

Hospital readmissions can be a vital part of a patient's treatment, but in many cases are avoidable and cause unnecessary cost to the health system. Unplanned readmissions are estimated to cost Australia \$1.5B each year.

By reducing the number of avoidable hospital readmissions, limited resources are freed up and a better standard of care can be provided to patients both in Hospitals and those receiving treatment in the community.

Released today by the Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association's Deeble Institute for Health Policy Research, the Evidence Brief '[Avoiding hospital readmissions: the models and the role of primary care](#)' authored by Inala Primary Care, looks at how the wider adoption of virtual care models and increased communication across primary care roles can affect hospital readmissions and provide improved outcomes that matter to patients.

'These new and innovative models of care, like virtual wards, have been beneficial for not only COVID-19 patients during the pandemic but could improve transitional care for those being discharged from hospital,' says AHHA Acting Chief Executive Kylie Woolcock.

'We know that the process of going from hospital back home is a critical point in a patient's care journey and can be a risk factor for hospital readmission.

'But for many it's at this stage they want to be getting back home, particularly if a high level of care and monitoring can be provided in a setting like a virtual ward.

'When virtual care models are designed around treatment of specific diseases, there can be greater levels of care satisfaction for patients and practitioners.

'Models of care are typically more successful if their goal relates to improving multiple facets of the transition process using multidisciplinary teams embedded in primary care.

'Patients generally felt they had better co-ordinated care and understanding of their medical condition, they also had greater confidence in handling their condition and reduced stress and anxiety related to their illness.

'These are all important outcomes that can have a substantial impact on someone's quality of life.

'New models of care designed to reduce readmissions, while not necessarily reducing overall costs to our healthcare system, have the potential to shift costs to other sectors that improve the long-term health outcomes that matter most to patients.

The online version of this [media release](#) and the Evidence Brief '[Avoiding hospital readmissions: the models and the role of primary care](#)' can be found on the AHHA website.

The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association is the national peak body for public and not-for-profit healthcare.

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