WHY USING PATIENT DATA SOFTWARE IN GENERAL PRACTICE MAKES SENSE

As part of our commitment to ensuring the most appropriate primary health care services are available to people in our region, Western Victoria PHN (WVPHN) is also making sure health care providers are supported with fit-for-purpose tools to deliver those services. This includes software to help monitor and manage patient data.

WVPHN is offering free POLAR software licences to clinics in our catchment area looking to improve patient services. The software can also be used to meet data submission requirements for Practice Incentive Payment – Quality Improvement (PIP QI) accreditation.

POLAR is operated by Outcome Health which is an Australian, not-for-profit organisation that provides services and support for GP clinics and Primary Health Networks across Australia as well as mental health services for Ambulance Victoria.

What type of data is collected?

POLAR can extract any data stored in a specific field from your clinical management system. It can then be used to populate reports to identify needs, risks and opportunities in your patient population. This includes but is not limited to diagnosis', medications, MBS activities, screening, and radiology and pathology testing.

How is this data kept safe and secure?

De-identified patient data is encrypted and stored in Outcome Health's national data warehouse located in Australia and so meets all Australian Government privacy and security requirements. No identifiable data leaves the practice at any point.

What are the benefits for General Practice?

Clinicians can provide enhanced support to patients by having easy-to-access data. For example, clinics can generate lists of patients who may be at high risk of chronic conditions or hospitalisation, or patients who are eligible for certain preventative health activities or checks.

From a business planning perspective, the data can identify patients who are eligible for specific MBS item numbers and seamlessly manage care planning in general practice.

Practices can also pinpoint specific patient cohorts for action, including screening and care coordination activities. And support the growth of your practice by using existing MBS claiming trends to identify new or missed opportunities for claiming.

What are the benefits for patients?

POLAR can support practices looking to improve data quality and ensuring patient records are accurate and up to date. Practices can also use data extraction tools to help target patients with specific needs of health risk profiles, namely in chronic disease management, cancer screening, immunisations, medication reviews, sexual health, ehealth and preventative health.

How to access the POLAR tool

The registration process is simple and straightforward. Your clinic will be provided with a data-sharing agreement and once this agreement is signed and returned it to us, POLAR will contact you to arrange installation. This is a five-to-15-minute process that can be undertaken at a time suitable to your clinic and using the clinic's nominated IT support. Your Practice Facilitator will be available to help you with this process and any training support you need support.

Does a practice also need to sign up to PIPQI to use the POLAR tool?

No. While any clinic wanting to participate in the PIPQI program must have a data and extraction analysis tool such as POLAR, you can still have POLAR installed without signing on for PIPQI.

Is there a cost involved?

No, there is no cost to general practices. WVPHN has secured the rights to licenses in our region and are making these available to interested practices free of charge.

More information

If you would like more information on digital data extraction and analysis tools, please contact your relevant Practice Facilitator or email us via digitalhealth@westvicphn.com.au