



Enquiries to: Melissa Carter  
A/Deputy Director-General  
Healthcare Purchasing and  
System Performance Division  
Telephone: 07 37085820  
File Ref: C-ECTF-22/12522

Queensland Health

Dear General Practitioner

Following consultation with key primary care stakeholders (including representatives from AMAQ, Primary Health Networks, RACGP, ACRRM and RDAQ) I write in relation to the suspension of category 3 specialist outpatient appointments.

As you are aware, the severity and duration of impact of the current wave of COVID-19 is expected to continue over the coming months. Although our Hospital and Health Services have implemented local COVID-19 Response Plans to ensure there is sufficient capacity to maintain services, this has been significantly challenged due to increasing urgent care demands and impacts to our workforce.

Effective 1 August 2022, Queensland Health facilities will:

- suspend scheduling of routine non-urgent (category 3) outpatient appointments,
- advise new referral category 3 patients of lengthy delays with expectation that they remain under the care of their referring primary healthcare service whilst awaiting an appointment with Queensland Health, and
- conduct a clinical review of existing category 3 patients on the waitlist, advising of delays, and advice that they should continue care with their referring clinician or other suitable primary healthcare service until an appointment becomes available if still clinically required.

Queensland Health will continue to accept new non-urgent category 3 outpatient referrals in accordance with the Clinical Prioritisation Criteria (CPC) located at [Home | Clinical Prioritisation Criteria \(health.qld.gov.au\)](#) however due to the anticipated delays to care, alternate management options should be considered. In the event that your patient's condition deteriorates during this period, an updated referral will need to be provided.

These arrangements mirror those implemented in March 2020 and were effective in ensuring Queensland Health ability to prioritise urgent and emergency care needs of all patients presenting to our public hospitals.

These temporary suspensions will remain in place until 31 October 2022, however we will review this decision on an ongoing basis and will communicate any updates accordingly.

I thank you and all colleagues across primary and community care for your collaboration and partnership in managing the implications of COVID-19.

Yours sincerely

Dr David Rosengren  
**Acting Chief Operating Officer**  
28 / 07 /2022