

Southern Cross Healthcare eAdmissions pilot



Southern Cross Auckland Surgical Centre



CUSTOMER DETAILS

Customer name	Southern Cross Healthcare Limited
Connected facilities	16
Organisation type	Private Healthcare Organisation
Population serviced	Around 80,000 admissions annually across joint venture and wholly owned hospitals
Project name	eAdmissions Pilot

The eAdmissions pilot took place at **Auckland Surgical Centre** over a 12 week period, ending in **March 2022**. It involved 6 specialists across orthopaedics, plastics and reconstructive surgery and included hospital booking and admin teams and pre-admission nurses.

Pilot location Southern Cross Auckland Surgical Centre, New Zealand

Products implemented Digital Front Door

Key benefits



90%

of patients chose to use the eAdmissions solution over the previous paper-based process



83%

reduction in booking processing time per patient for the administrative staff in the surgeon rooms



91%

Customer Effort Score for ease of use to complete admissions journey, with most forms being completed in one login session

At least a **25% reduction** in the number of follow ups required for missing forms or incomplete responses

Increased safety through improved accuracy of information provided that is accessible in the Clinical Workstation





The Customer

Southern Cross Healthcare Limited has been a trusted part of New Zealand's healthcare system for over 40 years and plays a vital role in New Zealand's private elective surgery sector.

The organisation's wholly owned and joint venture hospital network comprises 16 facilities across New Zealand, as well as services beyond its hospitals including community-based physiotherapy and rehabilitation, and personalised healthcare solutions for New Zealand workplaces.

Southern Cross continuously invests in modern healthcare technology to improve clinical workflows and patient outcomes in line with its mission to provide affordable, high-quality healthcare to more New Zealanders. To support this commitment, Southern Cross and Orion Health work together in a unique innovation partnership pursuing a paperless strategy through ongoing co-development and digitisation projects.

The partnership's achievements so far include the development of an electronic patient record called Clinical Workstation (CWS). CWS encompasses a range of Orion Health products accessed via Clinical Portal and provides an integrated view of a patient's clinical record. It incorporates products that streamline clinical workflow including digital patient notes, electronic bedside monitoring of vital signs and nursing assessments.

Building upon the achievements of the partnership and following successful migration of CWS to the AWS cloud in early 2020, Southern Cross and Orion Health embarked on a project to develop and pilot a digital admissions solution aimed at streamlining the pre-surgery process for patients and clinicians.



The Challenge

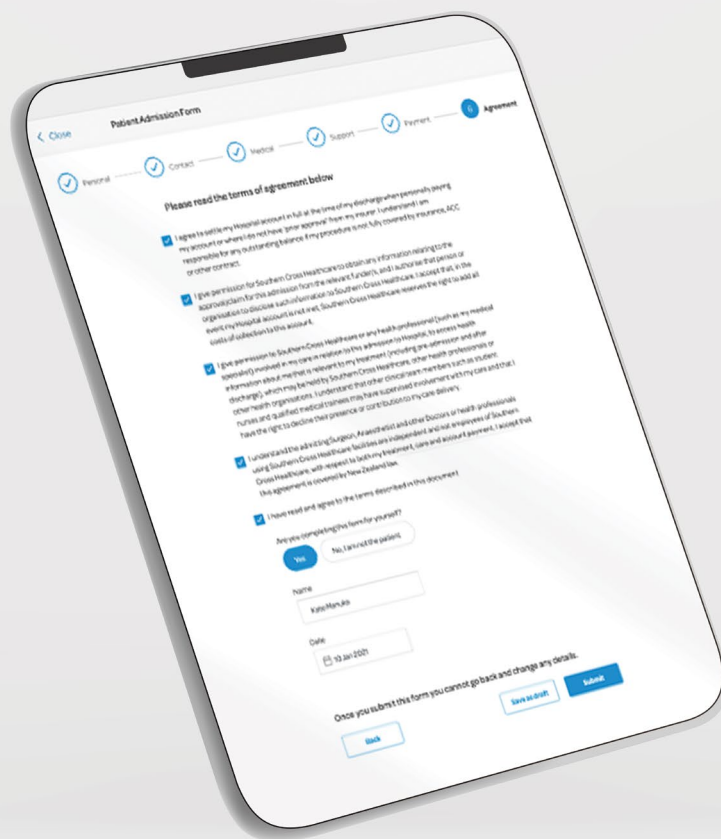
When a patient visits a Southern Cross hospital for a procedure, they are required to provide information about themselves and their health status. This includes vital details such as what medications they are currently taking as well as their agreement to treatment.

In the absence of the digital solution, patients are required to meet this need by completing a substantial pack of paper admission forms and returning them to the hospital either in person, by post or via email. The forms are received by the Southern Cross admissions team in many different formats such as physical paper copies, PDFs and photos attached to an email. There is often missing information, illegible handwriting and sometimes even notes scribbled in the margins by translators assisting the patient.

The nature of the paper-based system poses significant operational burden due to forms not arriving on time or being delayed, adding to the administrative workload for hospital staff. It was common for the forms to be received late, sometimes even on the day of the surgery, putting staff under pressure.

For surgeon rooms, the booking process was time consuming too as they were tasked with compiling admission packs manually and sending them out to patients. They would also be asked by the hospital to chase patients whose forms were late. Any delays meant patients had to wait to receive instructions from the hospital.

Southern Cross Healthcare wanted a solution that would streamline the pre-admission experience for its patients, and make the booking process quicker and more efficient. It wanted to ease the administrative burden for admission staff and ensure the most accurate and complete data was being provided to its medical specialists and nursing teams, well ahead of any surgeries.



The Solution

Leveraging Orion Health's Digital Front Door, Southern Cross and Orion Health co-designed a digital admissions solution that digitises the booking request, pre-admission, and admission forms process for patients visiting a hospital.

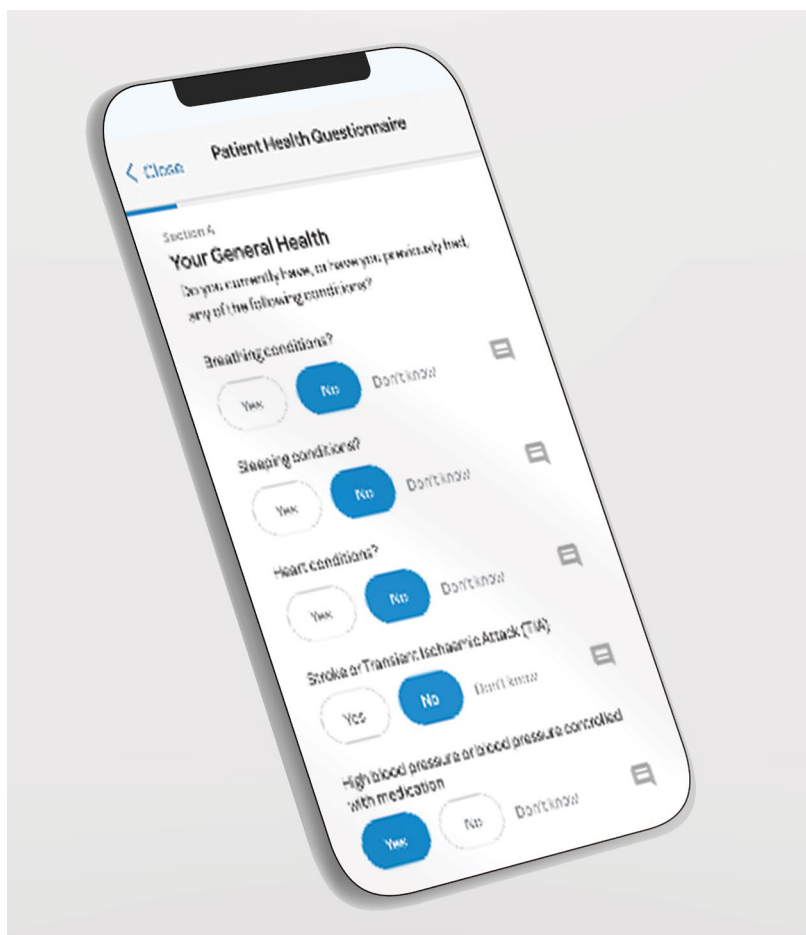
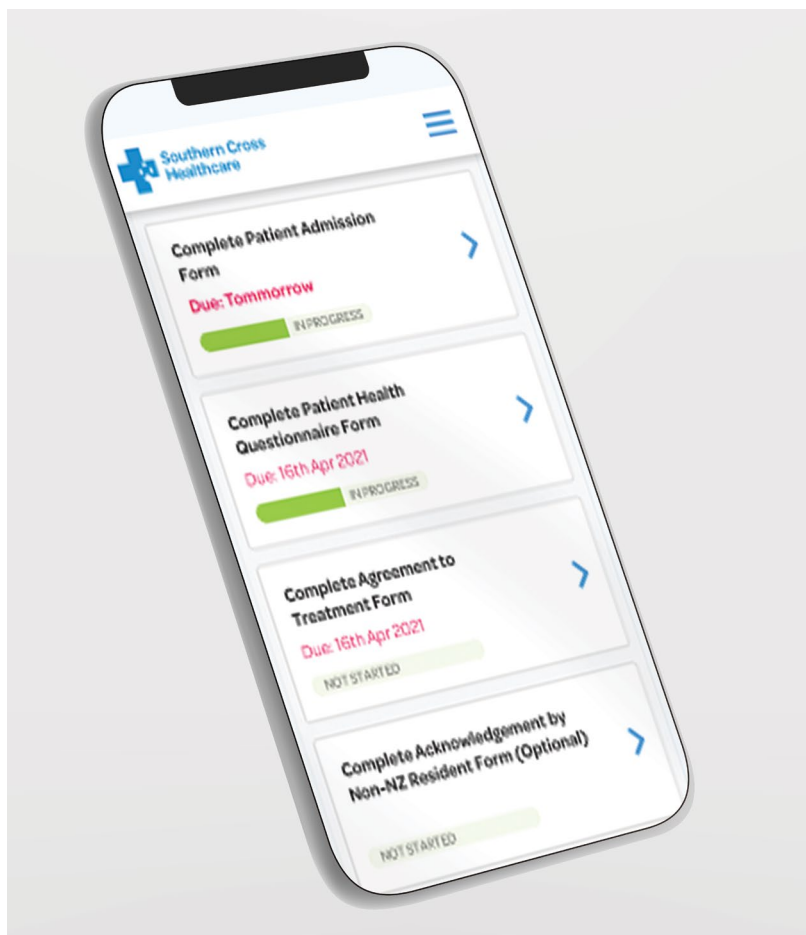
To replace the existing paper admission pack, patients in the pilot were given the option to be invited by email to register and login to a MyHealthcare account. Once logged in they could see exactly what forms need to be completed for their upcoming procedure. Each digital form was broken down into short sections so the patient could complete them at their own pace (e.g. complete 90% of the Patient Admission Form and finish it off once their insurance pre-approval was in place). Naturally, patients could save a draft and come back to complete the form later.

Clearly visible deadlines for when each form needed completing guided patients to submit the information on time. Southern Cross staff instantly received the information upon form submission, and it became

visible to pre-admission nurses via Clinical Workstation (CWS) so that patients could safely be triaged and assessed pre-surgery. The information in the forms helped nurses to establish which patients were high risk and therefore required a face-to-face pre-op assessment, the goal being to avoid bringing patients in unnecessarily.

Information chasing became less of a hassle with the new eAdmissions system because it was clear to all people involved what had to be done and by when. Practice Managers were no longer in the dark as to whether the patient had completed the 'homework' as they now had visibility over how patients were tracking with form completion. Hospital administration staff had one place to go to see all booking requests in progress and valuable time was saved by not having to download, open and print email attachments and file them into the paper medical record.

As the patient progressed through the eAdmissions journey, hospital staff could see exactly what stage had been reached, leading to a better understanding of what was going to happen next.



The Result

The eAdmissions solution was initially piloted at Auckland Surgical Centre over a 12 week period, ending in March 2022. It involved six specialists across orthopaedics, plastics and reconstructive surgery and included hospital booking and administration teams and pre-admission nurses.

More than 90% of patients in the pilot group used MyHealthcare to complete the admissions process digitally, all of whom agreed they preferred the digital solution over the paper-based process.

The solution has brought meaningful benefits to workflow efficiency for Southern Cross Healthcare staff. The increased accuracy and completeness of data has resulted in the number of follow up calls between staff and patients being reduced by at least 25%. Similarly, Practice Managers reported a reduction in booking processing time by 83% on average, removing the need for them to compile the paper admission pack and send it out to the patient.

Pre-admission nurses and anaesthetists have also benefited from being able to view all of a patient's pre-assessment data in real-time, from within their electronic patient record in CWS. This means they have prompt oversight of a patient's medical history including previous visits, pre-existing conditions, medications, allergies and clinical documentation, and can assess any possible risks well ahead of surgery.

Patients also had an extremely positive response to the digital admission experience. The simplified processes resulted in an overall Customer Effort Score of 91% which is well above the global benchmark of 71%. On average patients completed their forms during one session - reducing timeframes from days to hours - and feedback has been that the system is easy, simple and more convenient.

Streamlining the entire pre-admissions process has proven significant value for Southern Cross Healthcare and most importantly has made the process of being admitted to hospital prior to surgery a better experience for patients.

“Online is way better.
**100x better than paper,
loved the experience.”**

PATIENT

“It’s been a **game
changer**, it really
has. It has certainly
made my life easier,
much easier.”

PRACTICE MANAGER



Future Developments

Recognising the global demand from consumers to actively engage with health systems in more convenient and efficient ways, and following an extremely successful pilot project, Southern Cross Healthcare plans to roll the solution out across their entire network. The rollout will take a phased approach spanning over 12 months, beginning October 2022.

In addition, and prior to the wider rollout, a number of key enhancements are being incorporated into the solution to ensure the user experience is optimised as much as possible following end-user feedback received as part of the pilot.

About Orion Health

Orion Health is a leading population health management company and one of the world's foremost providers of digital health solutions to healthcare organisations. Used in over 30 countries by more than 300,000 clinicians, Orion Health provides an open platform which enables better healthcare delivery for more than 100 million patients globally. This platform delivers improvements to the patient experience, efficiencies in frontline care, provides insights into population health and enables data science through machine learning to raise the digital maturity of healthcare facilities, Health Information Exchanges (HIEs), and healthcare systems worldwide.

Orion Health supplies the world's #1 health data platform,
protecting over 110 million precious patient records worldwide.

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