Health in Focus Report 2017
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Introduction and Background

The annual CheckUP survey, *Health in Focus*, aims to investigate issues faced by primary health care practitioners and the general public in Queensland focusing on a range of topics including workforce models, care coordination, preventative health, digital health and interface between different sectors.

CheckUP uses the results of the survey to:

- inform discussions with stakeholders.
- inform internal planning.
- identify areas of need.
- identify and celebrate initiatives that have been successful.
- increase the profile of primary health care in Queensland.

The survey began in 2009 to gather information from General Practitioners (GPs). Over the years the focus has been broadened to include other health professionals and the general public. Bringing information from these different stakeholders together has enabled CheckUP to continue to collate longitudinal data while seeking new information to inform improvements in primary health care across the state.

The table below outlines the evolution of CheckUP’s annual survey over the past nine years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>GPs</th>
<th>Practice Managers</th>
<th>Allied Health</th>
<th>Practice Nurses</th>
<th>Medical Specialists</th>
<th>General Public</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<td>2017 Health in Focus</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</table>

In 2017, CheckUP invited Health in Focus sponsors from the health sector to contribute survey questions. The information gathered through these questions is incorporated into this report and featured in sponsor spotlights.
Respondents
In 2017, the Health in Focus survey received 1,328 responses comprised of 69% from the general public with the remaining 31% from health professionals across five categories.

Geographical Distribution

[Map showing geographical distribution with symbols indicating the number of responses from health professionals and the general public in different locations.]
General Practitioners

Demographics

Most common age groups
- 35-44 ➔ 29%
- 55-64 ➔ 26%

Qualification obtained
- 71%
- 29%

Average years as a GP ➔ 19

Sessions worked
- 75% worked an average of 8 or more sessions per week

Plan on changing sessions worked
- No change
- Increase sessions
- Decrease sessions
- Leaving General Practice

Health in Focus 2017 – General Practitioners
National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS): Knowledge

The percentage of GPs reporting moderate to high levels of knowledge about the NDIS since 2013 has continued to increase.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>41%</td>
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Sponsor spotlight

Most common neurodegenerative conditions identified by GPs and practice nurses

1. Parkinson’s
2. Restless leg Syndrome
3. Essential Tremor

*Question supplied by Parkinson’s Queensland*
Prevention

GPs who offer routine prevention or lifestyle advice to patients ➔ 97%

Preventative areas most commonly targeted by GPs:

- 97% smoking
- 86% alcohol/drugs
- 90% overweight/obesity
- 86% physical activity
- 97% immunisation
- 70% diet/nutrition
- 80% mental health
- 63% maternal health
- 70% Sexual health
- 76% Contraception

Sponsor spotlights

Most popular structured lifestyle modification programs GPs refer patients to:

- 63% Quitline
- 20% Heart Foundation Walking
- 17% 10,000 Steps

*Question supplied by the Heart Foundation

GPs recognised the value of Motivational Interviewing in helping patients make positive change to improve their health

- 33% had undertaken training in Motivational Interviewing
- 61% were interested to do so

*Question supplied by Veriti
Referrals

Perceived change in waiting times for patients to see a medical specialist at public hospital out-patient clinics. The percentage of GPs indicating longer waiting time has continued to decline.

69% of GPs send referrals to public hospitals electronically some of the time and/or all the time.

GP referral knowledge

83% had good pre-referral knowledge (where to send referrals and relevant guidelines).

90% had good referral knowledge (including clinical information required).

54% had good post-referral knowledge (waiting times and managing patients while waiting).

Sponsor spotlight

97% of GPs reported moderate to high knowledge of reproductive and sexual health.

60% of GPs had undertaken specific training in reproductive and sexual health.
Transfer of Care Documents

The percentage of GPs that receive transfer of care documents from public hospitals remains steady. The decline in 2015 may have been attributed to a sampling issue.

GPs were asked to rate their satisfaction with transfer of care documents on a 5-point Likert scale. GPs were most satisfied with the clinical relevance (mean = 3.19) and comprehensive (mean = 2.93) of transfer of care documents.
Public Health Alerts

45% of GPs recall receiving Queensland Health’s Public Health Alerts from CheckUP

93% were satisfied or very satisfied with the information contained in the Public Health Alerts

eHealth Adoption (My Health Record)

In 2017, the number of GPs using My Health Record continues to increase with 80% reporting participation and further 7% indicating participation in the future.

Telehealth Use

More than half of the GPs (55%) surveyed indicated that they had undertaken a telehealth consultation in the past 12 months.
Telehealth Challenges

Most common challenges GPs face when delivering healthcare via telehealth

61% organisational capacity and processes

58% IT functions and systems

42% funding models

Sponsor Spotlight: Focus on Digital Health

GPs were asked how important it was for them to learn about how digital health could help with general practice

50% very important

40% somewhat important

10% not important

Digital health topics most GPs want to know more about:

- 55% Patient Portals
- 52% Wearables technology
- 52% Interoperability (exchange of information between systems)
- 45% Telehealth
- 45% Data analytics

*Questions supplied by HISA*
After Hours Care

Most GPs provide direct or indirect access to after-hours care.

Health Service Directories

There has been a steady increase in the number of GPs reporting the use of health service directories, in particular Health Engine.
The One Big Idea

GPs were asked to identify in free text their one big idea for a needed change that will improve the health system for providers or patients. The three most common themes were:

“Better Integration and Communication supported by digital health

This was the most popular theme with GPs highlighting the need for better shared patient information through electronic health records and more information on wait times.

Workforce improvements

GPs highlighted the need for education and training as well as better use of allied health staff.

Improve access to specialists

Including new ways to manage wait lists for medicine specialties.”
Allied Health

Demographics

Most common age groups
- 45-54: 21%
- 35-44: 27%

Average years’ experience
- 16

Work status
- 72% Full-time
- 28% Part-time

Plan on changing work capacity
- 79% No change
- 17% Increase sessions
- 5% Decrease sessions
- 5% Leaving

79% of allied health professionals surveyed belong to a professional association
National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

Allied health providers are becoming better informed about the NDIS.

Knowledge
The percentage of allied health professionals reporting moderate to high levels of knowledge about the NDIS since 2013 has continued to increase.

Knowledge about becoming a provider
The percentage of allied health professionals reporting moderate to high knowledge about becoming an NDIS provider has continued to increase.
eHealth Utilisation (My Health Record)

The adoption of My Health Record has increased, and more allied health professionals anticipate adoption in the future.

Telehealth Use

The rate of telehealth use amongst allied health professionals remains steady.
Sponsor Spotlight: Focus on Digital Health

Allied health professionals were asked how important it was for them to learn about how digital health could help them provide care:

- **50%** very important
- **38%** somewhat important
- **9%** haven’t given it much thought
- **3%** not important

Digital health topics most allied health professionals want to know more about:

- **60%** Telehealth
- **50%** Patient Portals
- **31%** Wearables technology
- **31%** Data analytics

*Questions supplied by HISA*
Satisfaction with GP referrals

The mean satisfaction (Likert scale) for appropriateness and comprehensiveness of referrals received from GPs to allied health professionals has remained relatively consistent over the past few years.

Sending electronic medical reports to GPs

There has been a significant increase in the percentage of allied health professionals sending medical reports back to GPs electronically.
The One Big Idea

Allied health professionals were asked to identify in free text their one big idea for a needed change that will improve the health system for providers or patients.

The three most common themes were:

"Better Integration and Communication supported by digital health

This was the most popular theme with Allied health providers highlighting the need for shared patient information and integrated referral processes and systems

Better use of the allied health workforce

……...with capacity boosted through education and training

Improve funding allocation

Increase flexibility of funding models including Medicare funded telehealth sessions
Nurses

Demographics

♂ ➔ 2%
♀ ➔ 98%

Most common age groups
45-54 ➔ 29%
55-64 ➔ 34%

Average years experience
16

Qualification obtained
-au ➔ 92%
-world ➔ 8%

Nurse type
Registered ➔ 89%
Enrolled ➔ 9%
Nurse Practitioner ➔ 2%

Work status
Part-time ➔ 33%
Full-time ➔ 67%

Plan on changing work capacity

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<th>Change</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leaving</td>
<td>3%</td>
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National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Knowledge

Nurses are becoming significantly better informed about the NDIS.

The percentage of nurses reporting moderate to high levels if knowledge about the NDIS since 2014 has continued to increase.

Prevention

Nurses have reported more involvement in preventative health.

95% of Nurses routinely offer prevention or lifestyle advice to patients. Preventative areas most commonly targeted by nurses:

- 62% diet/nutrition
- 63% smoking
- 60% physical activity
- 57% overweight/obesity
- 51% alcohol/drugs
- 60% immunisation
- 51% mental health
- 46% Falls

Health in Focus 2017 – Nurses
Sponsor spotlight

Most popular structured lifestyle modification programs Nurses referred patients to

61% Quitline 26% Walking 19% STEPS

*Question supplied by Heart Foundation

Health Service Directories

There has been no significant change over the past four years in the percentage of nurses reporting the use of Health Engine, or the National Health Services Directory. Use of My Community Directory/CheckUP Diary has also remained steady since first asked about in 2016.
Telehealth Use

The percentage of nurses reporting participation in telehealth consultations decreased slightly in 2017.
The One Big Idea

Nurses were asked to identify in free text their one big idea for a needed change that will improve the health system for providers or patients.

The three most common themes were:

“Better Integration and Communication supported by digital health

Nurses identified the need to share patient information and improve service delivery through streamlined communication and use of digital health systems such as telehealth

Better use of the nursing workforce

………with capacity boosted through education and training. Many suggested a bigger role for nurses including providing chronic disease management services and nurse led clinics

Funding models that focus on prevention and long wait areas

Including special programs for chronic conditions and partnerships with the private sector”
Practice/Service Manager

Demographics

♀  ➔  89%
♂  ➔  11%

Most common age groups
45-54 ➔ 42%
55-64 ➔ 24%

Work status

Part-time  ➔  21%
Full-time ➔  79%

Highest Qualification

- Diploma/Advanced Diploma ➔ 20%
- Degree/Post Graduate ➔ 39%
- High School ➔ 36%
- Other ➔ 6%
National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS): Knowledge

Practice/Service Managers are becoming better informed about the NDIS.

The percentage of practice/service managers reporting moderate to high levels of knowledge about the NDIS since 2014 has continued to increase each year with now over half reporting moderate to high knowledge.

Clinical Software Use

Best Practice and Medical Director 3 continue to be the most used clinical software in practices. However, 37% reported using a range of other software programs.
Secure Messaging Use

In 2017, 94% of services reported having a secure electronic software package installed. The adoption of secure electronic messaging has remained high over the past 6 years.

![Bar chart showing the adoption rate of secure messaging from 2012 to 2017.](chart)

eHealth knowledge (My Health Record)

In 2017, practice/service managers continued to feel well informed about My Health Record. The trend line from 2012 shows an overall increase in knowledge over the last six years with a slight decline in 2015 which could be attributed to a sampling issue.

![Bar chart showing the knowledge about My Health Record from 2012 to 2017.](chart)
Health Service Directories

The National Health Services Directory and Health Engine have been the most commonly used health service directories by practice/service managers over the past five years with use of My Community Directory/CheckUP Diary continuing to grow since first asked about in 2016.
The One Big Idea

Practice/service managers were asked to identify in free text their one big idea for a needed change that will improve the health system for providers or patients. The three most common themes were:

**Better Integration and Communication supported by digital health**

Managers expressed a need for effective integration of services with streamline communication that interfaces with all clinical software.

**Better allocation of funding**

Many managers identified the need for increased funding for disadvantaged areas and more flexible funding to include additional nursing and allied health support.

**Improve access to services**

Managers highlighted the need for new service delivery models to support culturally appropriate care and address areas of need such as mental health.
**Medical Specialists**

**Demographics**

- **♂**: 81%
- **♀**: 19%

**Most common age groups**

- 35-44 ➔ 24%
- 45-54 ➔ 38%
- 65+ ➔ 24%

**Average years in current speciality ➔ 16**

**National Disability Insurance Scheme: Knowledge**

The percentage of specialists reporting moderate to high levels of knowledge about the NDIS this year has decreased, which could be attributed to a sampling issue.
Telehealth Use

The percentage of specialists reporting participation in telehealth consultations since 2014 has remained steady.

Secure Electronic Messaging

The percentage of specialists using secure electronic messaging has increased by 40% since 2013.
Satisfaction with GP referrals

The percentage of specialists reporting satisfaction with the comprehensiveness of GP referrals has increased.

The One Big Idea

Specialists were asked to identify in free text their one big idea for a needed change that will improve the health system for providers or patients.

The three most common themes were:

**Better Integration and Communication supported by digital health**

Specialists highlighted the need for shared patient information and improved communication with primary health providers.

**Less administration and bureaucracy**

Specialists identified the need for less administrative requirements and bureaucracy in the delivery of effective healthcare.

**Improve access to specialist services in rural areas**

Ideas included rural visiting specialist hubs and more resources for areas of need.


General Public

Demographics

♂  ➔ 24%
♀  ➔ 76%

Age distribution

0-34 years, 18.1%
35-44 years, 18.3%
45-54 years, 20.7%
55-64 years, 16.7%
65+ years, 26.0%

6% of the general public identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

11% of the general public indicated they have a disability.
Health Status (self-reported)

The self-related health status of respondents has remained consistent over the past four years with three-quarters rating their health as good or very good in 2017.

Telehealth Consultations

Support for telehealth is strong with 7% of respondents reporting participation in a consultation and a further 79% indicating willingness to participate.
National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS): Knowledge

The general public have reported an increase in their level of knowledge about the National Disability Insurance Scheme since 2015.

Of the 11% of respondents who indicated they had a disability:

- **65%** knew where to find information about the NDIS
- **36%** knew how to find information about their eligibility
- **30%** knew when the NDIS would commence in their region
- **15%** had attended information sessions about the NDIS
- **16%** knew what the NDIS will provide for them

**While most people with a disability knew where to find information about the NDIS the level of knowledge on detail is still quite low, particularly in relation to exactly what the NDIS will provide for them.**
Prevention

Visiting a health service:

- 64% of the general public visit a health service for preventative health
- 36% visit a health service only when they are unwell

**eHealth Adoption (My Health Record)**

General public support for and/or adoption of the My Health Record continues to increase with just over two-thirds now supporting and/or adopting a My Health Record.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Yes, already have one or will in the future</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>24%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>9%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Engagement with the health care system

The general public were asked to rate their level of agreement with a range of statements relating to engagement with the health system. Over 80% of people agreed or strongly agreed with the following:

- Can rely on at least one healthcare provider to understand and support them
- Can easily find and understand health information
- Involved in decision-making about their health
- Can easily work out which type of healthcare provider they need to see

Compared with 2016, there has been a 9% increase in the number of people indicating they would be comfortable allowing their health data to be stored on a mobile phone application.
Confidence in health providers

Confidence levels for health providers is overall very high, particularly for an individual’s regular GP and specialists.

Barriers to Accessing Health Care

The general public identified a number of key barriers to accessing health services in their local area.
The One Big Idea

The general public were asked to identify in free text their one big idea for a needed change that will improve health services to meet health care needs. The most common themes with example quotes were:

Better Integration and Communication supported by digital health

“An online system like "My Health Record" could really streamline healthcare so that no matter which doctor, specialist or hospital you go to the information is readily available. I have multiple illnesses and need to see various medical professionals. It would be ideal if they could all see my health record and communicate with each other on the best care for me.”

Reduce the cost of health care

“Bulk billing for ongoing health issues. Or a call and collect for update of scripts.”
“Reduce costs for routine/preventative visits”

Improve access to specialist services – particularly in rural areas

“more coordinated visiting specialist services like the heart bus, but with other specialists”

Greater focus on preventative health

“make preventative health checks cheaper/bulk billed for everyone”
“more investment in preventative health measures in primary care”
“More focus on preventive health - asking me the hard questions about diet, physical activity, alcohol intake, mental health, etc. Measuring height, weight and waist circumference”

Improve access to appointments – less travel and waiting

“More appointment times - I work during the day and cannot get to doctor even when I feel unwell”
“Encourage doctors to practice in outer suburbs and country areas. I live 35KMs from Brisbane and it’s hard to get an appointment”
“more video consultations (not just specialist telehealth session) should be available for people living in rural and remote locations”
CheckUP would like to thank our 2017 Health in Focus sponsors:

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