

## POLAR GP Transition

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What are the benefits to have clinical audit tool installed?**

Clinical audit tool helps practices to better understand their patient cohort by providing insights into patient data. It also enables meaningful analysis by general practices of their patient data to identify gaps in patient care, track patient outcomes, build on areas of quality improvement, and identify opportunities to improve practice business revenue.

**Q: What is POLAR GP?**

Outcome Health’s Population Level Analysis and Reporting tool (POLAR) is a clinical audit tool and uses health analytics to understand and respond to population health trends, support quality in primary health services and provide insights into the local business drivers for general practice.

**Q: Who can use POLAR GP?**

POLAR GP is suitable for use by all general practice staff:

	Clinical	Business	Accreditation
Practice Principals	✓	✓	✓
General Practitioners	✓		✓
Nurses	✓		✓
Practice Managers		✓	✓
Business Managers		✓	✓
Receptionists			✓

**Q: Do I need to pay for POLAR GP?**

There is no direct cost to the practice. POLAR GP is fully subsidised by SWSPHN and there will be no ongoing product costs. An agreement to provide de-identified practice data to SWSPHN is required for the use of the tool.

## Q: How does POLAR GP manage my data?

The POLAR data extraction tool automatically extracts patient data from the general practice clinical information software and practice management software. The identified and de-identified practice data is encrypted using industry endorsed algorithms similar as those used in the banking sector. The encrypted identified data is stored locally with the POLAR software. The encrypted de-identified data is uploaded directly to the POLAR data warehouse (located in Australia).

Please refer to [Data Security and Privacy](#) for more details of Outcome Health data management.

## Q: Why has SWSPHN decide to make the change?

SWSPHN has decided to switch to POLAR GP based on feedback received from the 6-month POLAR GP trial. This trial was held in late 2019 with a representative cohort of practices under SWSPHN.

## Q: What are the benefits of POLAR GP?

- Friendly user interface and layout with interactive reports and graphs
- Only single installation at your practice that allow you to use POLAR GP in any PC within the same network
- Data is LIVE (extraction of data happens every 5 minutes)
- Remote access to the tool (de-identified data only)
- Extensive data mapping
  - POLAR GP maps free-text and coded GP diagnosis to [Australian SNOMED-CT](#) and a Higher Order Diagnosis categorisation systems so free-texted diagnoses are not lost
  - POLAR GP maps medications to the [World Health Organisations ATC Drug classification](#)
  - POLAR GP maps Pathology data into GP relevant categories
- Advanced filtering options and ability to add bookmarks
- Regular PIP QI reports for each practice
- New reports coming on board including a COVID-19 report

## Q: When will the transition start?

Recruitment of the transition has started from 1<sup>st</sup> week of May 2020. Please visit [SWSPHN POLAR GP](#) and contact your assigned Practice Support Officer / Health Systems Improvement Officer for more information.

## Q: What are the steps of POLAR GP installation?

Step 1: Your assigned SWSPHN representative will create a [practice profile](#) for you:

- Practice needs to nominate a POLAR authoriser and administrator. Your authorised person and nominated administrator can be the same person (only admin users have access to your practice's financial information in MBS reports)
- The POLAR Administrator can setup and manage your POLAR user accounts for any staff member and allow or restrict access to revenue information in individual reports

Step 2: Filling out the [installation checklist](#)

- POLAR GP is compatible with Medical Director, Best Practice, Pracsoft and Zedmed. Other technical requirements are specified on the checklist

Step 3: Your assigned SWSPHN representative will upload the checklist to [Outcome Health](#) and request installation time

- Practice can nominate a chosen date and time for remote installation
- It will take 3-5 business days to start the installation process after checklist has been uploaded
- POLAR GP is only installed onto one server or computer within the general practice or cloud environment. It takes about 30-60 minutes to install including the first full data extraction
- In most cases, rebooting the server or computer is not required during installation. This means no downtime during business hours

## Q: My practice has a lot of workstations, will the POLAR GP's installation process time-consuming?

Only single installation at your practice that allow you to use POLAR GP in any PC within the same network regardless of the size of your practice.

## Q: Can I keep both PENCS and POLAR GP clinical audit tools at the same time?

Yes, both clinical audit tools can be kept at the same time. However, SWSPHN will only subsidise POLAR GP, and PENCS license will be deactivated from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 except in certain special circumstances.

If you would prefer to keep PENCS, feel free to pay for PENCS license yourself.

**Q: What are the circumstances that SWSPHN will consider subsidising PENCS license?**

SWSPHN will consider extension of subsidising PENCS license under certain circumstances including:

- Practice's clinical software is not compatible with POLAR GP. POLAR GP currently works with Best Practice, Medical Director and Pracsoft, and Zedmed. Medtech32, Genie and Helix connectivity currently in development.
- Practice is participating certain SWSPHN approved researches only using PENCS for data collection
- Practice is participating in LUMOS project

Once the above circumstances are no longer applicable SWSPHN will not continuously subsidise PENCS license.

**Q: What will be the deadline for data submission using PENCS if I choose to have POLAR GP installed?**

22<sup>nd</sup> June 2020 will be the last day submitting practices' de-identified dataset to SWSPHN via PENCS for PIP QI.

**Q: Will it impact PIP QI payment if I do not have POLAR GP installed?**

According to [Department of Health](#) (page 9), a general practice would submit their Population Health Data Set via PENCS or POLAR GP depending on the PHNs chosen extraction tool.

Starting from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020, POLAR GP will be the clinical audit tool provided by SWSPHN to submit your de-identified dataset to meet the above requirement of getting PIP QI payment. If you do not have POLAR GP installed, your practice will not be eligible to receive PIP QI payment, except under special circumstances where extension has been granted by SWSPHN to continue having PENCS installed.

**Q: Will SWSPHN still subsidise TOPBAR?**

No, TOPBAR is a PENCS product. However, Outcome Health provides a clinical decision support tool along with POLAR GP called Walrus.

**Q: Will SWSPHN subsidise Walrus?**

Yes, Walrus will come along with POLAR GP. It has two versions including the light and heavy versions. At this stage, only light version is available. Whereas, heavy version is still under development, and will soon be available.

**Q: How do I notify our patients about their data being collected?**

You can notify your patients about their data being collected by practice brochure and/or waiting room poster. Please contact your assigned SWSPHN representative to have a copy of the resource.

**Q: How do I exclude patient data from POLAR?**

You can remove your patient's information from POLAR for data sharing via these [simple steps](#) (Please contact your assigned SWSPHN representative to create a log in for you if you do not have one).