Staying Connected

The Virtual Care Journey of an Australian Prison System

Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network

New South Wales, Australia

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Educational Objectives

1. Describe the model of care for justice-involved patients in New South Wales, Australia

2. Identify the modes of virtual care provided in correctional centers in New South Wales

3. Apply the learnings from the outcomes of the project to other correctional settings

I KNOW
RIGHT?!

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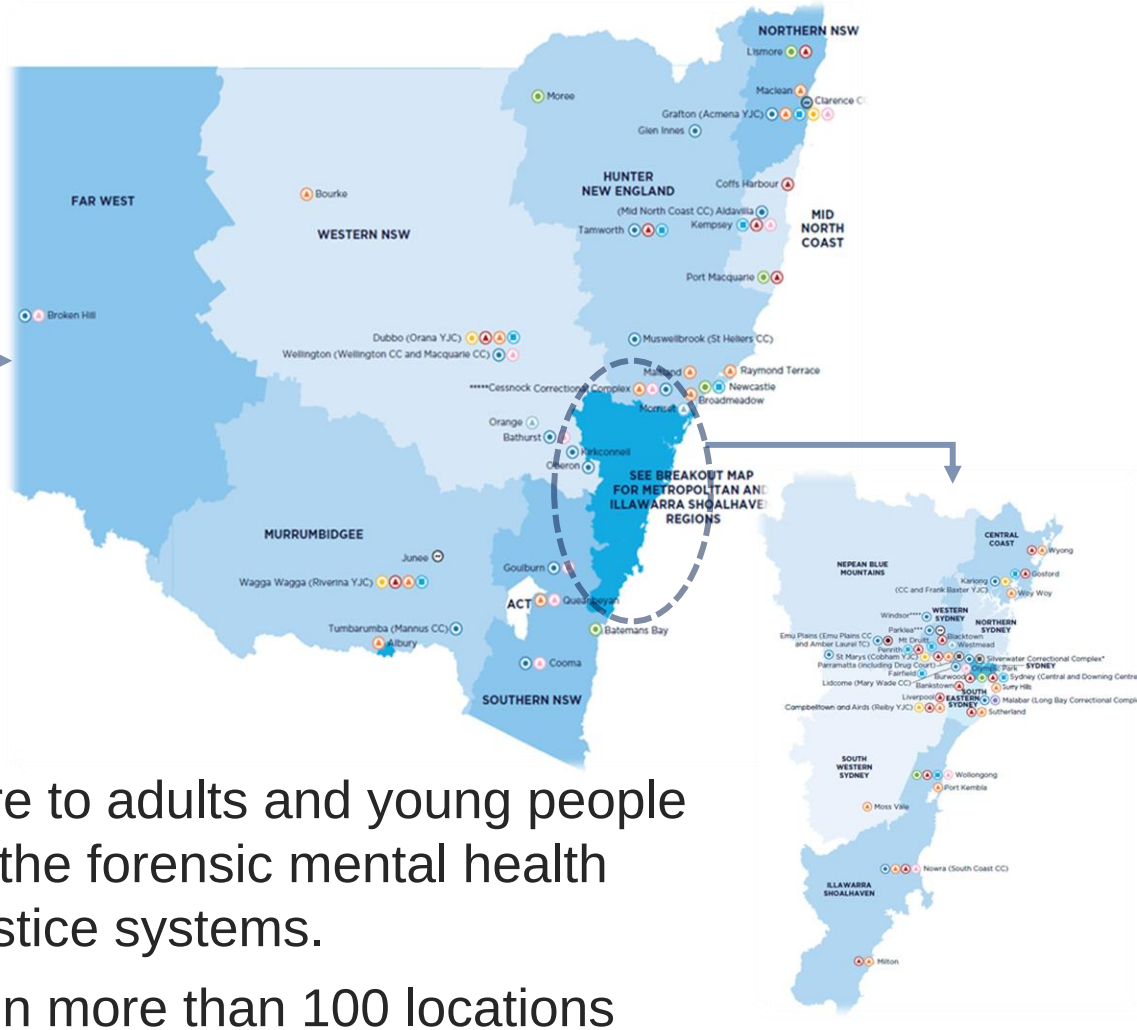
Correctional Healthcare in Australia

At 30 June 2021:
There were about 43,000 prisoners in Australia.
Just over 9 in 10 (92%) prisoners were men.
Just under 1 in 3 (30%) prisoners were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.



We provide care to adults and young people in contact with the forensic mental health and criminal justice systems.

Our staff work in more than 100 locations across the state, including correctional and detention centres, courts, police cells, inpatient settings, and in the community.

Our purpose is to provide a safe and equitable health service

Justice Health NSW care for highly vulnerable adults, adolescents and forensic patients whose health needs are frequently challenging and more complex than the broader community.

63%
Have a mental illness

26%
identify as **Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander**, compared to 3% in the broader community

10%
no fixed accommodation

76% **report a health condition**
26% **report more than three**

17%
Have an intellectual disability

18%
have previously attempted suicide

1 in 5 **report intergenerational incarceration**

2 out of 3
Had a daily substance misuse problem

20%
Reported first time accessing healthcare was in custody

65%
Have experienced at least one traumatic event

***Sources:**

Justice Health NSW Annual Report 2021
AIHW | Secondary education: school retention and completion 2019
AIHW | Illicit Drug Use 2020
AIHW | Mental Health: prevalence and impact 2021

What is Virtual Care?

Virtual care aims to optimise choice, quality and effectiveness of patient care

Virtual care is any interaction between a patient and clinician, or between clinicians, occurring remotely with the use of information technologies.

Virtual care be:

- real time using video or telephone conferencing
- sharing of information or medical images to inform diagnosis, care planning and treatment
- remote patient monitoring

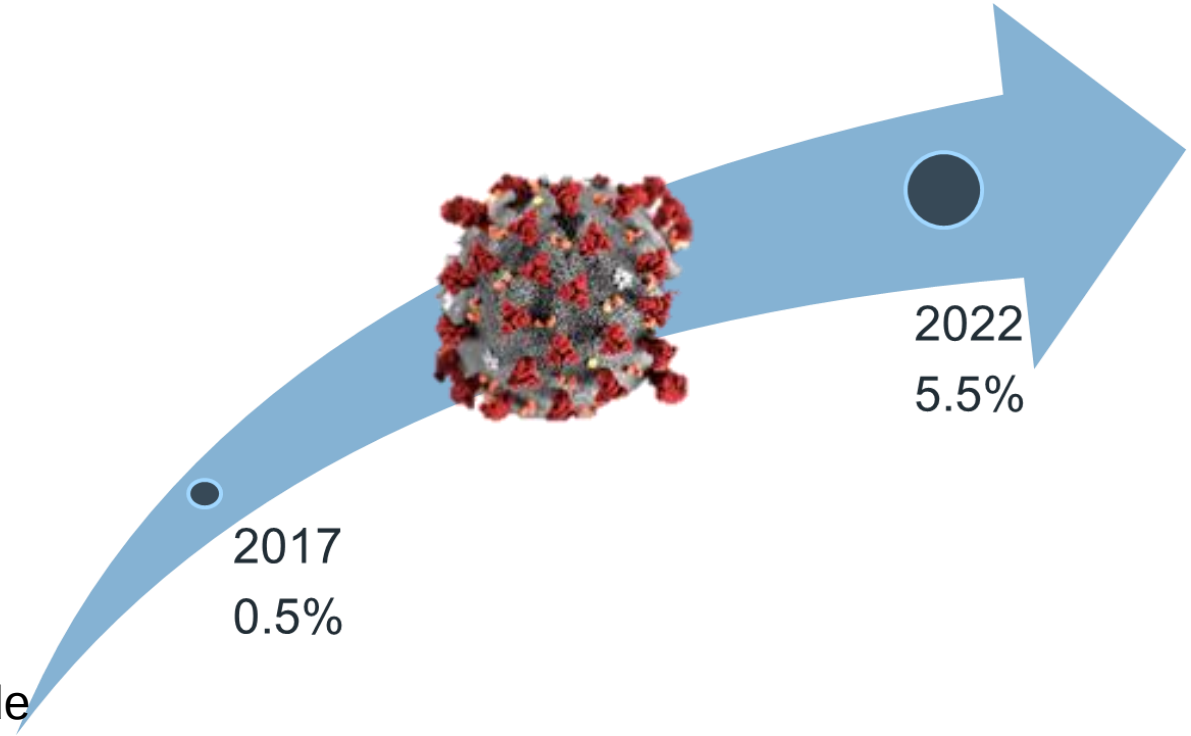
Our Virtual Care Journey

2017

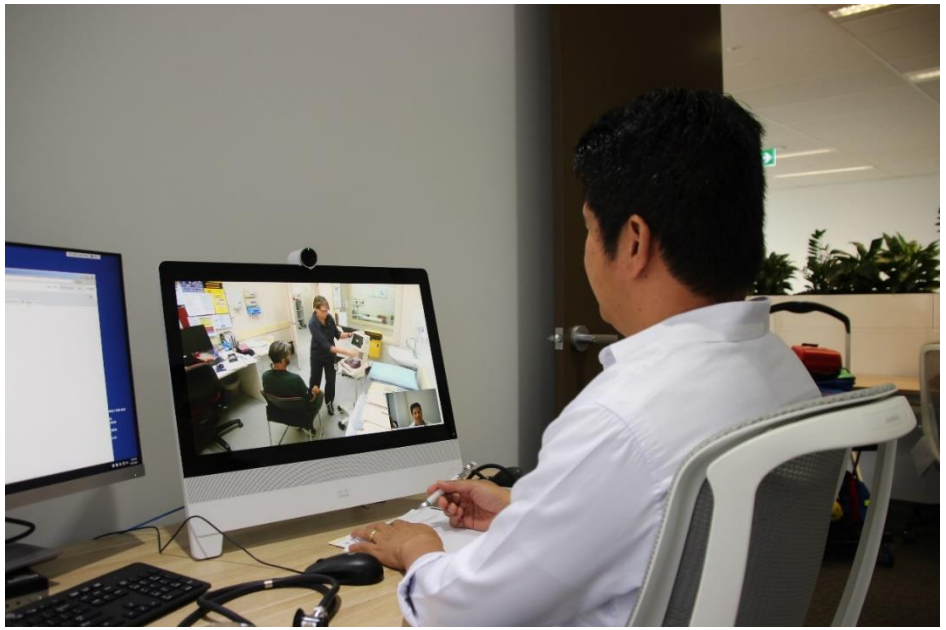
- **0.5%** of all clinical activity delivered via “Telehealth”
- Majority via telephone
- Drug and Alcohol Service, GPs and Psychiatry

2022

- **5.5%** of all clinical activity is “Virtual Care”
- Over half of all appointments are video conference mode
- Most services deliver some care virtually



Our Virtual Care Model



Internal Virtual Clinics conducted from administration centres, Correctional Centres and home offices

- Specialised virtual nursing and medical clinics are organised to support face to face onsite clinics based on patient acuity and need; and can be
  - Phone consultation, clinician to clinician
  - Phone consultation with the patient present
  - Video consultation

External Virtual Specialist Consultations delivered by Local Health District tertiary referral hospitals.

- We have supported virtual specialist appointments with Cardiology, Neurology, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Oncology, and Endocrinology.

NSW
Health

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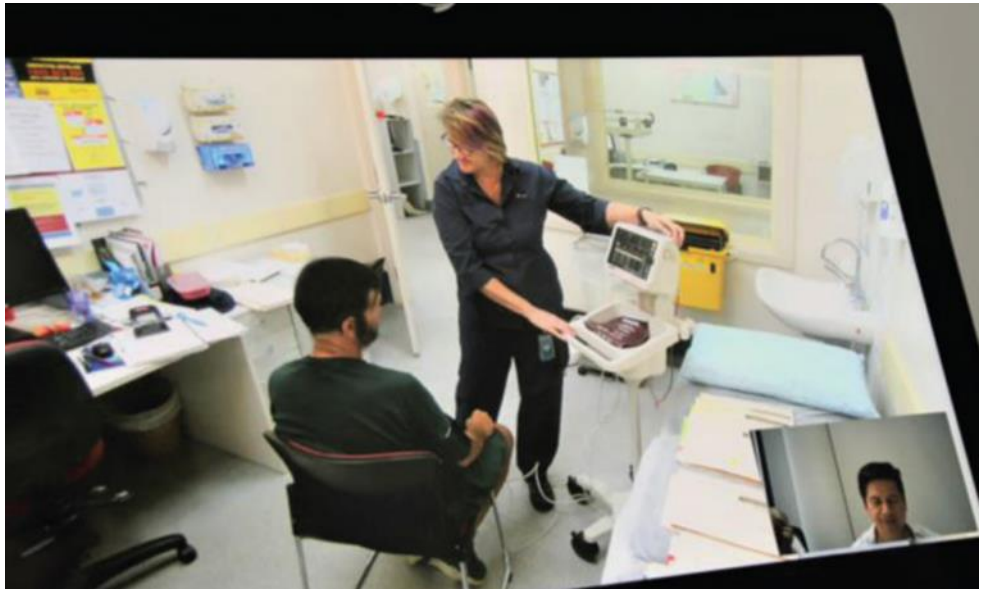
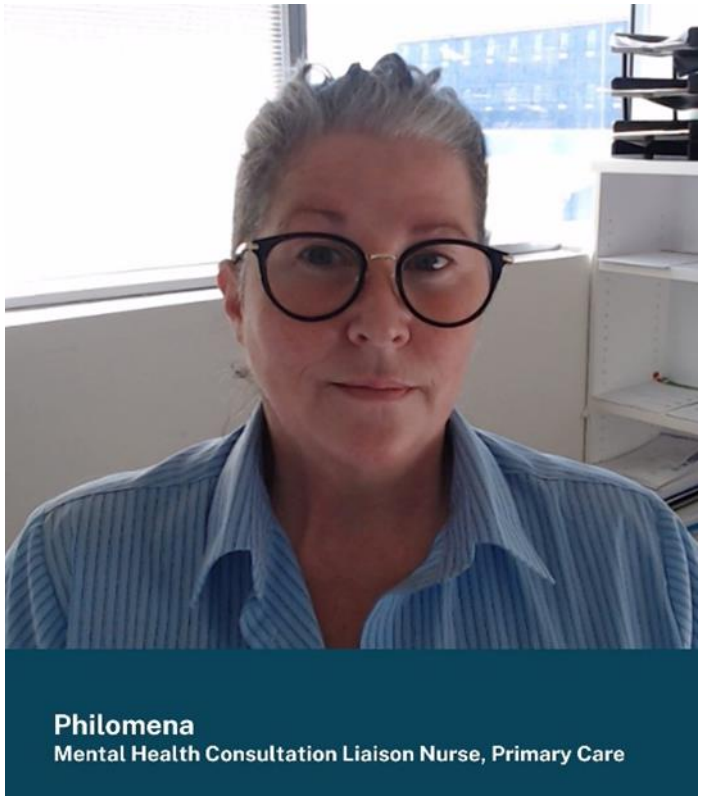
Medical (General Practitioner) Telehealth

- Virtual GP clinic co-ordinated by centralised waitlist management
- 102.5% increase in patients seen from October 2017 to May 2022
- Model of care has contributed to significant reduction in waiting times despite an increase in demand for GP services

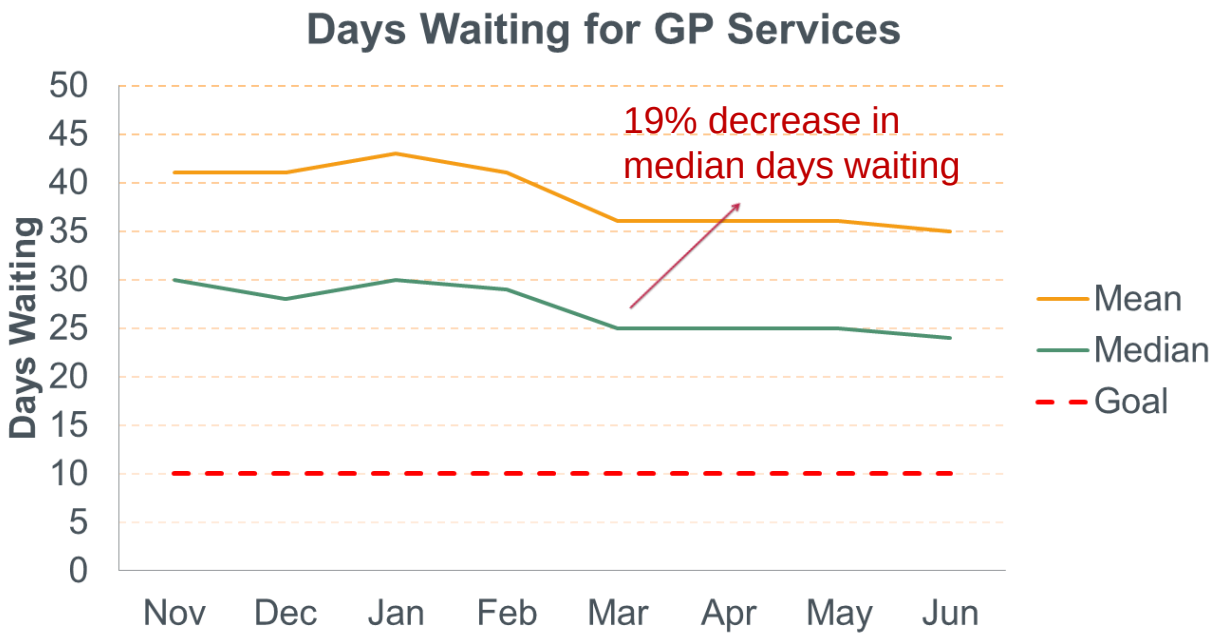


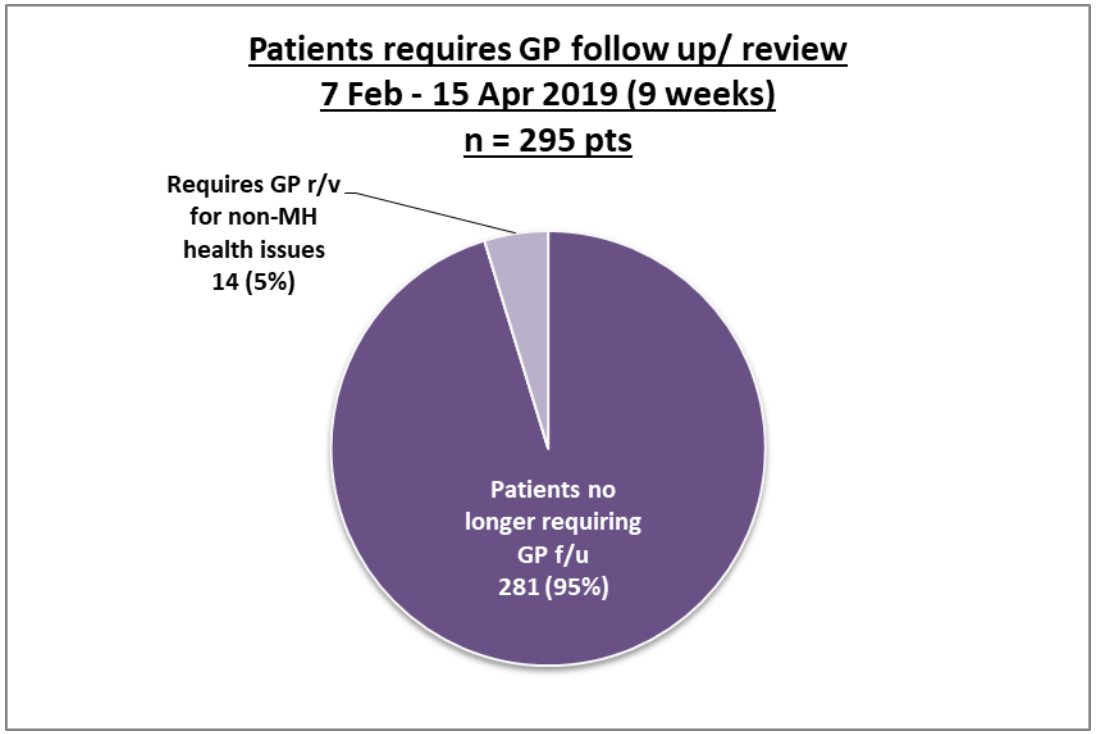
Mental Health Consultation Liaison Nurse Service

- The MHCLN service is a state-wide exclusively virtual service
- Mental Health Nurses provide virtual care, assessment and follow up to mental health patients on the GP waitlist
- An interface between the GP and Psychiatry service



Results

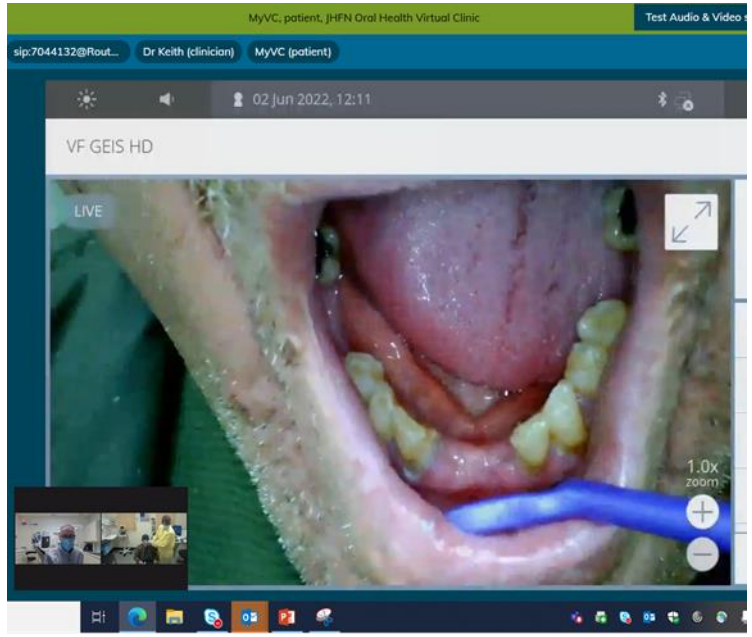


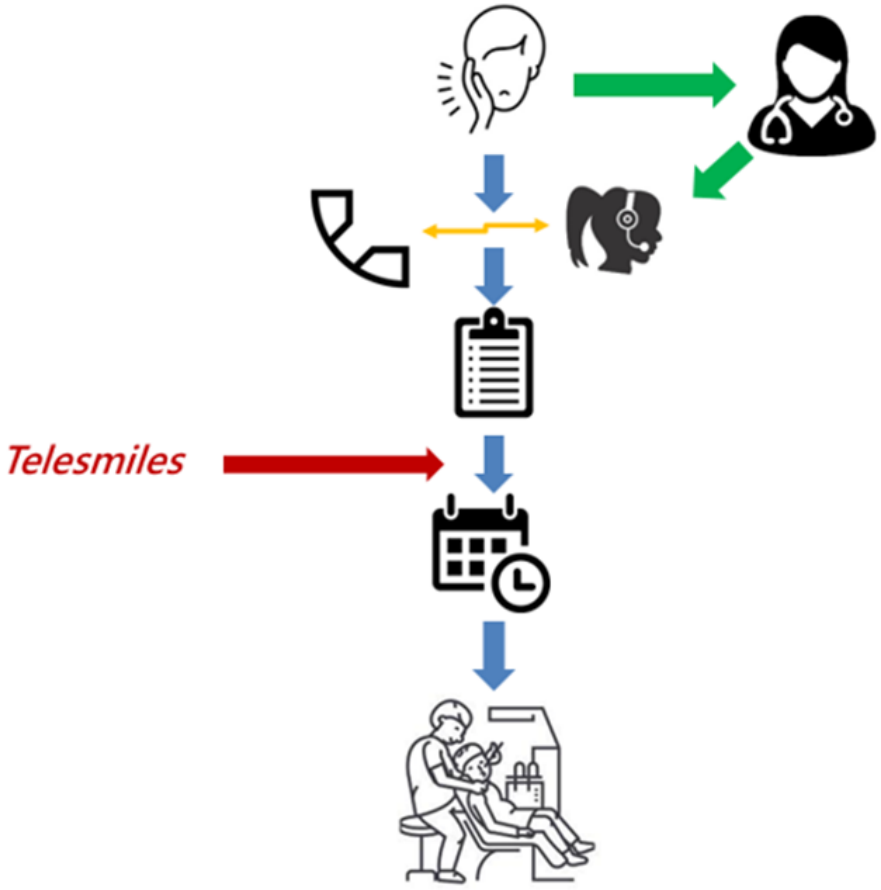


‘ I would just like to thank you for the help and support you have given and shown me over the past year. I am forever grateful for your kindness and I believe without your support I may not have continued to “get up” and keep going’ – Patient feedback letter to MHCLN

Telesmiles – Teledentistry Service

- Teledentistry by Network Oral Health Service
- An adjunct to on-site oral health treatment
- Timely assessments and enhanced triage
- Supports an upstream approach





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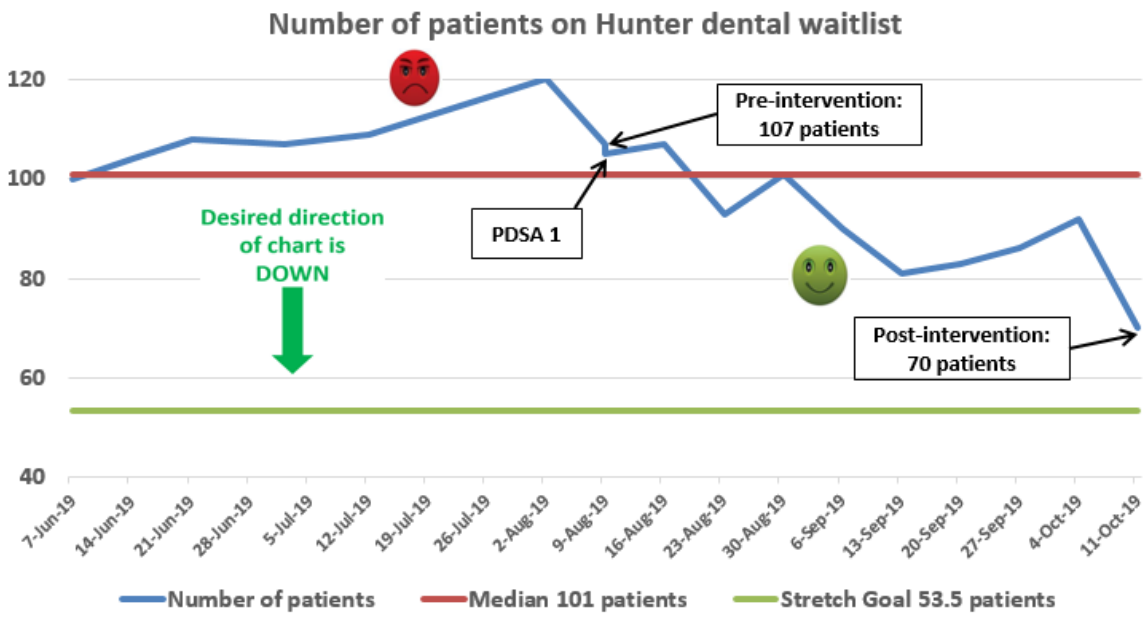
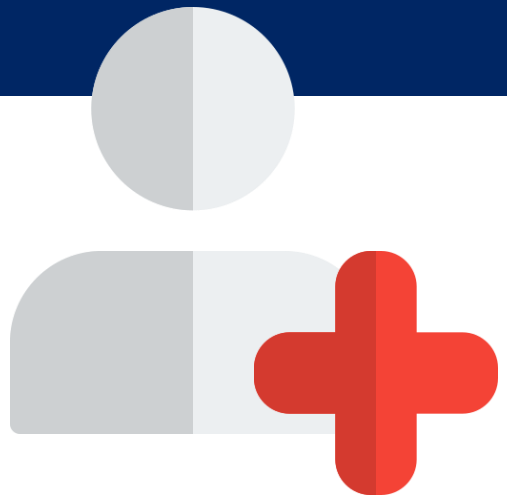
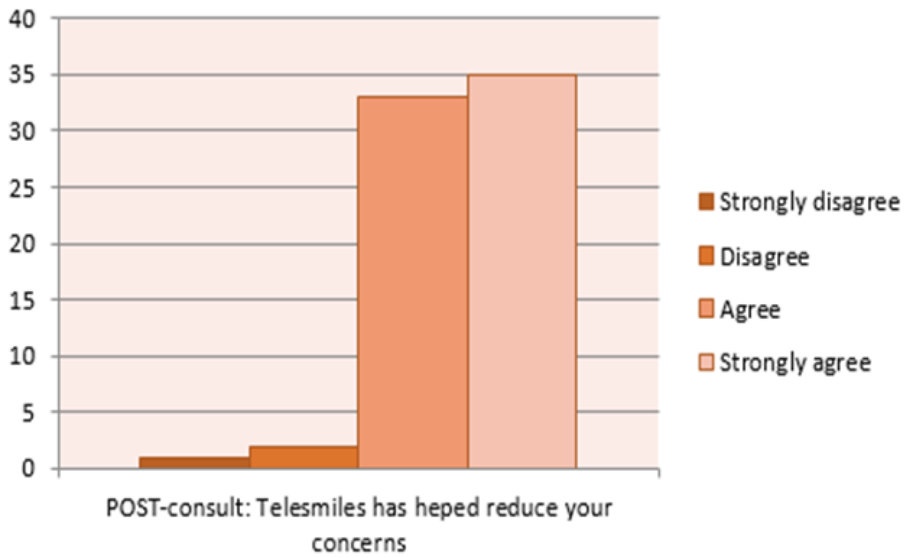




51% patients re-triaged



- Urgent wait times decreased by 84.9% from 52 to 21 days
- Semi urgent wait times decreased by 80.95% from 59 to 25 days

The Virtual Care Accelerator

VALUE Project - Virtual Cardiology Collaboration

- Restricted movements
- Patients don’t want to transfer for medical appointments
- Cancellations have a negative effect on health outcomes
- Significant ‘whole of government’ costs and increased risks
- Challenging experience for patients, staff and members of the public.

Redesigning the “Prison” Cardiology Clinic

Project aim to increase the utilisation of virtual care in collaboration with the Prince of Wales Hospital to improve patients access, patient and clinician experience and reduce costs.

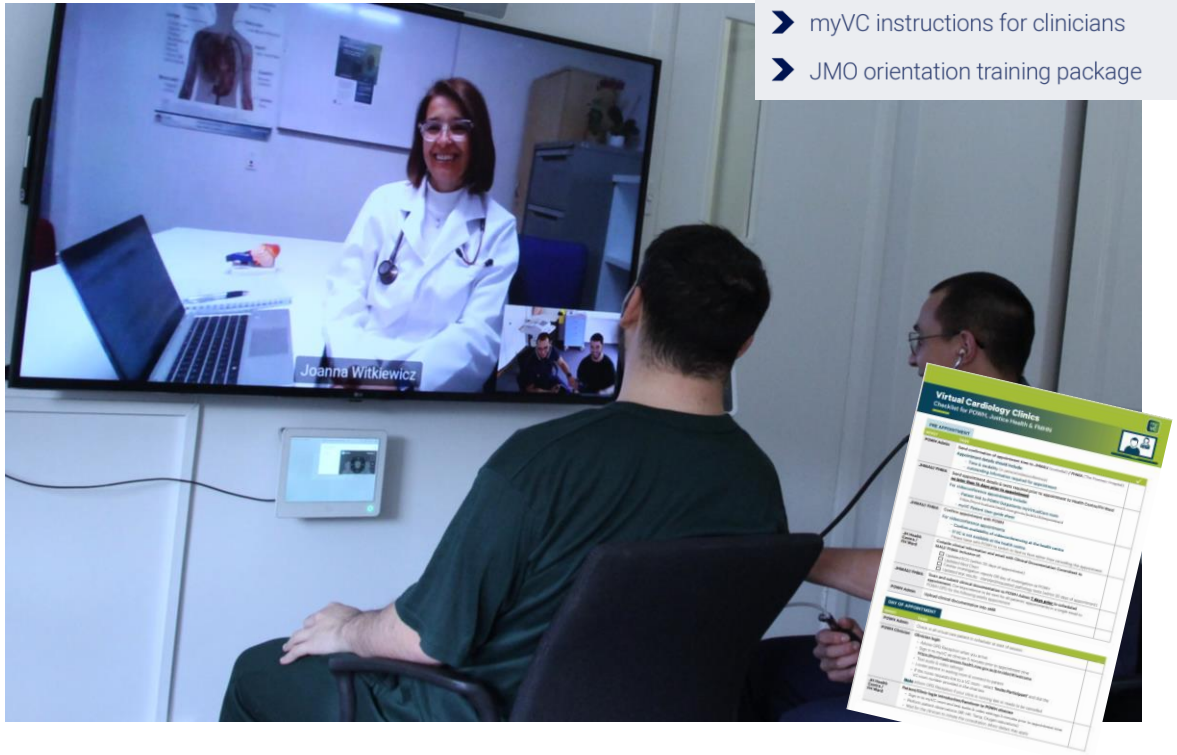
- Prince of Wales Hospital providing about 3000 outpatient appointments across multiple specialties, and over 800 ED transfers every year.
- Cardiology represents about 15% of all OPD appointments, with high cancellation rates

Following Clinical Redesign Methodology

- Clinicians now have access to all documentation and live ECG as required
- Patients have face-to-face nursing support
- Where appropriate, clinical and patient supports can be invited to attend virtually

RESOURCES DEVELOPED

- Cardiology specific clinic checklist for POWH & JHFMHN
- Communication process workflow
- myVC instructions for clinicians
- JMO orientation training package



Results: Operational

47
Clinics

194
Consultations

79%
Virtual

Clinic Utilisation

Before the project
50%

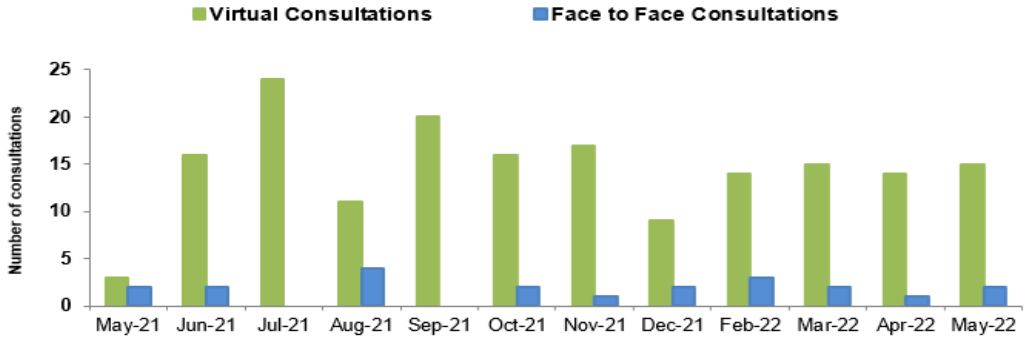
May 21 - May 22
average
89%

49% ↑
Clinic utilisation

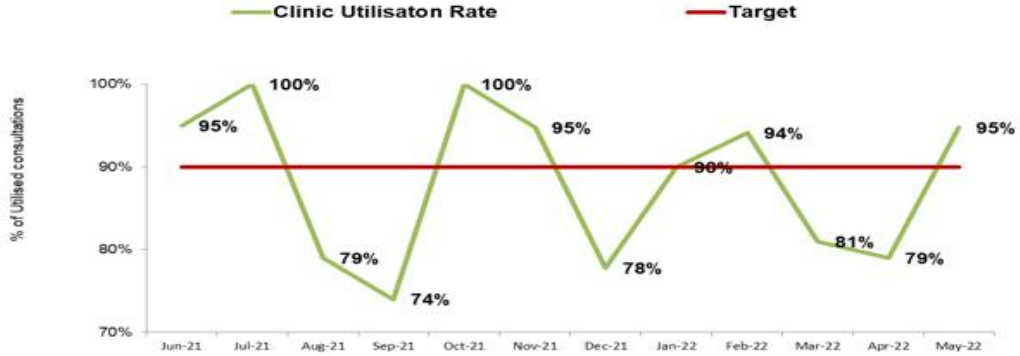
39% ↓
Cancellations/DNAs

173
Return Patient
Transfers Saved

96% ↓
Patient transfers



Virtual cardiology consultations: 79% of all consultations
Face to Face consultations: 10% of all consultations

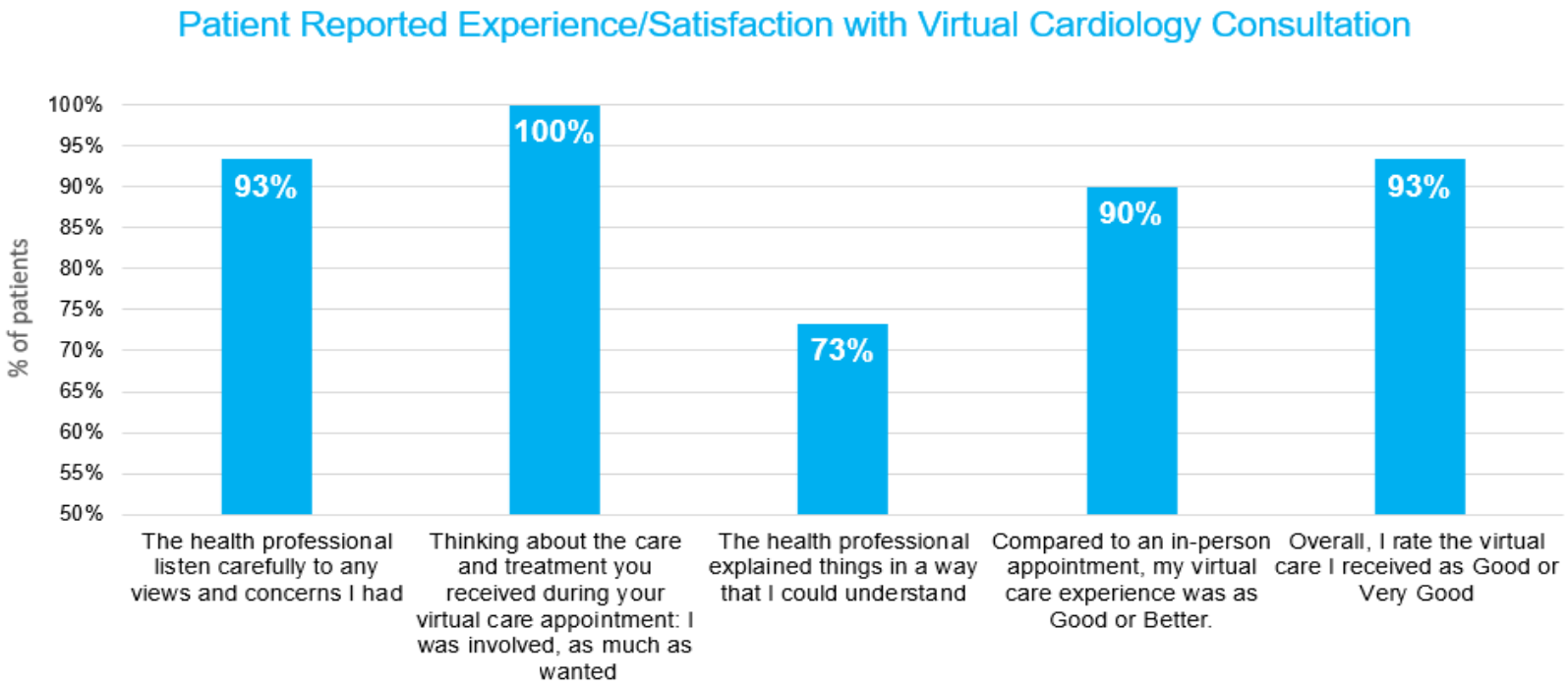


Average utilisation before project start: 50%
May 2021 - May 2022: 89%

Results: Patient Satisfaction

90%

Patients are satisfied



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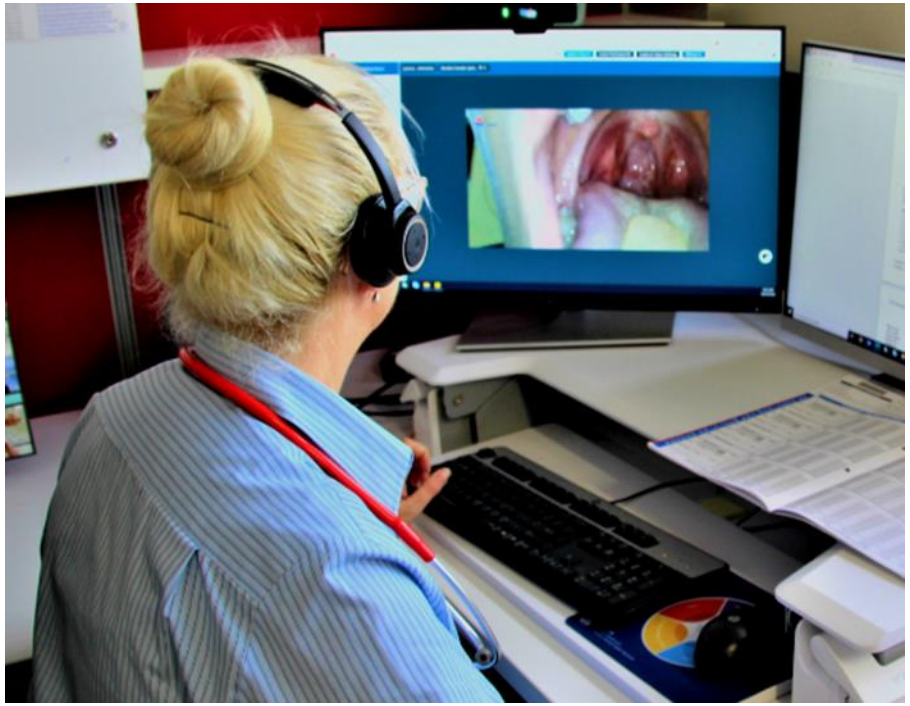
Solutions that support care provision across the system

Opportunities for Virtual Care across multiple services

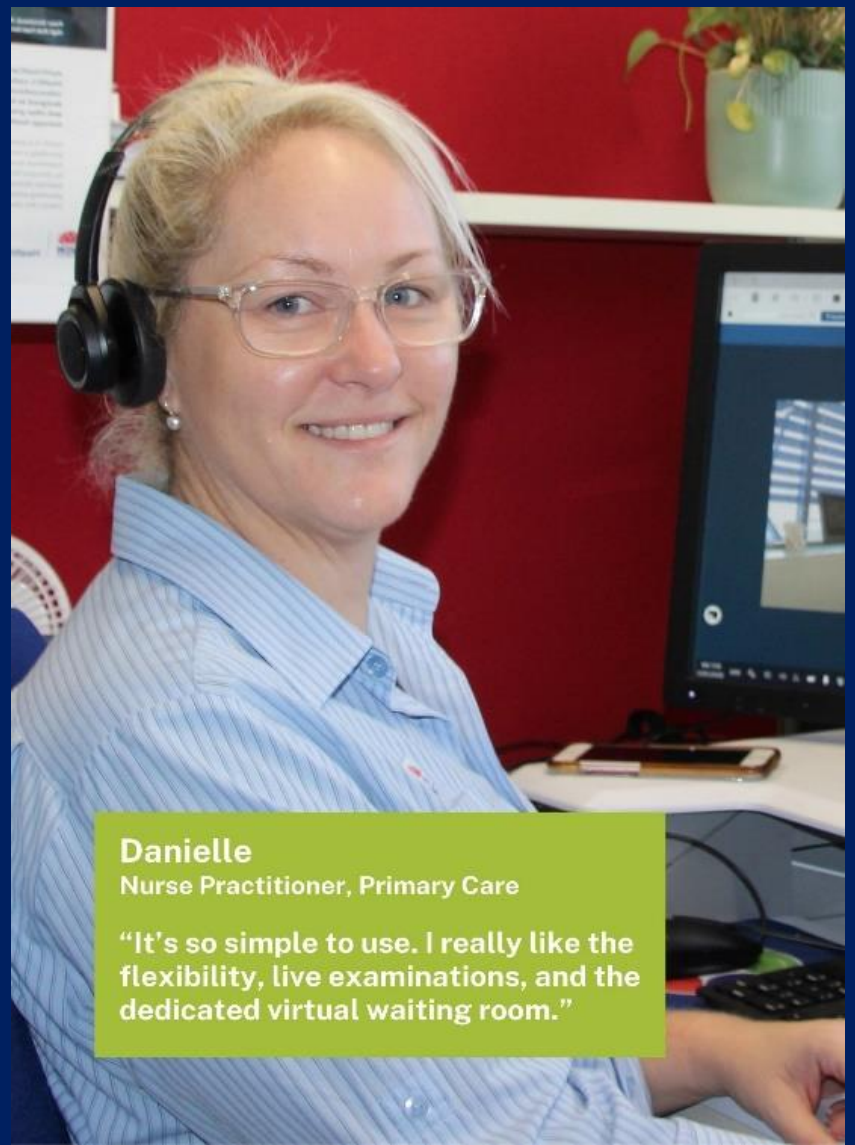
- Aboriginal Chronic Care Program
- Adolescent Mental Health
- Cancer Care Coordinator
- Connections Transition Team
- Custodial Mental Health
- Dermatology
- Diabetes Management and Support
- Dietitian
- Drug & Alcohol
- Integrated Care Service



- Mental Health Consultation Liaison Nurse (MHCLN)
- Nurse Practitioner Primary Care
- Occupational Therapy
- Older Persons Clinic
- Oral Health
- Physiotherapy
- Population Health
- Virtual GP Clinic
- Wound and Stoma Care Clinic
- GP ROAMS

Linda
Wound and Stoma Care Clinical Nurse Specialist

"It's easy to access, and connect with the Health Centres and other health professionals. I definitely get better vision for wound assessment with cameras connected to myVC".



Danielle
Nurse Practitioner, Primary Care

"It's so simple to use. I really like the flexibility, live examinations, and the dedicated virtual waiting room."

Josh
Diabetes Clinical Nurse Specialist

"With myVC, I can share educational materials and pathology results during virtual consultations to help my patients understand some of their unique abstract health issues. Patients report positive experience, feel more engaged and supported".

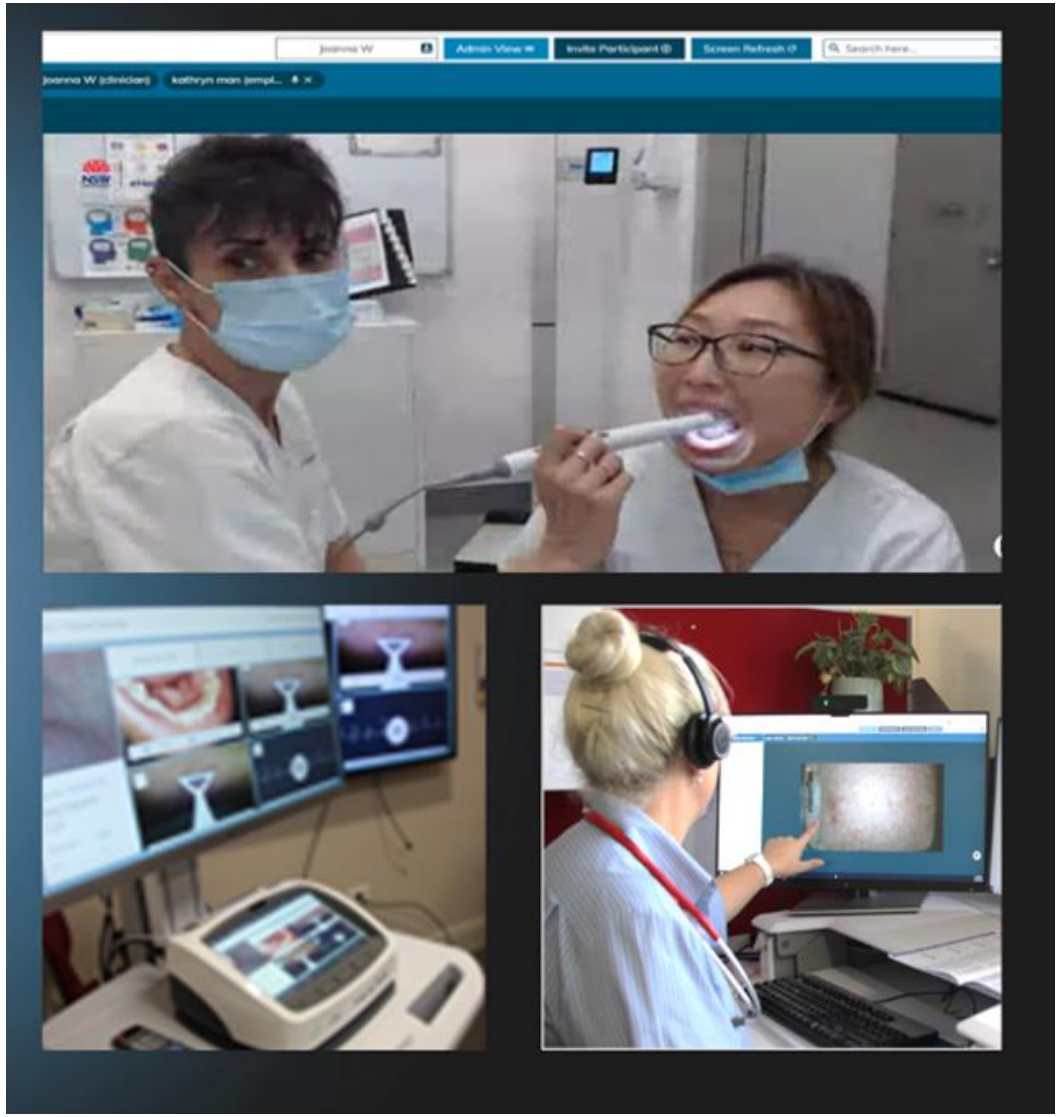
Clinician Feedback

" VIRTUAL APPOINTMENTS WORK WELL WHEN THE TECHNOLOGY IS RELIABLE"

" HAVING SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO ENSURE CLINICS RUN SMOOTHLY IS VITAL"

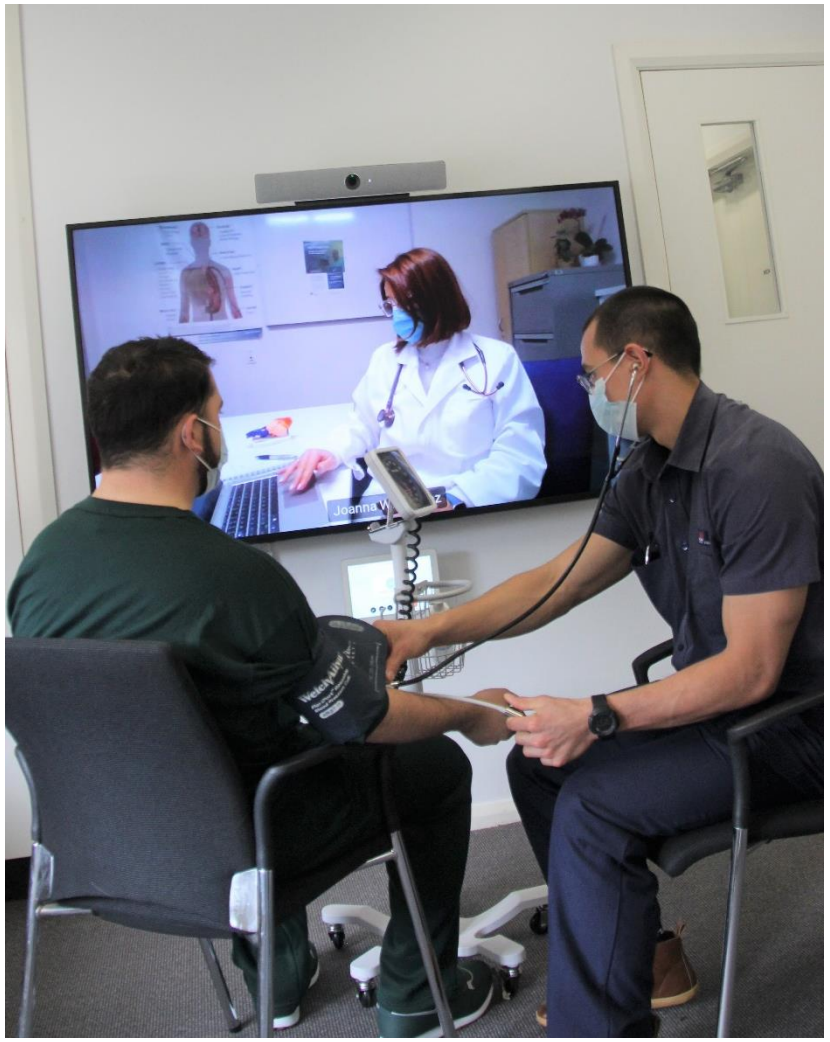
" ASSUMING RECENT TEST RESULTS ARE AVAILABLE AND ON HAND VIDEO APPOINTMENTS FOR THE RIGHT PATIENTS ARE GOOD"

" HAVING A NURSE AT THE OTHER END TAKING OBS AND RECORDING THEM IN THE MYVC CHAT MAKES THINGS EASIER"



Benefits of virtual care in our settings

- Timely access to specialist care
- Reduced need for facility transfers
- Can help Aboriginal patients remain on country and closer to their support networks
- Less disruption to other aspects of their custodial routine
- Continuity of care in a familiar environment
- Stability in treating team helps with improved identification and escalation of patients with increasing or serious physical or mental health needs
- Targeted referrals leads to shorter waiting times for patients with complex care needs



Innovation and Future Plans

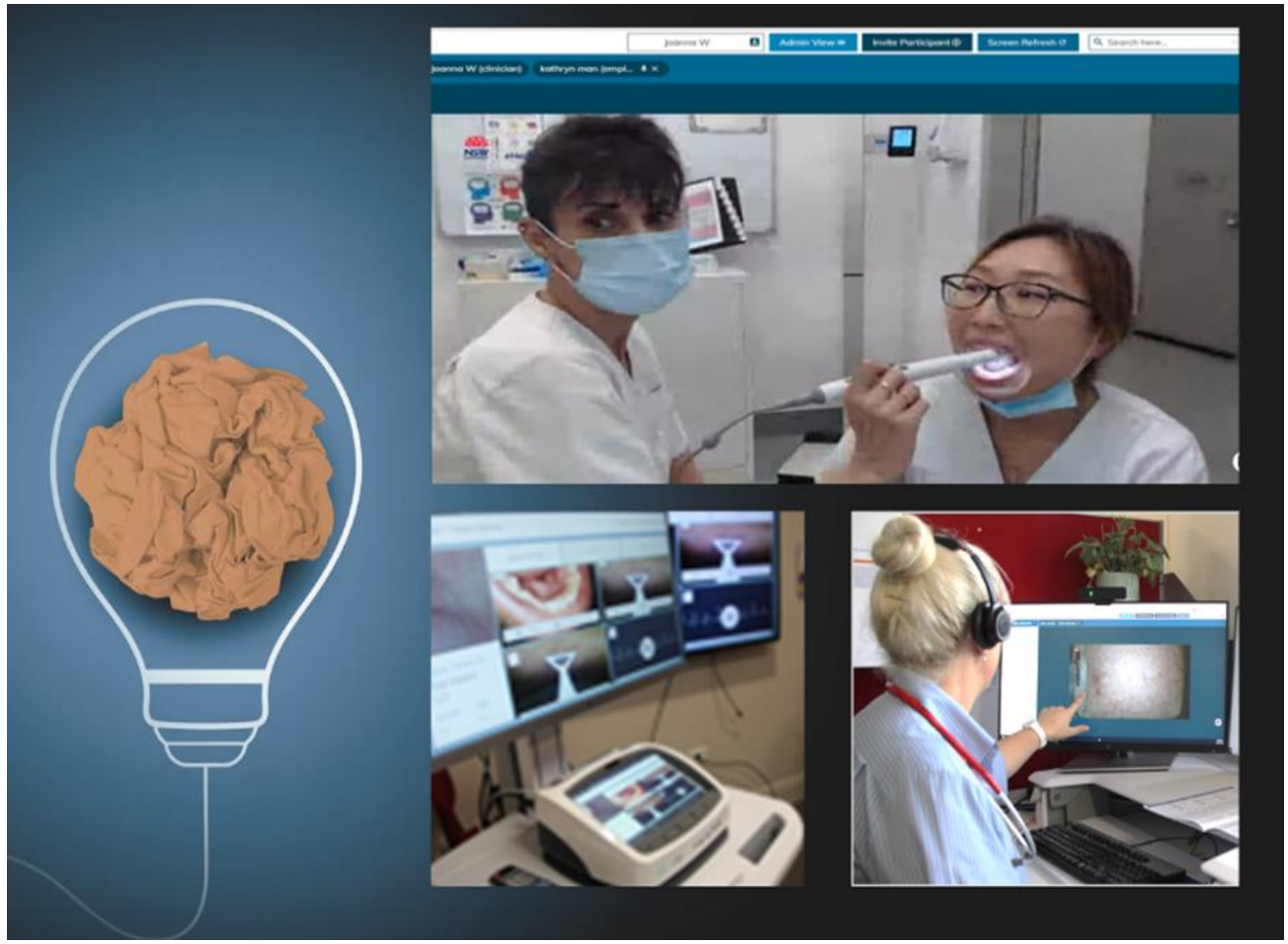
- Digital medical devices for skin, ear and throat examinations
- Remote patient monitoring
- Virtual Care collaborations with further community hospitals
- Tablet technology for expanding videoconferencing
- Virtual Care in Police Cells

Enabled and supported by:

- Digital Health Steering Committee
- Justice Health NSW Strategic Plan
- Justice Health NSW Digital Health Strategy
- NSW Ministry of Health Virtual Care Strategy

Lessons learnt

- Create the space for innovation
- It’s not just about the technology
- Early and targeted stakeholder engagement
- Communicate widely and often
- Site visits to Correctional Centres to showcase care in our context
- Focus on solutions that matter and work for both partners and patients
- Listen to and consult patients
- Ensure adequate support
- Be patient



Michael's Story

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Thank you

Questions?