WHITE PAPER

# Reactive or proactive - how well does your patient flow operate?

## Check your hospital on the patient flow maturity model

HealthStream™

# INTRODUCTION - FROM ADMISSION TO DISCHARGE, THERE ARE MANY MOVING PARTS

When it comes to digital transformation, the healthcare industry often lags behind other industries. While others are digitising and automating wherever possible, many healthcare organisations are still using manual systems like white boards or spreadsheets to inform patient flow through the hospital. Prior to the advent of Covid-19, hospitals were under increasing pressure to achieve better outcomes at a lower cost and this has become increasingly true. This means that optimal patient flow has now become a critical component in helping to achieve this objective.

In this white paper, we'll look at the challenges that healthcare organisations face at the enterprise level and outline our patient flow maturity model. This should give you an understanding of what is required to achieve full maturity and the difference an enterprise patient flow solution would make to you.

# THE KEY CHALLENGES AROUND PATIENT FLOW AND STAFF ROSTERING

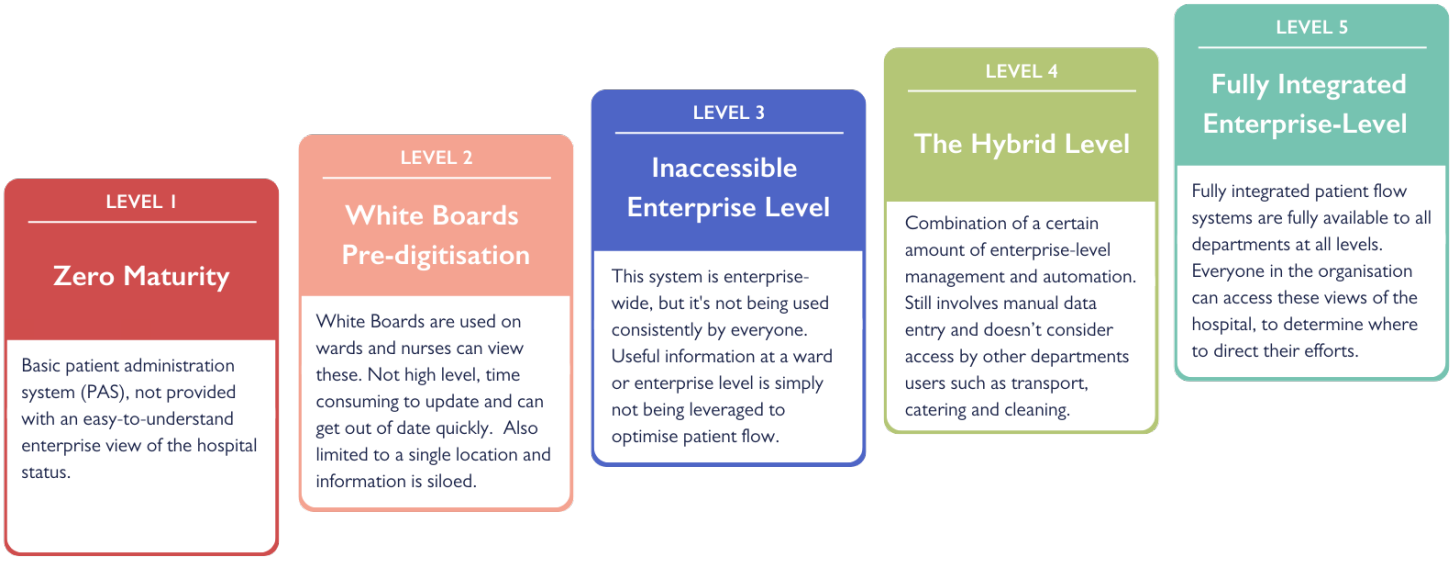
It's important to take an enterprise-level viewpoint when considering the challenges around optimising patient flow and resource allocation. Healthcare facilities, hospitals and wards often work in siloes, but this results in a lack of visibility across the organisation and ultimately a fragmented approach. It is critical that if all departments are going to contribute to the overall streamlining of both their own and ultimately the hospital wide processes, then a different approach needs to be adopted.

## Eyes on everything

Manual systems simply don't allow enterprise-level visibility. Not only that, but systems like paper, white boards and spreadsheets are not updated in real-time. However, the main issue is that the information can only be seen in a single location, often by one person. Every time a change occurs, updating and communicating the change is costly in terms of both time and money. This has the potential to negatively impact patient care. The different wards are unable to see what others are doing, what resources are available or their current patient capacity. To have eyes on everything at an enterprise-level with facility-wide visibility can only be achieved with a digital solution.

# STEPS TO MATURITY IN PATIENT FLOW SYSTEMS - THE ENTERPRISE VISIBILITY MATURITY MODEL

We've developed a maturity model that will help you determine how much visibility you have over your patient flow. From the basic systems to a sophisticated full enterprise approach, see where your organisation lands.




*HealthStream Patient Flow Maturity Model*

## Level 1: Zero Maturity

In its most basic form there is the basic patient administration system (PAS), which provides the clinical information for every patient in the hospital, from admission through to discharge. Treatments, medication, length of stay are the very basics. However, typical PAS systems simply don't provide enterprise-level visibility, and we've found that many hospitals that have implemented them are not provided with an easy-to-understand enterprise view of the hospital status. At this stage you are highly reliant on key staff, making phone calls, walking the wards or use of paper-based systems to bridge the gap.

## Level 2: White Boards - Pre-digitisation

White Boards tend to be used on wards, where nurses from the ward can view these and are trained to understand which patients are in each bed. However, the information is not only very high-level, but also manually entered and thus, time consuming to update, which often means the written information is not current. White boards can only be seen in a single location so only that ward staff know the status of their patients. In addition, white boards don't take data from or provide data to any other systems, so the information they hold remains in silos and disappears over time. Often, attitudes around pre-digital solutions like white boards are "this is how we've done it in the past and it's all we need, it works" but the reality is that the pandemic has accelerated the change from this approach to a more innovative approach.

## Level 3: Inaccessible Enterprise Level

This system is enterprise-wide, but it's not being used consistently by everyone. Useful information at a ward or enterprise level is simply not being leveraged to optimise patient flow. Whether they don't have access or are simply unaware that it exists, staff are not using it to its full potential, thus defeating the purpose.

## Level 4: The Hybrid Level

This is where we start to see a combination of a certain amount of enterprise-level management and automation. It still involves manual data entry, and it does take available PAS data and displays it, but it doesn't really allow for effective decision-making. It doesn't consider the use or access by other departments such as transport, cleaning or catering. As a result the overall patient flow is compromised. These, hospitals will benefit from some automation, but they won't have the information they need to make proactive decisions; it's still a reactive system.

## Level 5: Fully Integrated, Enterprise-Level Visibility

Fully integrated means that your patient flow systems are fully available to all departments at all levels and tied into all relevant systems. This means that everyone in the organisation can access these views of the hospital, to determine where to direct their efforts. Where staff used to call around other departments to get answers to their questions, they can view at a glance information such as:

- When's the next bed available?
- When's the next bed in a specific ward available?
- Will there be a bed available in a certain department in five hours' time?
- This patient was supposed to be discharged two hours ago, why haven't they gone home yet? A fully integrated patient flow system will provide the answer, e.g. the patient is waiting on additional medication.
- What delays in care will prevent patients from being discharged on their expected date?
- A proactive approach can then be taken to allocate patients to the right beds, with the right resources ahead of time addressing issues proactively rather than reactively.

Level Five on our maturity model means staff in all departments have real time view of what's happening across the hospital. This results in all staff across all departments and wards in the enterprise actively contributing to patient flow efficiency, this is the true enterprise approach!

The challenge for you now is to evaluate where your healthcare facility sits within the Maturity Model, and to think about what you'll need to do next to moved up the levels.

# HOW DOES FULL PATIENT FLOW VISIBILITY IMPACT THE QUADRANT OF CARE?

There are four key areas that will be impacted by patient flow:

1. Cost - the longer patients remain in hospital, the more it is likely to cost, both from a resource and clinical perspective. Optimising patient flow and moving the patient through the admission to discharge process as efficiently as possible, without compromising care and clinical outcomes is the desired goal. This results in significantly reduced hospital stays, thereby lowering costs.
2. Patient satisfaction - we often see this during the discharge process. The patient has been told their treatment is complete and they can go home, but the discharge process is held up, due to lack of visibility. No-one wants to stay in hospital longer than they need to; and if their experience throughout their stay has been negatively impacted by inefficient patient flow systems, being delayed on discharge will only make the patient and family more frustrated.
3. Nurse satisfaction and well-being - nurses shouldn't be weighed down by administration tasks. The nurses' focus needs to be on patient care, not logistics. The more time they spend dealing with admin jobs, the less time they have for their patients and the more their frustration and stress levels will increase.
4. Clinical care - the more information staff have about patients, the better the care will be. If there are details such as when patients need to be turned, taken for showers, if they have to eat at specific times, preferred methods of medication application - anything at all that can help staff care for patients on every level - then clinical care will improve exponentially.

Optimised patient flow and visibility means you'll have the right staff in the right place, at the right time, with the right resources on hand.

# MOVE ALL THE WAY UP THE LEVELS WITH ENTERPRISE VISIBILITY

**A patient tracking system for hospitals that need real-time visibility into patient status from admission to discharge for optimised patient throughput.**

The way we implement Enterprise Visibility takes a healthcare facility right through the journey, from one end of the maturity model to the other. It's done at both staff and patient levels; there's visibility in the wards and at the control centre and at the leadership level. It enables a centralised view not just for control, but at an enterprise level.

What this means is that the hospital isn't managed at the control centre; wards can still function autonomously, but they still have eyes on what's happening in other areas.

Enterprise Visibility also has geospatial mapping capabilities which show what a ward actually looks like - not just lists of rooms and patients on a white board.

- Speed patient flow and improve safety
- Synchronise physical and staff resources
- Remove roadblocks and minimise interruptions

Transparency increases accountability and gives staff members more autonomy. The aim of the tool is to provide better outcomes by helping to deliver safe, high-quality care.

Want to find out how to move your facility to a more mature patient flow model?

BOOK A DEMO TODAY

HealthStream™


Australia and New Zealand Head Office

79 Lichfield Street
Christchurch 8011
New Zealand

www.healthstreamanz.com


## About HealthStream

Helping hospitals and healthcare institutions globally, our team of experts understand professional medical pain points and have the knowledge and technical solutions to solve them. If you're looking to advance your institution's medical processes and ensure patients receives consistent, quality care, please reach out to the HealthStream team. With a wealth of medical software solution experience, we are confident we can help.