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Establishing Sustainable Electronic Communication Across the Continuum

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Abstract and objective

Without healthcare partners across the continuum having timely access to accurate information relating to patients' treatment, patients' health outcomes are placed at risk.

This paper documents a case report of the approach adapted by the Sunshine Coast Health Service District to establish sustainable electronic communication across the continuum.

The paper identifies how the Health Service District:

- Identified barriers and constraints to uptake (such as spoken and written language barriers, constraints impacting on introduction of appropriate technology, etc)
- Benchmarked key performance indicators to establish a baseline for assessment of introduction of electronic communication
- Established monitoring and registration processes
- Developed "change templates" to establish sustainable electronic communication in a community of health care partners

Most significantly, prior to the establishment of electronic communication in the District, discharge summaries were not available to GPs within 48 hours. In the first month of the capability being available 30% of summaries from all medical units across the District were available to GPs within 48 hours.

Testimonials from primary care community partners are positive. For example Dr Sandra Peters GP from Chancellor Park Medical Centre: "Timely discharge information sent electronically is accurate and we can follow up without delay."

Keywords:

continuity of patient care, communication barriers, confidentiality, referral and consultation, organizational innovation