with the consent of the patient and referring practitioner;
- Reduction of specialist follow-up visits - once the episode of care has concluded, patients are returned to the care of the referring practitioner;
- Audit of appointment waiting lists (see: *Specialist Outpatient Administrative Audit*, page 16);
- Sending letters to patients following non-attendance of specialist clinic (see: *Specialist Outpatient Letter Suite*, Appendix IV).

Hospitals will implement procedures to identify and contact all patients who do not attend their specialist outpatient appointment.

- Written notification of failure to attend the specialist outpatient appointment with the offer of a new appointment will be sent to the patient and referring practitioner (see: *Specialist Outpatient Letter Suite* – Appendix IV).
- When a patient fails to attend the specialist outpatient clinic on two consecutive occasions, consultation with the attending medical officer must take place to determine further action. The patient will be provided with an appointment or removed from the appointment schedule (see: *Specialist Outpatient Letter Suite* – Appendix IV).

Scheduling Teaching in Specialist Outpatient Clinics

Hospitals should implement procedures to ensure that patients are allocated to clinics with due consideration of teaching time for medical students.

Policy Statement – Specialist Outpatient Service Efficiency

All facilities will administer systems to maximise specialist outpatient service efficiency.

Standby Patients

In order to ensure that specialist outpatient services are fully utilised, hospitals should maintain a register of patients who are available if additional outpatient appointments become available at short notice.

Standby patients may have their outpatient appointment fast-tracked if additional outpatient appointments become available at short notice. Standby patients should be available at short notice and easily contacted (eg. by telephone).

Management of Staff Leave

Hospitals must implement processes to appropriately manage staff leave, so that service efficiency is maintained and where necessary, appointment/clinic bookings are planned around periods of critical staff leave.

All Queensland Health employees and other practitioners (including visiting medical officers) involved in the delivery of specialist outpatient services must provide adequate notice of planned leave, as per relevant awards.

Hospitals must have specific processes in place to manage planned leave for specialist outpatient staff, due to the critical impact these staff have on specialist outpatient services. These processes must include:

- Approval of leave by the relevant line manager a minimum of four weeks in advance, or as per award or contract conditions;
- Notification of leave to accountable officers and designated staff a minimum of four weeks in advance;
- Timely notification to the designated specialist outpatient staff and appointment/waiting list administrative staff about upcoming leave that will affect appointment/clinic lists;
- Bi-annual reviews by accountable officers of the impact of staff leave on patient postponement.

Process Improvement

Continuous evaluation and action to improve access, safety, appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency are fundamental to meeting Queensland Health's *Quality of Health Services Framework*.

Service improvement activities at Queensland Health facilities may vary depending on the size of the facility and the nature of services provided, but all should involve consumers in the process and it is recommended that staff at all levels contribute to these activities.

As a minimum, accountable officers should organise and oversee the development of processes to evaluate the following aspects of specialist outpatient services on a monthly basis:

- Number of referrals received in each specialty;
- Number of new cases seen in each specialty;
- Waiting times for appointment by clinical urgency category, in each specialty;
- Failure to attend rates in each specialty;
- Postponement (patient and hospital-initiated) rates in each specialty;
- New case to follow-up ratio in each clinic;
- Conversion ratio from outpatients to inpatients (acute admissions) in each specialty;
- Conversion ratio from outpatients to elective surgery waiting lists in each specialty.

These indicators will provide the basis for workforce and service planning and annual review of clinic templates, as well as providing direction for addressing issues impacting on access to services and service efficiency.

Specialist outpatient clinic staff should be provided with information about indicators to assist with identification of performance issues and possible service improvements.

Implementing changes to improve services should incorporate principles and tools described in the Queensland Health *Managing Organisational Change "How to Guide"* (see website: http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/odb/oju/documents/services/change_management/12940dmp.htm)

Policy Statement – Specialist Outpatient Administrative Audit

All facilities will manage a system of administrative audit to ensure the specialist outpatient waiting list provides an accurate record of patients waiting for specialist outpatient consultation.

Waiting list audits are usually conducted by the designated staff and may involve contact with patients by telephone, letter or other appropriate methods (see: *Methods of Communication*, page 19).

Hospitals will implement processes to ensure regular administrative audits are conducted on the specialist outpatient waiting list, to include the following:

- Weekly audit of Category 1 patients who have waited longer than 30 days for an appointment;
- Monthly audit of Category 2 patients who have waited longer than 90 days for an appointment;
- Six-monthly audit of Category 3 patients who have waited longer than 90 days for an appointment;
- Annual audit (eg. exception reporting) of the complete waiting list.

Administrative audit will:

- Identify waiting list records that are incorrect (eg. duplicate records, patients seen but not removed);
- Confirm patient details to maintain the accuracy of waiting list records.

Patient contact as part of the administrative audit process should ascertain:

- The need to update contact details;
- That the patient still requires the specialist outpatient appointment (i.e. has not had the consultation elsewhere);
- Whether the patient is on a waiting list at another hospital for the same or another condition;
- Whether the patient is available at short notice (see: *Standby Patients*, page 15);
- The date when a local medical officer last reviewed the patient.

Any removal of patient records from the waiting list will comply with policy relating to reasons for removal (see: *Reasons for Removal*, page 18).

Policy Statement – Minimising Specialist Outpatient Postponement

All facilities will manage procedures to minimise the postponement of specialist outpatient appointments and to ensure appropriate utilisation of hospital resources if postponements occur.

In balancing the needs of patients requiring urgent outpatient appointments or emergency care and those requiring assessment less urgently, some appointment postponements may occur.

Patient-initiated Postponement

Hospitals will educate patients in order to minimise the occurrence and consequence of patient-initiated specialist outpatient postponements.

Education may include the provision of information about patient responsibilities and the effects of late postponement on service provision when an appointment is offered. Information about clinical implications of appointment postponement should be emphasised to the patient.

Patients may request postponement of booked appointments for unforeseen clinical, personal, or social reasons. The designated staff will notify the attending medical officer and ensure:

- Rescheduling of the appointment for the patient;
- Rescheduling of vacated appointment time for use by another patient;
- The referring practitioner is notified.

When a patient postpones an appointment without due cause or notice on two consecutive occasions, consultation with the attending medical officer must take place to determine further action. The patient will be provided with an appointment or removed from the appointment schedule (see: *Specialist Outpatient Letter Suite* – Appendix IV).

Hospital-initiated Postponement

Hospitals may need to postpone specialist outpatient appointments or clinics due to unforeseen circumstances such as an urgent need for the specialist to attend emergency surgery, or other factors related to human resources, equipment or facilities.

Hospitals will implement processes to minimise hospital-initiated postponements, while maximising service efficiency, including:

- Management of staff leave (see: *Management of Staff Leave*, page 15);
- Management of equipment maintenance scheduling;
- Regular review of postponement causes by the clinic nurse manager and accountable officer.

When a decision has been made to postpone appointments, arrangements will be made for any available clinic time to be utilised for other patients (see: *Standby Patients*, page 15).

Hospitals will implement processes to ensure, wherever possible, that rescheduling and postponement of appointments or clinics is carried out with due consideration of clinical urgency and other patient-related factors:

- Attending medical officers must be notified of any need to postpone an appointment or clinic in order to determine the course of care for the affected patients.
- Postponement of less urgent patients should be undertaken rather than more urgent patients.
- Patients who have experienced more than one hospital-initiated postponement will be treated as high priority and should immediately be rescheduled for the next available booking.
- Social and geographic circumstances of a patient should be taken into consideration in the event of rescheduling (eg. patients who need to travel long distances and patients who are carers should be given special consideration).

When hospital-initiated postponement of appointments or clinics is necessary, hospital employees and other practitioners (including visiting medical officers) will make every effort to minimise the impact on patients:

- The patient should be notified as soon as possible when the decision has been made to defer the patient.
- The patient should be rebooked for the next available clinic list. If immediate allocation of a new date is not possible at the time of postponement, a new date must be allocated within 48 hours. Confirmation of the new date must be made in writing to the patient and the referring practitioner (see: *Specialist Outpatient Letter Suite* – Appendix IV).
- Patients that live a considerable distance from the facility should be encouraged to contact the hospital prior to commencing travel.

Policy Statement – Specialist Outpatient Removal

All facilities will manage processes to ensure patients are removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list according to the appropriate 'Reasons for Removal', and under the authorisation of the attending medical officer or executive director of medical services.

Removal of patients from the specialist outpatient waiting list or appointment schedule is necessary to maintain the accuracy of specialist outpatient information systems. This may occur when the patient has attended the allocated appointment/clinic or for other reasons defined below.

Hospitals are to implement procedures to ensure that removal of patients from the specialist outpatient waiting list or appointment schedule is in accordance with the reasons for removal.

Reasons for Removal

Patients may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list or appointment schedule when the patient has completed the episode of care associated with the specialist outpatient clinic.

Other reasons for removal must be at the authorisation of a medical officer or executive director of medical services, and may apply in the following circumstances:

- The patient requests to be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list;
- The attending medical officer requests that the patient be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list;
- Clinical review, exception reporting or administrative audit ascertains that the specialist outpatient attendance is no longer required;
- Advice has been received that the patient has been, or will be attending elsewhere;
- The patient has on two consecutive occasions:
 - declined the offer of a clinic appointment without valid reason;
 - not presented for clinic appointment and has not contacted the hospital;
 - not responded to audit measures (letter/phone) and cannot be located;
- The patient is deceased.

Process

The reason for removal from the specialist outpatient waiting list or appointment schedule is updated on the patient's waiting list system record and in the medical record.

The patient and the referring practitioner are to be notified in writing when the patient is removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list for non-response to audit, non-presentation, or repeated declining of appointment offers (see: *Specialist Outpatient Letter Suite* – Appendix IV).

Policy Statement – Specialist Outpatient Communication

All facilities will implement and maintain appropriate communication processes to notify patients and relevant health care professionals of significant specialist outpatient waiting list information.

Appropriate and timely communication is vitally important when providing information about specialist outpatient services to patients, referring practitioners, and health care professionals. The communication process and method of transmission should be flexible according to the information required and the intended audience.

Methods of Communication

The communication process to notify patients and relevant health care professionals of significant specialist outpatient services information needs to be inclusive of:

- Different styles to suit the message and audience – written, telephone, video, face-to-face;
- Special needs – interpretation, translation, language, cultural differences;
- Privacy requirements (see website: <http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/privacy/>).

Information to Patients

Designated staff are responsible for providing information to the patient regarding:

- placement on the specialist outpatient waiting list;
- attending medical officer (when allocated);
- time, date and location of appointments, and what to bring (e.g. x-rays, investigation results, medications);
- investigations to be performed before the clinic appointment;

- the need to visit the referring practitioner for clinical review;
- course of action if changes occur in clinical condition;
- course of action to confirm, cancel or rebook appointments;
- rights – eg. free hospital treatment, respect, free interpreter, etc; and responsibilities – eg. to advise of any change of name, address or telephone number, or inability to attend appointments. (see website: <http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/hsd/procurement/quality/16912ppc.htm>)
- special requirements (if applicable);
- reasons for removal.

Patients registered on a specialist outpatient waiting list will be formally notified of:

- placement on the waiting list (see: *Specialist Outpatient Letter Suite* – Appendix IV).
- appointment offer (see: *Specialist Outpatient Letter Suite* – Appendix IV).
- postponement (see: *Specialist Outpatient Letter Suite* – Appendix IV).
- failure to attend an appointment (see: *Specialist Outpatient Letter Suite* – Appendix IV).
- removal from waiting list (see: *Specialist Outpatient Letter Suite* – Appendix IV).

Documentation of patient correspondence will be retained in the patient's medical record.

Special Note – Patients from Department of Corrective Services

Correctional Centre, Watch House, and secure mental health facility patients are accorded the treatment available to all patients. However, for security reasons, the patient and their relatives must not be informed of specialist outpatient clinic appointment details.

- The patient may be advised that at some time in the future they may attend a facility for specialist outpatient clinic appointment.
- Details of dates for specialist outpatient appointments are to be directly conveyed to the delegate from the Department of Corrective Services or appropriate authority.

Information to Referring Practitioners

Accessing clinic

Prior to referring patients for consultation in specialist outpatient clinics, referring practitioners may request access to information about the:

- status of specialist outpatient waiting lists;
- types of specialities offered;
- estimated waiting times.

Designated staff should respond to information requests made by referring practitioners, to support the achievement of timely clinical outcomes and effective referral practices.

If a letter of referral is received for a service/specialty that is not provided at a facility, a letter will be forwarded to the patient and the referring practitioner informing them that the service is not available and the need to arrange appropriate transfer of the referral. The original letter of referral will be retained in the patient's medical record with a copy of the correspondence to patient and referring practitioner.

Waiting for appointment allocation

Designated staff are responsible for coordinating information to the referring practitioner about:

- patient placement on the specialist outpatient waiting list;
- clinical review of the patient whilst waiting for specialist outpatient appointment;
- notifying the hospital about any significant changes in the patient's condition;
- date and nature of appointment (and any changes or postponements);

- special requirements (if applicable);
- reasons for removal.

Requisite correspondence

The referring practitioner will be formally notified of:

- return of referral (see: *Specialist Outpatient Letter Suite* – Appendix IV).
- placement of a patient on the specialist outpatient waiting list (see: *Specialist Outpatient Letter Suite* – Appendix IV).
- appointment details (see: *Specialist Outpatient Letter Suite* – Appendix IV).
- failure to attend a patient appointment (see: *Specialist Outpatient Letter Suite* – Appendix IV).
- postponement of a patient appointment (see: *Specialist Outpatient Letter Suite* – Appendix IV).
- removal of a patient from the waiting list (see: *Specialist Outpatient Letter Suite* – Appendix IV).

Where the referring practitioner is a medical officer within the hospital (eg. emergency department, other specialist outpatient clinic or inpatient unit), the above information must be provided to the patient's nominated general practitioner. The hospital must also have in place processes to allow medical officers within the hospital to be informed about estimated waiting times within the hospital.

Liaison with Referring/General Practitioners

Continued contact with the Referring/General Practitioner during the term of the consultative period (episode of care) is vital to ensure that the collaborative management of the patient is maintained. Contact may be made through a letter, fax, email or telephone.

Documentation of referring practitioner correspondence will be retained in the patient's medical record.

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APPENDIX I

Roles and Responsibilities

Policy Framework for Specialist Outpatient Services

Specialist Outpatient Services Policy Framework

Roles and Responsibilities

Commitment of a number of key players within the Specialist Outpatient setting is vital. From the patient's initial consultation with a General Practitioner through to Outpatient appointment, admission, treatment and discharge, it is essential that all team members be aware of and understand their particular role and responsibilities. It is acknowledged that waiting time management practices vary between facilities and that one person may undertake several roles.

Patient

The patient is to be requested to:

- Advise the hospital of any change in intention to attend the Specialist Outpatient clinic appointment.
- Advise the hospital of any change in intention to remain on the Specialist Outpatient appointment waiting list.
- Advise the hospital of any changes to their contact details.
- Provide the hospital with as many contact details as possible.
- Attend the procedures and investigations arranged and follow any advice outlined in the information provided by the hospital and treating medical officer.
- Advise the hospital if they are going to be unavailable for periods of time, or for a scheduled appointment.
- Advise their general practitioner if their condition deteriorates or alters whilst waiting for an appointment.

Referring/General Practitioner

The Referring/General Practitioner is requested to:

- Arrange referral for the patient to a Specialist Outpatient clinic appointment.
- Provide an appropriate and adequate referral letter to the Specialist Outpatient clinic.
- Perform investigations pertinent to the patient's condition, which will assist the triage process for clinic appointment allocation.
- Provide additional information about the patient or their condition, such as identifying any pre-existing conditions affecting the patient's care and/or management.
- Liaise with the specialist clinics or the allocated specialist if there is a change in the clinical priority of the patient's condition after referral, whilst awaiting appointment allocation.

Specialist Outpatient Services

The Specialist Outpatient Services will:

- Ensure receipt of all referral letters are recorded, charted and triaged in a timely manner.
- Ensure information regarding appointments, attendance, waiting list placement, patient and Referring/General Practitioner responsibilities are conveyed to the patient and the Referring/General Practitioner within Five (5) days of receipt of the referral letter.

- Liaise with the Referring/General Practitioners to ensure awareness of services available at the hospital specialist clinics.
- Liaise with the Referring/General Practitioners to ensure appropriate and adequate information is received in referral letters to expedite appropriate triage and appointment/waiting list allocation.
- Ensure Specialist Outpatient waiting lists are maintained and audited as per policy.
- Ensure Elective Surgery waiting lists are available for consultants to review at each clinic attendance. Ensure alteration and selections are conveyed to the booking office accurately and concisely.
- Assist with the accurate collation of data to provide occasion of service figures and monthly data requirements by Corporate Office Queensland Health, to meet state and commonwealth information and reporting requirements.
- Liaise with the Elective Surgery Coordinator/Liaison Officer and/or Elective Surgery Booking Office to ensure that patients who may require elective surgery are allocated to the appropriate medical officer/clinic with the shortest waiting time.
- Assist with the allocation of clinical review appointments for Long Wait Elective Surgery patients.
- Assist with the accurate collection of data to ascertain conversion rates between specialist clinics and the elective surgery waiting list and throughput.

Medical Officers

All Medical Officers will:

- Ensure patients are provided with accurate information related to their condition and treatment.
- Ensure the Referring/General Practitioner is informed of the patient's progress and treatment during care and at the time of discharge from the episode of care.
- Discharge patients back to their referring/general practitioner once the episode of care is completed or when another practitioner can more appropriately provide the service.
- Ensure adequate notification (minimum of 4 weeks) is received by Specialist Outpatient clinics of planned leave. Medical/Surgical Executive in consultation with the Specialist or Consultant Physician will provide instructions to the Nurse in Charge of Specialist Outpatient Clinics (or the nominated delegate) as to relief arrangements and/or cancellation, rescheduling, reduction of clinic numbers.
- Contact the Nurse in Charge of Specialist Outpatient Clinics (or the nominated delegate) as soon as practicable when unplanned incidents demand absence from the scheduled clinic.
- Ensure Specialist Outpatient clinic activity correlates with any elective surgery activity.

Specialty Directors/Consultants (or appointed delegates) will:

- Ensure all referral letters to clinic/specialty are triaged, categorised and prioritised in a timely manner and according to policy.
- Determine actions for rescheduling of patients appointments in the event of absence from scheduled clinics. Instructions in relation to relief arrangements and/or cancellation, rescheduling, reduction of clinic numbers should be relayed to the Nurse in Charge of Specialist Outpatient Clinics (or the nominated delegate).
- Liaise with nursing staff at the clinic to determine further clinical action re patients who fail to attend for their outpatient appointment.

Elective Surgery Coordinator/Liaison Officer

The Elective Surgery Coordinator/Liaison Officer will:

- Liaise with Specialist Outpatients services to ensure that patients who may require elective surgery are allocated to the appropriate medical officer with the shortest waiting time.
- In consultation with the accountable medical officer for elective surgery, conduct regular clinical validation of patients who have exceeded their clinical urgency waiting time and report results to management.
- Liaise with the Specialist Outpatient services to coordinate appointments for clinical review of 'long wait' patients and patients who require re-evaluation due to a change in their condition
- Ensure elective surgery waiting list reports are available for perusal by the Specialist or Consultant Physician and their designated delegates to review at all Specialist Outpatient clinics.

Specialty Directors/ Divisional/Institute Chairs

The Specialty Director or Divisional/Institute Chair will:

- Ensure compliance with the Policy Framework for Specialist Outpatient Services.
- Monitor performance of the specialty unit, identify barriers to efficient management, assist in the formulation and facilitate the implementation of strategies for improvement, in consultation with Specialist Outpatient management.
- Ensure all referral letters received are triaged and categorised appropriately by a Specialist or Consultant Physician, or a designated officer following a defined triaging protocol as per Queensland Health policy.

Hospital Executive/ District Managers

The Hospital Executive/District Manager will:

- Ensure that mechanisms are in place to implement the Policy Framework for Specialist Outpatient Services.
- Promote efficient and effective waiting list and appointment scheduling management. This includes the provision of adequate facilities, staff and work environment to facilitate the management of patients provided with a Specialist Outpatient appointment or placed on the Specialist Outpatient waiting list.

Zonal Management

Zonal Management will:

- Ensure that mechanisms are in place to implement the Policy Framework for Specialist Outpatient Services.
- Promote efficient and effective management of Specialist Outpatients by monitoring districts on individual hospital performance.

Queensland Health

Queensland Health will:

- Ensure efficient and effective management of the Specialist Outpatient service by the ongoing development, evaluation and regular review of the Policy Framework for Specialist Outpatient Services.

- Monitor hospital performance, assist in the identification of barriers to efficient Specialist Outpatient management and advice of implications.
- Assist in the development of strategies for improvement as required.
- Ensure system wide equity of access for patients to meet their clinical needs, by monitoring occasions of service, number of attendance, 'failed to attend' rates and waiting list management performance indicators.
- Collect and disseminate statewide waiting list information.
- Continue to commit necessary resources to improve the health of the people of Queensland.
- Develop, maintain and support information systems, which facilitate the effective management of Specialist Outpatient services in Queensland hospitals.

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APPENDIX II

Risk Assessment Scenario

Policy Framework for Specialist Outpatient Services

SAMPLE RISK ASSESSMENT SCENARIO FOR SPECIALIST OUTPATIENT SERVICES

Specialist Outpatient Scenario:

A referral letter is received in the Specialist Outpatient Clinic, and is assessed and categorised by a member of the Department. Information contained within the referral letter is inadequate, however the assessor places the person on the Specialist Outpatient waiting list without recognising the urgency for appointment (due to unchecked missing information). Worst case scenario – patient with malignant disease not seen in reasonable time.

| Risk Description | Risk Assessment | | Risk Rating | Current Controls /Treatments | Extra Treatment /Controls Required | Officer Responsible for Treatment/Controls | Time Frame | Reassessment of Risk Rating | Monitoring |
|---|--|------------|-------------|---|---|--|------------|-----------------------------|--|
| | Consequence | Likelihood | | | | | | | |
| Referral letter received with inadequate information, no referral and triage protocols in place to ensure patient accesses treatment within a suitable timeframe. | Adverse Clinical Incident: Major Outrage: Minor Management: Moderate | Likely | Very High | All letters registered on information system upon receipt Member of Specialist Outpatient staff to triage referral letters Patient offered an appointment or placed on waiting list | Communication to referring practitioners re information required in referral letters Protocols for triaging letters by designated and trained personnel Correspondence to referring practitioner and patient re offer of appointment or placement on waiting list | Accountable medical officer for Specialist Outpatients Nurse Unit Manager of Specialist Outpatient Services | Immediate | Medium | Regular survey of Specialists re quality of triage Liaison with referring practitioners re requisite information Ad hoc chart audits to analyse triage suitability based on provisional vs actual diagnosis Analysis of time of receipt of referral to time of consultation |

| RISK ASSESSMENT – FACTOR OF CONSEQUENCE | | |
|---|------------|--|
| Level | Descriptor | Example detail description |
| 1 | Negligible | No injury or harm, ~ 1% of monthly budget |
| 2 | Minor | Minimal harm, ~ 2% of monthly budget |
| 3 | Moderate | Loss of function, major harm, ~ 5% of monthly budget |
| 4 | Major | Loss of Life, ~ 10% of monthly budget |
| 5 | Extreme | Multiple Deaths, ~ 15% of monthly budget |

| RISK ASSESSMENT – FACTOR OF LIKELIHOOD | | |
|--|----------------|---|
| Level | Descriptor | Description |
| 1 | Rare | The event may occur only in exceptional circumstances |
| 2 | Unlikely | The event is not expected to occur |
| 3 | Possible | The event might occur at some time |
| 4 | Likely | The event will probably occur at least once |
| 5 | Almost certain | The event will occur in most circumstances |

RISK DETERMINATION MATRIX

| | Consequence | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | Negligible = 1 | Minor = 2 | Moderate = 3 | Major = 4 | Extreme = 5 |
| Likelihood | | | | | |
| Rare = 1 | Low (1) | Low (2) | Low (3) | Medium (4) | Medium (5) |
| Unlikely = 2 | Low (2) | Medium (4) | Medium (6) | High (8) | High (10) |
| Possible = 3 | Low (3) | Medium (6) | High (9) | Very High (12) | Very High (15) |
| Likely = 4 | Medium (4) | High (8) | Very High (12) | Very High (16) | Extreme (20) |
| Almost certain = 5 | Medium (5) | High (10) | Very High (15) | Extreme (20) | Extreme (25) |

Low Risk: Manage by routine procedures

Medium Risk: Manage by specific monitoring or response procedures

High Risk: Senior management action needed

Very High Risk: Detailed research and management planning required

Extreme Risk: Immediate action required

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APPENDIX III

Specialist Outpatient Referral Form (Sample)

Policy Framework for Specialist Outpatient Services



Hospital

New Patient Referral Form

For referring practitioner use for public & private patients

UR Number:

Surname:

Given Name:

Date of Birth: / /

Affix patient identification label here

TO ENSURE TIMELY APPOINTMENTS, PLEASE COMPLETE ALL SECTIONS OF FORM.
INCOMPLETE FORMS WILL BE RETURNED

Patient Identification

Referral date: / / Surname: Given Name: Date of Birth: / /

Address: _____ Day time phone number: () _____

Mobile phone number: _____ After hours phone number: () _____

Please advise all patients to bring Medicare card when presenting to hospital. Medicare ineligible patients will incur a fee for appointments / emergency treatment provided, payable on presentation.

Medicare number:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

 Exp Date: / / Medicare ID Reference No:

Next of kin: _____ Contact Ph No: _____

Is an interpreter service required for the patient's appointment? YES / NO - *please circle*

If yes, please specify language:

Referral to:

☐ Emergency Department

I have contacted a hospital staff member YES / NO

Contact Name:

Contact Date and Time: ____/____/____ : ____ am / pm

Outpatient Department

☐ Public

Clinic Type

☐ Private

Consultant (name **must** be provided)

Reason for Referral / Provisional Diagnosis

Relevant Clinical History / Examination (pls attach patient summary if required)

Relevant investigations / X-Rays – Please ensure your patient brings relevant X-rays to their appointment

Please attach reports (if available) ☐ Haematology ☐ Biochemistry ☐ Radiology ☐ Other (specify)

Medications (please attach patient summary if required)

Drug: _____ Dose: _____ Frequency: _____

Drug: _____ Dose: _____ Frequency: _____

Drug: _____ Dose: _____ Frequency: _____

Allergies:

Referring Doctor (Please print clearly or affix stamp)

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: / / Address:

Phone Number: () Fax Number:

Email Address: _____@_____

APPENDIX IV

Specialist Outpatient Services Letter Suite

Policy Framework for Specialist Outpatient Services

Specialist Outpatient Services Policy Framework

Letter Suite Briefing Note

The letters contained in the Specialist Outpatient Services Policy Framework Letter Suite have been approved for use by the Senior Executive Director of Health Services. They have received endorsement from the Offices of the Director General and the Minister for Health.

The Letter Suite is an integral part of the policy framework. As such, the letters are the only recognised and standardised form of statewide written communication to be forwarded to patients and referring practitioners concerning appointment scheduling and waiting list management in Specialist Outpatient Departments.

A regular yearly review of the policy framework will be undertaken. A team of Specialist Outpatient experts will review written requests for any additions, alterations or deletions to the Letter Suite. Prior to any changes being endorsed, the panel will consider the application and suitability of requests from a statewide perspective.

Appointment Reschedule - Patient

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert patient name or guardian name]
[Insert patient or guardian address]

Dear [Insert patient]

UR Number [Insert patient UR number]

We wish to advise you that due to an unforeseen circumstance your appointment at the [Insert outpatient clinic name] clinic has had to be rescheduled.

[Insert additional information if required, for example:

- If hospital-initiated – reason for postponement
- If patient-initiated – may include 'Please note that this re-scheduling is in response to your request of [date of request by patient]'

A new appointment has been made for you at the:

[Insert outpatient clinic name] with [Insert attending medical officer]
Day: [Insert appointment day and date]
Time: [Insert appointment time]
Location: [Insert outpatient clinic location].

We regret any inconvenience this appointment change may cause.

Disappointingly, last year a large number of specialist outpatient appointments had to be cancelled because patients failed to attend. Hospital resources are valuable, so we require you to notify us if you are unable to keep your appointment. If you do not require the appointment, are unable to attend or have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter please phone [Insert designated officer or outpatient clinic name] on [Insert contact phone number] between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]

Executive Director of Medical Services

/ /

Office

Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal

Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone

Insert Phone No.

Fax

Insert Fax No.

NOTE: Queensland Health Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list. A new referral would then be required from your referring practitioner.

Appointment Reschedule – Referring Practitioner

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert referring practitioner name]
[Insert referring practitioner address]

Dear [Insert referring practitioner name]

Re: [Insert patient name]
[Insert patient address]
[Insert patient date of birth]

Our reference: [Insert patient UR number]

We wish to advise you that due to an unforeseen circumstance, the above patient's outpatient clinic appointment has had to be rescheduled.

[Insert additional information if required, for example:

- Reason for postponement
- Note whether patient-initiated or patient-initiated]

The following appointment has been made for your patient at the:

[Insert outpatient clinic name] with [Insert attending medical officer]

Day: [Insert appointment day and date]

Time: [Insert appointment time]

Location: [Insert outpatient clinic location].

The patient has been notified of this appointment change.

While your patient is waiting for their appointment, we would ask that you continue to monitor their progress and notify the hospital if there is a change in their condition.

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]

Executive Director of Medical Services

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal
Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
Insert Phone No.

Fax
Insert Fax No.

/ /

NOTE: Queensland Health Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list. A new referral would then be required.

Appointment Reschedule (no new date) Letter - Patient

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert patient name or guardian name]
[Insert patient or guardian address]

Dear [Insert patient]

UR Number [Insert patient UR number]

We wish to advise you that due to unforeseen circumstances your appointment at the [Insert outpatient clinic name] clinic has had to be rescheduled.

A new appointment date is currently being organised, and we will be in touch with you as soon as possible.

[Insert additional information if required, for example:

- If hospital-initiated – reason for postponement
- If patient-initiated – may include 'Please note that this re-scheduling is in response to your request of [date of request by patient]'

We regret any inconvenience this change may cause.

If your health condition requires attention before we make contact with you about your new appointment time, you will need to contact your general practitioner, or if urgent, attend the nearest hospital emergency department.

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]
Executive Director of Medical Services
/ /

NOTE: Queensland Health Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list. A new referral would then be required from your referring practitioner.

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
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Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
Insert Phone No.

Fax
Insert Fax No.

Appointment Reschedule (no new date) – Referring Practitioner

[Insert referring practitioner name]
[Insert referring practitioner address]

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

Dear Dr [Insert referring practitioner name]

Re: [Insert patient name]
[Insert patient address]
[Insert patient date of birth]

Our reference: [Insert patient UR number]

We wish to advise that due to an unforeseen circumstance, the above patient's outpatient clinic appointment has had to be rescheduled.

[Insert additional information if required, for example:

- Reason for postponement
- Note whether patient-initiated or patient-initiated]

A new appointment date will be organised as soon as possible and you will be advised.

The patient has been notified of these details.

While your patient is waiting for their appointment, we would ask that you continue to monitor their progress and notify the hospital if there is a change in their condition.

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]

Executive Director of Medical Services

/ /

NOTE: Queensland Health Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list. A new referral would then be required.

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
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Postal
Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
Insert Phone No.

Fax
Insert Fax No.

Booked Appointment (direct from referral) Letter – Patient

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert patient name or guardian name]
[Insert patient or guardian address]

Dear [Insert patient]

UR Number [Insert patient UR number]

We have received a referral letter from your doctor requesting an appointment for you to see a specialist in our hospital outpatient department.

The following outpatient appointment has been made for you at the:

[Insert outpatient clinic name] with [Insert attending medical officer]
Day: [Insert appointment day and date]
Time: [Insert appointment time]
Location: [Insert outpatient clinic location].

At the outpatient clinic your health condition will be reviewed and a specialist/expert will talk to you about your future care.

Disappointingly last year a large number of outpatient appointments were cancelled because patients failed to attend. Hospital resources are valuable, so we require you to notify us if you are unable to keep your appointment. If you do not require the appointment, are unable to attend or have any queries relating to information provided in the letter or your treatment please phone [Insert designated officer or outpatient clinic name] on [Insert contact phone number] between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Please bring this letter to your appointment, together with any relevant x-rays, scans (eg. CT or ultrasound scans), blood tests, a list of any medications you are currently taking, and your Medicare card. You must present your Medicare card or a fee will be payable.

On arrival, please report to the reception desk at [Insert outpatient clinic location]. Please be advised that some patients may encounter a delay due to unexpected circumstances.

If your condition requires attention prior to this appointment date you should contact your general practitioner, or if urgent, attend the nearest hospital emergency department.

Yours sincerely

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal
Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
Insert Phone No.

Fax
Insert Fax No.

[Insert Name]

Executive Director of Medical Services

/ /

NOTE: Queensland Health Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list. A new referral would then be required from your referring practitioner.

Office

Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal

Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone

Insert Phone No.

Fax

Insert Fax No.

**Booked Appointment (direct from referral) Letter -
Referring Practitioner**

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient
clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert referring practitioner name]
[Insert referring practitioner address]

Dear [Insert referring practitioner name]

Re: [Insert patient name]
[Insert patient address]
[Insert patient date of birth]

Our reference: [Insert patient UR number]

In response to your referral dated [Insert date of referral], the following appointment has been made for your patient at the:

[Insert outpatient clinic name] with [Insert attending medical officer]
Day: [Insert appointment day and date]
Time: [Insert appointment time]
Location: [Insert outpatient clinic location].

The patient has been notified of this appointment, and has been requested to contact the hospital if they are unable to attend.

They have also been advised that if their condition requires attention prior to this date they should contact you, or if urgent, they should attend their nearest hospital emergency department.

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]
Executive Director of Medical Services
/ /

NOTE: Queensland Health Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list. A new referral would then be required.

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal
Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
Insert Phone No.

Fax
Insert Fax No.

Booked Appointment (from waiting list) Letter - Patient

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert patient name or guardian name]
[Insert patient or guardian address]

Dear [Insert patient]

UR Number [Insert patient UR number]

Further to our previous correspondence, we are now able to offer you an appointment to see a specialist in our outpatient department.

The following outpatient appointment has been made for you at the:

[Insert outpatient clinic name] with [Insert attending medical officer]
Day: [Insert appointment day and date]
Time: [Insert appointment time]
Location: [Insert outpatient clinic location].

At the outpatient clinic your health condition will be reviewed and a specialist/expert will talk to you about your future care.

Disappointingly last year a large number of outpatient appointments were cancelled because patients failed to attend. Hospital resources are valuable, so we require you to notify us if you are unable to keep your appointment. If you do not require the appointment, are unable to attend or have any queries relating to information provided in the letter or your treatment please phone [Insert designated officer or outpatient clinic name] on [Insert contact phone number] between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Please bring this letter to your appointment, together with any relevant x-rays, scans (eg. CT or ultrasound scans), blood tests, a list of any medications you are currently taking, and your Medicare card. You must present your Medicare card or a fee will be payable.

On arrival, please report to the reception desk at [Insert outpatient clinic location]. Please be advised that some patients may encounter a delay due to unexpected circumstances.

If your condition requires attention prior to this appointment date you should contact your general practitioner, or if urgent, attend the nearest hospital emergency department.

Yours sincerely

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal
Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
Insert Phone No.

Fax
Insert Fax No.

[Insert Name]

Executive Director of Medical Services

/ /

NOTE: Queensland Health Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list. A new referral would then be required from your referring practitioner.

Booked Appointment (from waiting list – confirmation required) Letter - Patient

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert patient name or guardian name]
[Insert patient or guardian address]

Dear [Insert patient]

UR Number [Insert patient UR number]

Further to our previous correspondence, we are now able to offer you an appointment for you to see a specialist in our outpatient department.

The following outpatient appointment is available for you at the:

[Insert outpatient clinic name] with [Insert attending medical officer]
Day: [Insert appointment day and date]
Time: [Insert appointment time]
Location: [Insert outpatient clinic location].

At the outpatient clinic your health condition will be reviewed and a specialist/expert will talk to you about your future care.

Please contact [Insert designated officer or outpatient clinic name] on [Insert contact phone number] to confirm that you are able to attend the appointment, or to let us know if you do not require, or are unable to attend the appointment. We ask that you contact us at least one week before the appointment date, or the appointment will be allocated to another patient.

Disappointingly last year a large number of outpatient appointments were cancelled because patients failed to attend. Hospital resources are valuable, so we require you to notify us if you are unable to keep your appointment.

Following confirmation, please bring this letter to your appointment, together with any relevant x-rays, scans (eg. CT or ultrasound), blood tests, a list of any medications you are currently taking, and your Medicare card. You must present your Medicare card or a fee will be payable.

On arrival, please report to the reception desk at [Insert outpatient clinic location]. Please be advised that some patients may encounter a delay due to unexpected circumstances.

If your condition requires attention prior to this appointment date you should contact your general practitioner, or if urgent, attend the nearest hospital emergency department.

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal
Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
Insert Phone No.

Fax
Insert Fax No.

Yours sincerely

Insert Name

Executive Director of Medical Services

/ /

NOTE: Queensland Health Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list. A new referral would then be required from your referring practitioner.

Booked Appointment (from waiting list) Letter - Referring Practitioner

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert referring practitioner name]
[Insert referring practitioner address]

Dear Dr [Insert referring practitioner name]

Re: [Insert patient name]
[Insert patient address]
[Insert patient date of birth]

Our reference: [Insert patient UR number]

The abovementioned patient has now been issued an appointment to see a specialist in our outpatient department.

The following appointment has been made for your patient at the:

[Insert outpatient clinic name] with [Insert attending medical officer]
Day: [Insert appointment day and date]
Time: [Insert appointment time]
Location: [Insert outpatient clinic location].

While your patient is waiting for their appointment, we ask that you continue to monitor their progress and notify the hospital if there is a change in their condition.

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]
Executive Director of Medical Services
/ /

NOTE: Queensland Health Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list. A new referral would then be required.

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
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Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
Insert Phone No.

Fax
Insert Fax No.

Change of Attending Medical Officer Letter - Patient

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert patient name or guardian name]
[Insert patient or guardian address]

Dear [Insert patient]

UR Number [Insert patient UR number]

We wish to advise you that due to an unforeseen circumstance, the doctor you are now scheduled to see is [Insert attending medical officer] for any future appointments with the (insert outpatient clinic name) clinic.

[Insert additional information if required, for example:

- Confirm existing appointment details
- Advise next appointment details]

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]

Executive Director of Medical Services

/ /

NOTE: Queensland Health Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list. A new referral would then be required from your referring practitioner.

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal
Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
Insert Phone No.

Fax
Insert Fax No.

Change of Attending Medical Officer Letter - Referring Practitioner

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient clinic]

[Insert hospital name]

Telephone: [Tel No.]

Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert referring practitioner name]
[Insert referring practitioner address]

Dear Dr [Insert referring practitioner name]

Re: [Insert patient name]
[Insert patient address]
[Insert patient date of birth]

Our reference: [Insert patient UR number]

We wish to advise you that due to unforeseen circumstances, your patient has been assigned to [Insert attending medical officer] for future appointments with the [Insert outpatient clinic name] clinic.

Your patient has been notified of these details.

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]

Executive Director of Medical Services

/ /

NOTE: Queensland Health Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list. A new referral would then be required.

Office

Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal

Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone

Insert Phone No.

Fax

Insert Fax No.

Missed Appointment (not re-booked) Letter - Patient

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert patient name or guardian name]
[Insert patient or guardian address]

Dear [Insert patient name]

UR Number [Insert patient UR number]

Our records indicate that you did not attend an appointment at the [Insert outpatient clinic name] clinic on [Insert date of missed appointment].

It is important that any investigation or treatment continue to be monitored by a medical officer and that you attend scheduled appointments. We invite you to book another appointment by phoning the [Insert designated officer or outpatient clinic name] on [Insert contact number].

Disappointingly last year a large number of outpatient appointments were cancelled due because patients failed to attend. Hospital resources are valuable, so we require you to notify us if you are unable to keep your appointment.

Our Queensland Health Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures, may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list.

If you have not responded to this letter within 30 days, your name will be removed from the appointment schedule. You would then require a new referral from your general practitioner to be seen at the clinic.

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]

Executive Director of Medical Services

/ /

Office

Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal

Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone

Insert Phone No.

Fax

Insert Fax No.

Missed Appointment (not re-booked) Letter - Referring Practitioner

[Insert referring practitioner name]
[Insert referring practitioner address]

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

Dear Dr [Insert referring practitioner name]

Re: [Insert patient name]
[Insert patient address]
[Insert patient date of birth]

Our reference: [Insert patient UR number]

Recently, your patient was booked for a specialist outpatient appointment. Unfortunately, due to circumstances not known by the hospital, the patient failed to attend the hospital on the scheduled day of appointment.

To date the hospital has been unsuccessful in contacting the patient to arrange a new appointment. If all attempts at contacting the patient are unsuccessful within the next 30 days, the patient may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list as per the Queensland Health Policy.

Our Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures, may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list. A new referral would then be required.

Any assistance you could provide in contacting this patient would be appreciated.

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]

Executive Director of Medical Services

/ /

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal
Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
Insert Phone No.

Fax
Insert Fax No.

Missed Appointment (re-booked) Letter - Patient

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert patient name or guardian name]
[Insert patient or guardian address]

Dear [Insert patient name]

UR Number [Insert patient UR number]

Our records indicate that you did not attend an appointment at the [Insert outpatient clinic name] clinic on [Insert date of missed appointment]. As it is important that any investigation or treatment continue to be monitored, the attending medical officer has requested that a further appointment be made.

Your new outpatient appointment is on:

[Insert outpatient clinic name] with [Insert name of attending medical officer]

Day: [Insert appointment day and date]

Time: [Insert appointment time]

Location: [Insert outpatient clinic location].

At the outpatient clinic your health condition will be reviewed and a specialist/expert will talk to you about your future care.

Disappointingly last year a large number of outpatient appointments were cancelled because patients failed to attend. Hospital resources are valuable, so we require you to notify us if you are unable to keep your appointment. If you do not require the appointment, are unable to attend or have any queries relating to information provided in the letter or your treatment please phone [Insert designated officer or outpatient clinic name] on [Insert contact phone number] between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Please bring this letter to your appointment, together with any relevant x-rays, scans (eg. CT or ultrasound scans), blood tests, a list of any medications you are currently taking, and your Medicare card. You must present your Medicare card or a fee will be payable.

On arrival, please report to the reception desk at [Insert outpatient clinic location]. Please be advised that some patients may encounter a delay due to unexpected circumstances.

If your condition requires attention prior to this appointment date you should contact your general practitioner, or if urgent, attend the nearest hospital emergency department.

Yours sincerely

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal
Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
Insert Phone No.

Fax
Insert Fax No.

Insert Name

Executive Director of Medical Services

/ /

NOTE: Queensland Health Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list. A new referral would then be required from your referring practitioner.

Missed Appointment (re-booked) Letter - Referring Practitioner

[Insert referring practitioner name]
[Insert referring practitioner address]

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

Dear [Insert referring practitioner name]

Re: [Insert patient name]
[Insert patient address]
[Insert patient date of birth]

Our reference: [Insert patient UR number]

Our records indicate that the above patient failed to attend an appointment at the [Insert outpatient clinic name] clinic on [Insert date of missed appointment]. The attending medical officer has requested that a further appointment be made.

The following appointment has been made for your patient at the:

[Insert outpatient clinic name] with [Insert attending medical officer]
Day: [Insert appointment day and date]
Time: [Insert appointment time]
Location: [Insert outpatient clinic location].

While your patient is waiting for their appointment, please continue to monitor their progress and notify the hospital if there is a change in their condition.

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]
Executive Director of Medical Services
/ /

NOTE: Queensland Health Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list. A new referral would then be required.

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal
Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
Insert Phone No.

Fax
Insert Fax No.

**Referral Acknowledgment (expected long waiting time)
Letter – Category 2 Patient**

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert patient name or guardian name]
[Insert patient or guardian address]

Dear [Insert patient name]

UR Number [Insert patient UR number]

We have received a referral letter from your doctor requesting an appointment for you to attend the [Insert outpatient clinic name] clinic.

You have been placed on a specialist outpatient waiting list, and we will be in touch with you about an appointment as soon as a date becomes available.

From your GP/Specialist Referral you are currently prioritised as a Category 2 patient who requires a semi-urgent appointment. Generally, Category 2 patients are seen within 3 months. Please be assured our staff will endeavour to meet your needs as soon as possible.

Please contact us on the number listed above if:

- You change your name, address or phone number; or
- You no longer wish to have an appointment at this hospital.

The waiting period for this particular clinic is considerable at this time. We have notified your referring doctor of this, and suggest you contact them to discuss your treatment. You may wish to consider and discuss the following options with your general practitioner while you wait to be notified by us.

- The initiation of treatment pathways such as an exercise programme, nutrition plan, home and work modification, education and psychosocial support.
- Investigation of the availability of treatment options at other facilities within Queensland Health.

If your condition requires attention prior to this appointment date you should contact your general practitioner, or if urgent, attend the nearest hospital emergency department.

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal
Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
Insert Phone No.

Fax
Insert Fax No.

[Insert Name]

Executive Director of Medical Services

/ /

NOTE: Queensland Health Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list. A new referral would then be required from your referring practitioner.

**Referral Acknowledgment (expected long waiting time)
Letter – Category 3 Patient**

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient
clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert patient name or guardian name]
[Insert patient or guardian address]

Dear [Insert patient name]

UR Number [Insert patient UR number]

We have received a referral letter from your doctor requesting an appointment for you to attend the [Insert
outpatient clinic name] clinic.

You have been placed on a specialist outpatient waiting list, and we will be in touch with you about an appointment as soon as a date becomes available.

From your GP/Specialist Referral you are currently prioritised as a Category 3 patient who requires a routine appointment. Please be assured our staff will endeavour to meet your needs as soon as possible.

Please contact us on the number listed above if:

- You change your name, address or phone number; or
- You no longer wish to have an appointment at this hospital.

The waiting period for this particular clinic is considerable at this time. We have notified your referring doctor of this, and suggest you contact them to discuss your treatment. You may wish to consider and discuss the following options with your general practitioner while you wait to be notified by us.

- The initiation of treatment pathways such as an exercise programme, nutrition plan, home and work modification, education and psychosocial support.
- Investigation of the availability of treatment options at other facilities within Queensland Health.

If your condition requires attention prior to this appointment date you should contact your general practitioner, or if urgent, attend the nearest hospital emergency department.

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal
Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
Insert Phone No.

Fax
Insert Fax No.

Executive Director of Medical Services

/ /

NOTE: Queensland Health Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list. A new referral would then be required from your referring practitioner.

**Referral Acknowledgment (expected long waiting time)
Letter - Referring Practitioner**

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient
clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert referring practitioner name]
[Insert referring practitioner address]

Dear Dr [Insert referring practitioner name]

Our reference: [Insert patient UR number]

In response to your referral dated [Insert date of referral], the above patient has been placed on a waiting list for an appointment with [Insert outpatient clinic name] clinic.

The waiting list for this particular clinic is considerable at this time. While your patient is waiting for their appointment, we ask that you continue to monitor their progress and notify the hospital if there is a change in their condition.

It is recommended that the following be considered while your patient is waiting for the offer of an appointment:

- The initiation of treatment pathways such as an exercise programme, nutrition plan, home and work modification, education and psychosocial support.
- Investigation of the availability of treatment options at other facilities within Queensland Health.

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]

Executive Director of Medical Services

/ /

NOTE: Queensland Health Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list. A new referral would then be required.

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal
Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
Insert Phone No.

Fax
Insert Fax No.

**Referral Acknowledgment (placed on waiting list) Letter
– Category 2 Patient**

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient
clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert patient name or guardian name]
[Insert patient or guardian address]

Dear [Insert patient name]

UR Number [Insert patient UR number]

We have received a referral letter from your doctor requesting an appointment for you to attend the [Insert
outpatient clinic name] clinic.

You have been placed on a specialist outpatient waiting list, and we will be in touch with you about an appointment as soon as a date becomes available. From your GP/Specialist Referral you are currently prioritised as a Category 2 patient who requires a semi-urgent appointment.

Generally, category 2 patients are seen within 3 months. Please be assured our staff will endeavour to meet your needs as soon as possible.

Please contact us on the number listed above if:

- You change your name, address or phone number; or
- You no longer wish to have an appointment at this hospital.

You may wish to consider and explore the following options with your general practitioner whilst waiting for the offer of an appointment:

- The initiation of treatment pathways such as an exercise programme, nutrition plan, home and work modification, education and psychosocial support.
- Investigation of the availability of treatment options at other facilities within Queensland Health.

If your condition requires attention while you are waiting for an appointment date you should contact your general practitioner, or if urgent, attend the nearest hospital emergency department.

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal
Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
Insert Phone No.

Fax
Insert Fax No.

Insert Name

Executive Director of Medical Services

/ /

NOTE: Queensland Health Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list. A new referral would then be required from your referring practitioner.

**Referral Acknowledgment (placed on waiting list) Letter
– Category 3 Patient**

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient
clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert patient name or guardian name]
[Insert patient or guardian address]

Dear [Insert patient name]

UR Number [Insert patient UR number]

We have received a referral letter from your doctor requesting an appointment for you to attend the [Insert
outpatient clinic name] clinic.

You have been placed on a specialist outpatient waiting list, and we will be in touch with you about an appointment as soon as a date becomes available. From your GP/Specialist Referral you are currently prioritised as a Category 3 patient who requires a routine appointment.

Please be assured our staff will endeavour to meet your needs as soon as possible.

Please contact us on the number listed above if:

- You change your name, address or phone number; or
- You no longer wish to have an appointment at this hospital.

You may wish to consider and explore the following options with your general practitioner whilst waiting for the offer of an appointment:

- The initiation of treatment pathways such as an exercise programme, nutrition plan, home and work modification, education and psychosocial support.
- Investigation of the availability of treatment options at other facilities within Queensland Health.

If your condition requires attention while you are waiting for an appointment date you should contact your general practitioner, or if urgent, attend the nearest hospital emergency department.

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]

Executive Director of Medical Services

/ /

Office

Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

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Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone

Insert Phone No.

Fax

Insert Fax No.

NOTE: Queensland Health Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list. A new referral would then be required from your referring practitioner.

**Referral Acknowledgment (placed on waiting list) Letter -
Referring Practitioner**

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient
clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert referring practitioner name]
[Insert referring practitioner address]

Dear Dr [Insert referring practitioner name]

Re: [Insert patient name]
[Insert patient address]
[Insert patient date of birth]

Our reference: [Insert patient UR number]

In response to your referral dated [Insert date of referral], the above patient has been placed on a specialist outpatient waiting list for an appointment with the [Insert outpatient clinic name] clinic. An appointment will be offered as soon as a date becomes available.

While your patient is waiting for their appointment, we ask that you continue to monitor their progress and notify the hospital if there is a change in their condition.

It is recommended that the following be considered whilst your patient is waiting for the offer of an appointment:

- The initiation of treatment pathways such as an exercise programme, nutrition plan, home and work modification, education and psychosocial support.
- Investigation of the availability of treatment options at other facilities within Queensland Health.

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]

Executive Director of Medical Services

/ /

NOTE: Queensland Health Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two letters may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list. A new referral would be required.

Office

Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
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Insert Postal Address 2

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Insert Phone No.

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Insert Fax No.

Reminder Letter - Patient

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert patient name or guardian name]
[Insert patient or guardian address]

Dear [Insert patient]

UR Number [Insert patient UR number]

Queensland Health would like to remind you of your pending outpatient appointment at the:

[Insert outpatient clinic name] with [Insert attending medical officer]
Day: [Insert appointment day and date]
Time: [Insert appointment time]
Location: [Insert outpatient clinic location].

Disappointingly last year a large number of outpatient appointments were cancelled because patients failed to attend. Hospital resources are valuable, so we require you to notify us if you are unable to keep your appointment. If you do not require the appointment, are unable to attend or have any queries relating to information provided in the letter or your treatment please phone [Insert designated officer or outpatient clinic name] on [Insert contact phone number] between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Please bring this letter to your appointment, together with any relevant x-rays, scans (eg. CT or ultrasound scans), blood tests, a list of any medications you are currently taking, and your Medicare card. You must present your Medicare card or a fee will be payable.

On arrival, please report to the reception desk at [Insert outpatient clinic location]. Please be advised that some patients may encounter a delay due to unexpected circumstances.

If your condition requires attention prior to this appointment date you should contact your general practitioner, or if urgent, attend the nearest hospital emergency department.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]
Executive Director of Medical Services
/ /

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal
Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
Insert Phone No.

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Insert Fax No.

NOTE: Queensland Health Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list. A new referral would then be required from your referring practitioner.

**Removal from Waiting List (2 missed appointments)
Letter – Patient**

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient
clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert patient name or guardian name]
[Insert patient or guardian address]

Dear [Insert patient name]

UR Number [Insert patient UR number]

Our records indicate that you did not attend an appointment at the [Insert outpatient clinic name] clinic on [Insert date of first missed appointment] and again on [Insert date of second missed appointment].

Our Queensland Health Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures, may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list. A new referral would then be required from your general practitioner.

As such, we wish to advise you that your name has been removed from the appointment schedule and no further appointment will be made.

If you require further treatment for your condition we would urge you to contact your general practitioner.

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]
Executive Director of Medical Services
/ /

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal
Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
Insert Phone No.

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Insert Fax No.

**Removal from Waiting List (2 missed appointments)
Letter - Referring Practitioner**

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient
clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert referring practitioner name]
[Insert referring practitioner address]

Dear Dr [Insert referring practitioner name]

Re: [Insert patient name]
[Insert patient address]
[Insert patient date of birth]

Our reference: [Insert patient UR number]

The above mentioned patient has failed to attend two outpatient appointments and as per our Queensland Health Policy we have removed the patient from the Appointment schedule and notified the patient of such. Should any further consultations be required, a new referral would need to be supplied.

Our policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures, may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list.

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]
Executive Director of Medical Services
/ /

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal
Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
Insert Phone No.

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**Removal from Waiting List (not responding to audit)
Letter - Patient**

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient
clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert patient name or guardian name]
[Insert patient or guardian address]

Dear [Insert patient name]

UR Number [Insert patient UR number]

Our records indicate that you have not responded to two audit letters requesting confirmation that you still require an appointment at the [Insert outpatient clinic name] clinic.

As such, we wish to advise that your name has been removed from the appointment schedule and specialist outpatient waiting list. A copy of your referral has been returned to your doctor.

As stated in our previous correspondence, our Queensland Health Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures, may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list. A new referral would then be required from your general practitioner.

If you require further treatment for your condition, we would urge you to contact your general practitioner.

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]

Executive Director of Medical Services

/ /

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal
Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
Insert Phone No.

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Insert Fax No.

**Removal from Waiting List (not responding to audit)
Letter - Referring Practitioner**

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient
clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert referring practitioner name]
[Insert referring practitioner address]

Dear Dr [Insert referring practitioner name]

Re: [Insert patient name]
[Insert patient address]
[Insert patient date of birth]

Our reference: [Insert patient UR number]

The above mentioned patient has failed to respond to two audit letters and as per our Queensland Health Policy we have removed the patient from the waiting list. Should any further consultations be required, a new referral would need to be supplied.

Our policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures, may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list.

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]
Executive Director of Medical Services
/ /

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

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Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
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Insert Fax No.

Removal from Waiting List (patient request) Letter – Patient

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert patient name or guardian name]
[Insert patient or guardian address]

Dear [Insert patient name]

UR Number [Insert patient UR number]

Our records indicate that you have requested to be removed from the [Insert outpatient clinic name] clinic waiting list.

We wish to advise you that your name has now been removed from the appointment schedule and specialist outpatient waiting list. A copy of your referral has been returned to your doctor.

If you require further treatment for your condition, we urge you to contact your general practitioner.

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]
Executive Director of Medical Services
/ /

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
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Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
Insert Phone No.

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Insert Fax No.

**Removal from Waiting List (patient request) Letter -
Referring Practitioner**

[Insert referring practitioner name]
[Insert referring practitioner address]

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient
clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

Dear Dr [Insert referring practitioner name]

Re: [Insert patient name]
[Insert patient address]
[Insert patient date of birth]

Our reference: [Insert patient UR number]

The above mentioned patient has requested that they be removed from the waiting list for the [Insert
outpatient clinic name] clinic and we have now notified the patient they are no longer on the list.

No further appointment will be made unless we receive a new referral.

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient
staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]
Executive Director of Medical Services
/ /

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
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Insert Postal Address 1
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Phone
Insert Phone No.

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Insert Fax No.

Request for More Information - Referring Practitioner

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient clinic]

[Insert hospital name]

Telephone: [Tel No.]

Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert referring practitioner name]

[Insert referring practitioner address]

Dear [Insert referring practitioner name]

Re: [Insert patient name]

[Insert patient address]

[Insert patient date of birth]

Our reference: [Insert patient UR number]

We have received a referral from you on [Insert date referral received], requesting an outpatient consultation for the above patient.

So that we may prioritise your patient's referral appropriately, we ask that you forward the following additional information as soon as possible.

[Insert additional information required]

Should you have any queries relating to the advice provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]

Executive Director of Medical Services

/ /

Office

Queensland Health

Insert Office Street Address 1

Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal

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Insert Postal Address 2

Phone

Insert Phone No.

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Service Unavailable Letter - Patient

[Insert patient name or guardian name]
[Insert patient or guardian address]

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

Dear [Insert patient name]

UR Number [Insert patient UR number]

We have received a referral letter from your doctor requesting an appointment for you to attend the [Insert outpatient clinic name] clinic.

We have notified your referring doctor that the service required is not available at this hospital, and have advised him/her of other referral options. Your doctor is considering these alternatives and we suggest you contact your doctor to discuss your treatment.

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]
Executive Director of Medical Services
/ /

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal
Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
Insert Phone No.

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Insert Fax No.

Service Unavailable Letter - Referring Practitioner

[Insert referring practitioner name]
[Insert referring practitioner address]

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

Dear [Insert referring practitioner name]

Re: [Insert patient name]
[Insert patient address]
[Insert patient date of birth]

Our reference: [Insert patient UR number]

We have received a referral from you requesting an appointment for the above mentioned patient to attend the [Insert outpatient clinic name] clinic.

We regret to inform you that this service is not available at this hospital.

We have been in touch with your patient and suggested they contact you to discuss alternative arrangements for their treatment.

Should you have any queries relating to the information provided in this letter, Queensland Health services or your patient's treatment, please contact our Outpatient staff on the number listed above between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]
Executive Director of Medical Services
/ /

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal
Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
Insert Phone No.

Fax
Insert Fax No.

Specialist Outpatient Waiting List Audit Letter - Patient

Enquiries to: [Insert name of outpatient clinic]
[Insert hospital name]
Telephone: [Tel No.]
Facsimile: [Fax No.]

[Insert patient name or guardian name]
[Insert patient or guardian address]

Dear [Insert patient name]

UR Number [Insert patient UR number]

We are currently reviewing our specialist outpatient waiting list and appointment bookings. Our hospital records show that your name is on a waiting list for an appointment at the [Insert outpatient clinic name] clinic.

We wish to check the accuracy of our records, and would appreciate your confirmation that you still require this appointment. Please answer the following questions and return in the reply paid envelope.

Do you still require an appointment at the [Insert outpatient clinic name] clinic?

☐ YES

☐ NO

If yes, are you available at short notice?

☐ YES

☐ NO

If no, please indicate the reason.

☐ Condition resolved

☐ Treatment elsewhere

When was the last time you saw your general practitioner?

Please confirm your appointment intentions by returning this letter to the hospital within 30 days. If you have any queries, please contact the [Insert designated officer or outpatient clinic name] on [Insert contact phone number] between 9 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.

We appreciate your assistance in this matter.

Yours sincerely

[Insert Name]

Executive Director of Medical Services

/ /

Office
Queensland Health
Insert Office Street Address 1
Insert Office Street Address 2

Postal
Insert Postal Address 1
Insert Postal Address 2

Phone
Insert Phone No.

Fax
Insert Fax No.

NOTE: Queensland Health Policy states that any patient who declines two offers of appointment or fails to respond to two audit measures may be removed from the specialist outpatient waiting list. A new referral would then be required from your referring practitioner.

APPENDIX V

Glossary of Terms

Policy Framework for

Specialist Outpatient Services

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accountable Officer

The designated officer, as nominated by the District Manager, accountable for all aspects of the management and provision of specialist outpatient services at a specific facility.

Clinical review (Specialist Outpatients)

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.

Elective/planned admission

Care that, in the opinion of the treating clinician, can be delayed for at least 24 hours.

New Case

A new attendance is where a clinician carries out a full assessment consultation with the patient. It is also:

- the initial of a series of attendances to a clinic at which the patient has never been seen before, or
- the only (single) attendance at a clinic, or
- referred for an attendance to a clinic that the patient has attended previously, but a period greater than 12 months has elapsed since the last consultation.

Non-admitted patient

A patient who does not undergo a hospital's formal admission process. There are three categories of non-admitted patient:

- Emergency Department patient;
- Specialist Outpatient;
- Other non-admitted patient (Treated by hospital employees off the hospital site – includes community/outreach services).

Postponement

A scheduled appointment or proposed admission and /or procedure is delayed or deferred to a later time and/or date.

Referral

A written request for a specialist consultation.

Referral Source

Identity of the individual or organisation providing the referral to an outpatient clinic.

Review / Repeat Case

A repeat attendance relates to all subsequent visits following the new attendance that occurs during an active referral period.

Specialist outpatient clinic

Specialist outpatient services provided by a specialist or expert clinician that is recognised by the relevant professional college, board or association.

Specialist outpatient waiting list

Is a register, which contains essential details about patients who are awaiting a specialist outpatient clinic appointment.

Triage

The determination of urgency category of the patient's need for medical consultation.

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APPENDIX VI

Bibliography

Policy Framework for Specialist Outpatient Services

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