

Request for Submissions – Study on Patient Flow in Queensland’s public hospitals

Last updated: May 2022

The Emergency Medicine Foundation (EMF) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to enhancing patient emergency healthcare experience and outcomes, saving lives and promoting system sustainability in Queensland. EMF’s remit is the promotion and delivery of a research, education and grant program in the field of emergency healthcare.

EMF supports high quality research directed at improving the healthcare of patients in emergencies within the pre-hospital and emergency department settings. EMF has several research initiatives including its flagship Queensland Research Program which is fully funded by the Queensland Government through Queensland Health.

EMF is collaborating with Queensland Health on a large research program to find effective, evidence-based solutions to improve patient flow in Queensland’s public hospitals. The first component of this program is a study to analyse patient flow in Queensland Hospitals, including consideration of Queensland Ambulance Service. This Request for Submissions invites researchers and research teams to submit proposals to conduct this study.

Contents

1	Purpose of the Study - Overview	2
2	Requirements for proposal	3
3	Special Considerations	3
4	Deliverables.....	4

1 Purpose of the Study - Overview

Hospital Emergency Departments (EDs) are designed and resourced to be the first point of call for patients requiring urgent medical care. Since 2011-12, demand for ED services in Australia has outpaced population growth - culminating in over 8.3 million ED patient presentations in 2018-19.

EDs are impacted by several significant challenges that lead to delays in patient flow. While demand for ED services is a contributor - EDs do not operate in isolation and are impacted by factors across the entire health system.

EMF is inviting research teams to submit proposals for a broad, whole-of-system study to systematically establish the magnitude of factors leading to challenges with emergency access in Queensland public hospitals. This must include, but is not limited to factors conceptualised by Asplin et al. 2003:

- **Input causes:** type of presentations with reference to acuity, clinical cohorts, patient demographics and arrival mode, including by ambulance. These include patients with urgent and complex needs, low-acuity presentations, or patients without access to appropriate care outside of the ED, for example mental health patients, patients from and to residential aged care facilities, and 'GP type' patients.
- **Throughput causes:** challenges within EDs across the range of clinical, operational, and diagnostic services. These challenges include staff shortages, waiting time for diagnostic services, ED practices or cultures that lead to delays in patient disposition decisions.
- **Output causes:** challenges with whole of hospital patient flow, i.e. inability to transfer a patient out of the ED due to access block, delayed patient transfer to the wards due to insufficient communication with inpatient wards, discharge blocks relating to community-based primary health care, and access to Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF) beds and the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The aim of the study is to establish an evidence base for factors leading to access block. While many solutions have been suggested, this evidence base should help identify system-wide and local solutions that are most effective and efficient to improve emergency access across the state. The study therefore must include data from as many of the largest 26 Principal Referral Hospitals and Public Acute Hospitals group A and B in Queensland as practically possible. The findings will inform a set of recommendations to Queensland Health in implementing solutions that are practical and actionable.

Important Dates

Date (2022)	Actions
30 May	Request for Submissions opens
27 June	Request for Submissions closes
Early July	Panel to review proposals and interview applicants if required
Mid July	Funding announcement
Mid August	Project commencing
May 2023	Final report to EMF

2 Requirements for proposal

Proposals are expected to be written to the same standard as research grant applications and to include at a minimum the following:

- Project Summary in plain language (max 250 words)
- Project Plan (max 3000 words) including:
 - Background and literature review
 - Research design and outline of how the proposed project will achieve the aims specified above
 - Research methods including data collection
 - Analytics plan
- Research team
 - Lead Investigator(s) and their track record in this subject matter (max 100 words per investigator + CV of max 3 pages)
 - Team Quality and Capability relevant to this project (max 500 words)
- Budget request including justification for all items; eligible expenses may include:
 - Employment of personnel (research staff and research consultants for specific activities, up to 20% on-costs)
 - Direct research costs, e.g. consumables
 - Technical services, supplies and research facilities
- Project timeline (project is expected to be completed by early May 2023)

Proposals must be emailed to Grants@emfoundation.org.au by **5pm 27 June 2022**.

3 Special Considerations

Applicants are asked to pay special consideration to the following aspects:

- EMF expects the research team to be a broad, multidisciplinary collaboration.
- While EMF does not specify eligibility requirements for lead investigators, emergency clinicians must be included in the research team.
- Research teams led by clinician-researchers based in public hospitals will be viewed favourably.
- All research activities must be conducted in Queensland; however, this does not preclude collaboration with experts elsewhere in Australia or internationally.
- Involvement of the Queensland Ambulance Service is essential.
- The study must define the challenges impeding patient flow systematically, including what measures are going to be used (e.g. ambulance ramping, time to patient offload, extent of bed block).
- The research team must engage with local clinicians including emergency clinicians from as many principal Referral Hospitals and Public Acute Hospitals group A and B as possible to benefit from input on local context (e.g. on their models of care, refer to throughput factors) and support future change management in the long term.

4 Deliverables

The following deliverables are due:

- Monthly meeting with EMF executives
- 3-monthly interim report to the Project Steering Committee
- Final report in May 2023

Should you have any questions on this Request for Submissions, please contact EMF's Research Manager Dr Angie Nguyen Vu on (07) 3720 5700 or email angie.nguyenvu@emfoundation.org.au.