
Transit Lounges

Initiative Type

Model of Care

Status

Close

Added

19 July 2017

Last updated

30 January 2025

URL

<https://clinicaexcellence.qld.gov.au/improvement-exchange/transit-lounges>

Summary

A transit lounge is a dedicated area preferably near the hospital entrance that helps timely transfer of patients to increase emergency department (ED) and ward bed availability. It can be used as an interim waiting area for patients waiting discharge, bed allocation on admission, or an outpatient appointment.

Key dates

Jul 2009

Implementation sites

Queensland Health Emergency Departments

Partnerships

Queensland Ambulance Service

Key Contacts

Laureen Hines

0004

paul.blee.hiu

Director Statewide Access

Healthcare Improvement Unit

(07) 3328 9937

Laureen.Hines@health.qld.gov.au

Aim

Improving patient flow by ensuring the patient receives safe and appropriate nursing care in the right

environment, at the same time enabling inpatient beds to be ready and waiting for acutely ill patients.

Benefits

Transit lounges is beneficial when:

- access block from ED to wards
- large numbers of patients waiting in acute beds for discharge
- large volume of patient throughput

Background

Transit Lounges or Transit Care Hubs were developed to accommodate patients waiting for an appointment, admission or discharge, to ensure patients receive safe and appropriate care in the right environment, while enabling inpatient beds to be available for acutely ill patients.

Solutions Implemented

A variety of Transit/Discharge Lounges have been implemented across service delivery sites, dependent upon local requirements. Some services discharge the patient prior to their arrival in the Transit Lounge, others discharge the patient when they leave the Transit/Discharge Lounge.

Evaluation and Results

An overall formal evaluation of Transit/Discharge Lounges has not been undertaken, however local sites may have evaluated locally, particularly with respect to reducing length of stay or time in emergency department.

Lessons Learnt

Transit lounge for effective discharge

- Facilitates the timely discharge of patients who were previously waiting in an acute bed for

discharge medications, discharge summaries, transport, test results etc.

- Frees up the bed in the ward for the next patient, thus alleviating access block in the ED
- Patients who are otherwise well are not treated as sick in the ward
- Reduced hospital average length of stay
- Can also manage the avoidable admissions of patients by being the link between the hospital and options for care in the community. Eg. Hospital in the home, hospital in the nursing home, community services

Transit lounge for outpatients / day surgery patients

- Allows patients to enter the hospital system at an earlier time if travelling from a rural/remote area or has been transported by an ambulance
- Pre-appointment work up can be done at the transit lounge
- Patient is not occupying an acute bed unnecessarily

Transit lounge for admission / transfer from other hospitals

- Alleviates ED access block by providing an alternative entry point for patient transfers from other hospitals
- Less anxiety for the patient being in the ED
- Less workload for the already busy ED staff
- More appropriate use of ED beds

Further Reading

[Emergency Medicine Journal Article: Effectiveness of a multipurpose observation unit: before and after study The Royal Melbourne Hospital: What is the Transit Lounge?](#)

PDF saved 02/02/2025