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| Progress and innovations following the Safer Care Victoria report: ‘*Improving post operative recovery, and reducing length of stay’* |
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## Introduction

Since the completion of the Safer Care Victoria (SCV) report, *Improving Post-Operative Recovery and Reducing Length of Stay: ERAS and Alternative Post-Operative Care Models* (2022)*,* the Department of Health (the department) has invested in a series of key initiatives designed to enhance perioperative care and support patient outcomes.

Central to these advancements are digital tools such as the Customer Relationship Manager platform (CRM), My Surgical Journey, and Virtual Surgery School; each developed to support patients throughout their surgical journey. This document highlights progress made since 2022, building on the initial report’s findings. Additionally, Professor David Watters’ article, [*"If the peri-operative patient pathway was right, what would it look like?"*](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ans.19179) <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ans.19179> (published August 2024), offers an insightful vision for optimising perioperative pathways.

The following presents an overview of someone of the statewide-level progress made since the completion of the report. There have of course been many substantial innovations and improvements made at local health services that are not referenced below.

## The CRM

The CRM is a scalable and customisable digital platform, sponsored by the department (PCRR) and operated by Austin Health, which can be adapted to address challenges within our health system. This digital platform enables a single source for communication with patients throughout their journey and provides health services with efficient tools to manage their planned care processes.

The CRM platform has been adopted and scaled across metropolitan health services. There is further expansion planned across regional health services and additional module uptake within the metropolitan region. This will increase the impact made by the CRM on health care delivery in Victoria.

The current ‘modules’ which have demonstrated success and benefits within the sector are:

* **Planned Surgery Preparation List (or Waitlist) Audit** – The ‘usual’ process of patients waiting for surgery being routinely contacted by phone by health service staff, is replaced with an automated process. This removes administrative burden and improves the efficiency of the audit processes.
* **Electronic Health Questionnaire** – Enables a digital standardised patient questionnaire to be used to inform clinical decision-making processes.
* **Inter-service Referral** – Where health services have additional capacity to share with other health services, this function allows for an efficient mechanism to enable the safe transfer of the referral, removing slow paper-based process.
* **Specialist Clinic (Outpatient) Waitlist Audit** – The mechanism to audit patients waiting for specialist care is typically administrative. A CRM-based process automates the audit.
* **Specialist Clinic (Outpatient) Referral Management** – Variation in referral mechanisms lead to inconsistent processing. This module harmonises the process of receiving referrals, processing through triage and appointment booking, regardless of referral medium.

## My Surgical Journey

Launched in July 2024, [My Surgical Journey](https://www.safercare.vic.gov.au/consumer-resources/my-surgical-journey) <https://www.safercare.vic.gov.au/consumer-resources/my-surgical-journey> is a website that helps set clear expectations for patients across the perioperative journey. The website provides simple, clear and concise information on the four stages of the surgical journey:

1. Preparing for surgery and deciding if it is the right option,
2. What to do in the lead up,
3. What to expect on the day of surgery, and
4. Information on recovery.

SCV co-designed My Surgical Journey with consumers and clinicians, who informed the resources, functionality and design that would best guide patients across their perioperative journey.

My Surgical Journey includes educational resources, lists questions patients may be asked or might like to ask of their health care team, and checklists to help patients prepare for their surgical journey. Information and checklists are also available in seven languages (English, Arabic, Vietnamese, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, Greek and Punjabi​).

## Virtual Surgery School

Virtual Surgery School is provided as part of the Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (also known as ERAS) program and is designed to support patient education and optimisation prior to surgery. A suite of 22 pre-surgical educational videos have been created including nine surgery-agnostic videos, 12 condition-specific, and one focused on same day surgery. Videos are available in six languages: English, Mandarin, Cantonese, Arabic, Greek and Vietnamese.

West Metropolitan Health Service Partnership developed Virtual Surgery School with input from multidisciplinary teams and consumers. The videos have been sublicensed to other Victorian health services.

## References

* Watters, D. A., et al. (2024). [If the peri-operative patient pathway was right, what would it look like?](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ans.19179) *ANZ Journal of Surgery*, https://doi.org/10.1111/ans.19179

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