



Health

Mr Greg Piper MP  
Chair, Legislative Assembly Public Accounts Committee  
Parliament of New South Wales  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Your ref: D19/27607  
Our ref: H19/82095

Dear Mr Piper

**Auditor-General's performance audit – Managing demand for ambulance services**

I refer to your letter dated 5 August 2019 request for information relating to the implementation of recommendations of the Auditor-General's performance audit report – managing demand for ambulance services. The request specifically pertains to progress relating to Recommendation 2. *Determine the data system improvements required to provide accurate oversight of demand management initiatives. This should enable routine monitoring and reporting of the activity and performance of these initiatives.*

Dr Dominic Morgan, Chief Executive NSW Ambulance has advised the state-wide rollout of new Information Technology for ambulances in the form of new hardware supporting an electronic medical record (eMR) application and docking system progressed as planned, on schedule and is now complete. Replacement of the eMR hardware has led to an increase in completion of an electronic health record compliance average from 79% to 95%.

The reference to new software for analysing and reporting performance is actually enhancements to the eMR application to facilitate more individualised reporting capability of demand management initiatives and is well underway. In total 10 changes or updates were identified, each comprising of numerous data changes requiring development, field testing and for some alignment to the billing engine used by NSW Ambulance to accommodate the change. In addition, as the eMR system used is multi-jurisdictional there are sections within the eMR that require external consultation, development and approvals to progress updates or changes.

Dr Morgan further advises progress has been made on nine changes or updates with only one deferred till the next major application update as it requires additional functionality inputs. Further, although the enhancements to the eMR have proven to be challenging, it is expected on completion there will be improved quality reporting relating to the demand management initiatives.

The Attached Tab A provides a response to the specific questions raised by PAC and Tab B provides supporting evidence in relation to changes to eMR.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact Mr Allan Loudfoot, Executive Director Clinical Systems Integration NSW Ambulance on 9320 7870.

Yours sincerely

Phil Minns 13.9.19  
A/Secretary, NSW Health

**NSW HEALTH RESPONSE TO FURTHER QUERIES BY THE PAC ON PERFORMANCE AUDIT****MANAGING DEMAND FOR NSW AMBULANCE SERVICES****Recommendation 2**

The response to the audit indicates that the department would implement several improvements, including the rollout of new IT in ambulances and new software for analysing and reporting performance.

- 1. *Can the Department provide a progress report on the rollout of new IT for ambulances and new software for analysing and reporting performance? In your response, please indicate whether all the systems are now fully operational.***

**NSW Health Response:** The state-wide rollout of new Information Technology for ambulances in the form of new hardware supporting an electronic medical record (eMR) application and docking system progressed as planned, on schedule and is now complete and fully operational.

The reference to new software for analysing and reporting performance is actually enhancements to the eMR application to facilitate more individualised reporting capability of demand management initiatives is underway. In total there were 10 eMR changes or updates identified to enhance the reporting capability, each comprising of numerous data changes and all requiring development, field testing and for some alignment to the billing engine used by NSW Ambulance to accommodate the changes.

The current status of the identified updates to the eMR are:

- three updates have been released in the “live” environment – sample screenshots of the three updates are provided (**Tab B**)
- a further three are ready for release with one pending changes to the billing engine;
- one update is in development with the multi-jurisdictional team;
- two others have had first round testing completed with further changes made and the second version of release is ready for testing; and,
- linking the paramedic referral letter to the eMR has been deferred to the next major application update as it requires additional functionality inputs.

- 2. *Have there been any technical difficulties associated with this rollout?***

**NSW Health Response:**

The enhancements to the eMR have proven to be challenging with regard to timely progression, on completion of the eMR enhancements, distribution of final communications to the paramedic workforce. The eMR system being used is multi-jurisdictional, therefore sections within the eMR require external consultation, approvals and development to progress updates or changes, which adds to the time required to progress some of the enhancements.

**3. *What have been the improvements to the quality of data now available?***

**NSW Health Response:**

Replacement of the eMR hardware has led to an increase in completion of an electronic health record compliance average from 79% to 95%.

The reference to new software for analysing and reporting performance is actually enhancements to the eMR application to facilitate more individualised reporting capability of demand management initiatives.

Paramedic familiarity in using and completing the new or upgraded sections within the eMR will collectively improve overall reporting quality relating to demand management.



**Screenshots and information related to the eMR application updates and changes**

Three eMR application updates have been released to the “LIVE environment” they are:

- 1) the addition of ‘NSW Ambulance Referrals’
- 2) the addition of paramedic ‘Assessment tools’ into the secondary survey field
- 3) Extended Care Paramedic Pathways into the protocol section

**1) NSW Ambulance Referrals:**

Screenshot below showing section to enable identification of referrals, now implemented in the eMR application.

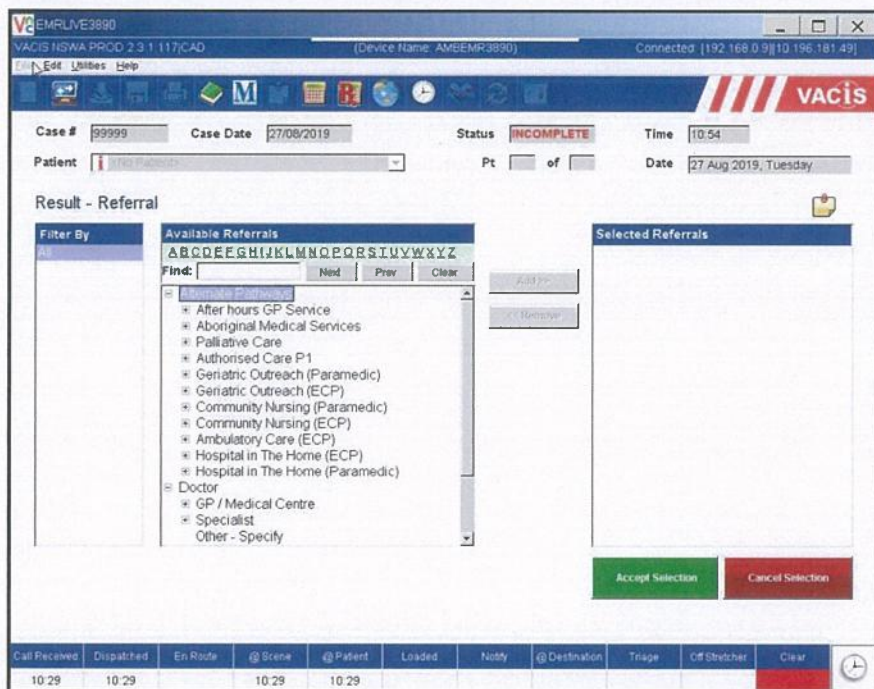

**2) Assessment tools**

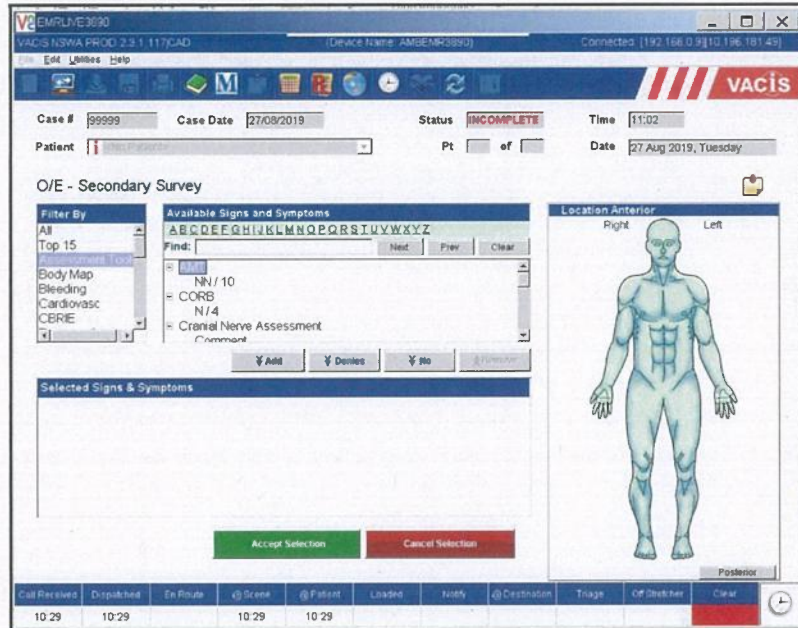
Table below showing list of additional assessment tools used, now implemented in the eMR application, this is important in relation to providing assessment results within referral information.

**List of additional assessment tools now in eMR**

Abbreviated Mental Assessment (AMT)
CORB score system ( Community Acquired Pneumonia)
Cranial Nerve Assessment
Ear Assessment
FROP-Com (screen) ( Falls Risk Screen)
FROP-Com (Full) (Falls Assessment)
Hand Assessment

Hodkinson AMT (Dementia)
Stroke Assessments
Hunter 8 Assessment
Modified Rankin Scale
Mini Mental Examination
Newborn Rapid Assessment
Ottawa Assessments
Ankle and Knee

Screenshot below showing section enabling documentation of assessment tools used, now implemented in the eMR application.



### 3) Extended Care Paramedics Pathways

Screenshot below showing section where ECP Pathways are entered in the eMR application.

