

# Outpatient Cancer Clinics Survey 2023

with virtual care module

Development Report

June 2023

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Please note that there is the potential for minor revisions of this report.

Please check the online version at **bhi.nsw.gov.au** for any amendments or errata.

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The conclusions in this report are those of BHI and no official endorsement by the NSW Minister for Health, the NSW Ministry of Health or any other NSW public health organisation is intended or should be inferred.

## Background

The Bureau of Health Information (BHI) is the statutory agency responsible for reporting on the performance of the NSW public health system. BHI manages the NSW Patient Survey Program on behalf of NSW Health. Every year this statewide program gives thousands of patients the opportunity to provide feedback about their experiences of care in the healthcare system and subsequent outcomes, using evidence-based, validated survey instruments.

Since 2015, the Cancer Institute NSW has partnered with BHI to conduct the Outpatient Cancer Clinics Survey. The results, which reflect the experiences of patients who visit outpatient cancer clinics in NSW, are reported annually in the Reporting for Better Cancer Outcomes Program. BHI also releases the results publicly in annual Snapshot reports and on the BHI Data Portal.

The sampling month, upon which the 'year' of the survey is based, was amended to January 2023, therefore dating the survey as the Outpatient Cancer Clinics Survey 2023. For previous surveys, sampling occurred during November each year, with the last sampling month being November 2021. The purpose of this amended sampling month was so that sampling, analysis and reporting of results could take place in the same calendar year.

This document summarises the changes made to the Outpatient Cancer Clinics Survey 2021 questionnaire for the 2023 questionnaire. Please refer to the 2015–2021 Outpatient Cancer Clinics Survey development reports available at [bhi.nsw.gov.au](http://bhi.nsw.gov.au) for information on how previous questionnaires were developed. These reports include information about stakeholder consultation and engagement, question development and sampling methodology, and more development notes.

## Review of the Outpatient Cancer Clinics Survey

BHI reviewed the Outpatient Cancer Clinics Survey 2021 questionnaire to inform the development of the 2023 questionnaire.

In 2021, a new question module consisting of seven questions about virtual care appointments with a hospital or outpatient clinic was added to the Outpatient Cancer Clinics Survey. The module asked patients who had appointments over the telephone or by video call, rather than in person, about their experience. These questions covered appointments with a public hospital or outpatient clinic only.

In 2023, the virtual care experience module was expanded and split into two parts. One additional question (about mode of access) was added to the existing virtual care questions and this module was renamed the 'Virtual Care with a Hospital Outpatient Clinic' section. Five additional questions about patients' virtual care experience with a general practitioner (GP) were added that comprised a new section: 'Virtual care with a General Practitioner'.

The purpose of the 'Virtual care with a General Practitioner' section was to gather feedback about patients' use and frequency of virtual care appointments with a GP, as well as the benefits, challenges and overall experience of accessing GP care by telephone or video call, rather than in person.

All patients were given the opportunity to complete these sections if they had a virtual care appointment with a hospital outpatient clinic and/or a GP in the past 12 months.

## Overview of changes

A short summary of amended questions and sections is outlined below. Details of these changes are explained in the following section. Changes to question numbers used in instructional text (e.g. 'Go to Q84') are not included.

### Changes to core content

- Modified section title/ preamble:
  - APPOINTMENT WITH THE OUTPATIENT CLINIC
- Modified questions, question instructions and/or response options:
  - Q29, Q83, Q88.

### Changes to module content

- Modified section title/ preamble:
  - VIRTUAL CARE WITH A HOSPITAL OUTPATIENT CLINIC.
- Modified questions, question instructions and/or response options:
  - Q67
- New question:
  - Q70
- New section:
  - VIRTUAL CARE WITH A GENERAL PRACTITIONER (Q71–75).

## Details of changes – Core content

Question # 2023	Question # 2021	Updated question/section (as it appears in 2023 questionnaire)	Change from 2021	Rationale
Q1–7	Q1–7	<p><b>APPOINTMENT WITH THE OUTPATIENT CLINIC</b></p> <p>When completing the questionnaire, please think about your appointment with the hospital named in the covering letter in January 2023.</p>	<p><b>Modified section title and preamble</b></p> <p>Changed from ‘Appointment at the clinic’ to ‘Appointment with the outpatient clinic’</p> <p>Changed month and year to January 2023</p>	<p>The section title was changed to accommodate both modes of service delivery – in-person and virtual care appointments.</p> <p>The date was aligned with the patient sample.</p>
Q29	Q29	At your January appointment, did the health professionals review your care plan with you?	<p><b>Modified question content</b></p> <p>Changed ‘November’ to ‘January’</p>	The date was aligned with the patient sample.
Q30–38	Q30–38	<p><b>YOUR CARE AND TREATMENT</b></p> <p>Thinking again about your <u>January appointment</u> with this clinic...</p>	<p><b>Modified preamble content</b></p> <p>Changed ‘November’ to ‘January’</p>	The date was aligned with the patient sample.
Q83	Q77	<b>Did you receive support, or the offer of support, from an Aboriginal Health Worker during your January appointment?</b>	<p><b>Modified question content</b></p> <p>Changed ‘November’ to ‘January’</p>	The date was aligned with the patient sample.

Question # 2023	Question # 2021	Updated question/section (as it appears in 2023 questionnaire)	Change from 2021	Rationale
Q88	Q82	<p><b>BHI would like your permission to link your questionnaire responses to other information from health records relating to you which are maintained by NSW Government and Commonwealth agencies</b> (including your hospitalisations or health registry information). Linking to your health information will allow us to better understand how the care provided by health services is related to the health of their patients.</p> <p><b>Your information will be treated in the strictest confidence.</b> BHI will not report any results that may identify you as an individual. Your questionnaire responses will not be accessible to the health professionals who cared for you.</p> <p>Do you give permission for the Bureau of Health Information to link your answers from this survey to health records related to you (the patient)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	<p><b>Modified preamble</b></p> <p>Changed from 'hospital staff' to 'health professionals'</p>	<p>The terminology was modified for consistency with other BHI patient questionnaires.</p>

## Module – Virtual Care with a Hospital Outpatient Clinic

In 2023, the virtual care experience module was expanded and split into two parts. One additional question (about mode of access) was added to the existing virtual care questions and this module was renamed the 'Virtual Care with a Hospital Outpatient Clinic' section.

Question # 2023	Question # 2021	Updated question/section (as it appears in 2023 questionnaire)	Change from 2021	Rationale
Q63–70	Q63–69	<p><b>VIRTUAL CARE WITH A HOSPITAL OUTPATIENT CLINIC</b></p> <p>Virtual care appointments are held over the telephone or by video call, using any form of communication or information technology, rather than in person. For the questions in this section, please think about your virtual care appointments with a hospital outpatient clinic, not with a general practitioner (GP), in the past 12 months.</p>	<p><b>Modified section title and preamble</b></p> <p>Changed from 'Virtual Care' to 'Virtual Care with a Hospital Outpatient Clinic'</p> <p>Added 'using any form of communication or information technology' in preamble</p>	<p>The section title was amended to provide context for questions in this section, which are only related to the outpatient clinic.</p> <p>Additional preamble information was added to clarify how patients may participate in their virtual care experience.</p>
Q67	Q67	Compared with in-person appointments, were your virtual care experiences...?	<p><b>Modified question content</b></p> <p>Changed from 'was your virtual care experience...' to 'were your virtual care experiences...'</p>	The question was pluralised to accommodate patients who had multiple episodes of virtual care.
Q70	N/A	<p><b>How did you access your most recent virtual care appointment?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Telephone, audio only (mobile or landline)</li> <li>• Online, with video (e.g. Skype, Zoom. On any device including computer, tablet or smartphone)</li> <li>• Online, audio only (on any device including computer, tablet or smartphone)</li> </ul> <p>Other</p>	<b>New question</b>	The question was added to gain insights into how patients access their virtual care appointment with a hospital outpatient clinic.

## Module – Virtual Care with a General Practitioner

In 2023, five additional questions about patients' virtual care experience with a general practitioner (GP) were added that comprised a new section: 'Virtual Care with a General Practitioner'.

The purpose of the 'Virtual Care with a General Practitioner' section was to gather feedback about patients' use and frequency of virtual care appointments with a GP, as well as the benefits, challenges and overall experience of accessing GP care by telephone or video call, rather than in person.

Question # 2023	Question # 2021	Updated question/section (as it appears in 2023 questionnaire)	Change from 2021	Rationale
Q71–75	N/A	<p><b>VIRTUAL CARE WITH A GENERAL PRACTITIONER</b></p> <p>For the questions in this section, please now think about your virtual care appointments with a general practitioner (GP), in the past 12 months.</p>	<b>New section</b>	<p>This section was added to expand on BHI's previously published insights about patient experiences with virtual healthcare appointments, to include insights into experiences with GPs.</p> <p>These questions were derived, with minor modifications, from the 'Virtual Care with a General Practitioner' module which has been used in several BHI surveys.</p>
Q71	N/A	<p><b>In the past 12 months, did you have any virtual care appointments – over the telephone or by video call – with a general practitioner (GP)?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No. . . . . Go to QXX</li> <li>• Don't know/can't remember. . . Go to QXX</li> </ul>	<b>New question</b>	<p>This question was added to gain insights into experiences of virtual care appointments with GPs.</p>

Question # 2023	Question # 2021	Updated question/section (as it appears in 2023 questionnaire)	Change from 2021	Rationale
Q72	N/A	<b>How many virtual care appointments have you had with a GP in the past 12 months?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 to 2</li> <li>• 3 to 5</li> <li>• More than 5</li> <li>• Don't know/can't remember</li> </ul>	<b>New question</b>	This question was added to gain insights into experiences of virtual care appointments with GPs.
Q73	N/A	<b>Overall, how would you rate the virtual care you received from GPs?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very good</li> <li>• Good</li> <li>• Neither good nor poor</li> <li>• Poor</li> <li>• Very poor</li> </ul>	<b>New question</b>	This question was added to gain insights into experiences of virtual care appointments with GPs.
Q74	N/A	<b>Did the care and treatment received from GPs through virtual care help you?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, definitely</li> <li>• Yes, to some extent</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	<b>New question</b>	This question was added to gain insights into experiences of virtual care appointments with GPs.

Question # 2023	Question # 2021	Updated question/section (as it appears in 2023 questionnaire)	Change from 2021	Rationale
Q75	N/A	<p><b>Did the opportunity to use virtual care help ensure that your care was well coordinated between the hospital outpatient clinic and the GP?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, definitely</li> <li>• Yes, to some extent</li> <li>• No</li> <li>• Don't know/can't remember</li> <li>• Not applicable</li> </ul>	<b>New question</b>	This question was added to gain insights into experiences of virtual care appointments with GPs.