

# Applying digital health to pre-admission pathways with Mercy Hospital

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One of the great challenges facing hospitals today is ensuring clinical staff have early visibility of patient information. This also leads to one of the greatest opportunities for hospitals - digital health.

When facing this very challenge, Mercy Hospital in Dunedin chose to digitise their patient pathways using Personify Care. Transforming their paper-based processes into a simple personalised checklist for patients on their mobile.

The key challenge that Mercy Hospital was facing was the secure, cost-effective and efficient delivery of pre-admission information to and from their patients. The team were reliant upon one-size-fits-all printed forms and patient packs that were costly to print and post and were taking up to two weeks to be returned by patients.

This meant clinical staff had little to no visibility into the patient surgery pipeline, resulting in last minute adjustments to support patient needs. Their reliance on physical forms and phone calls was consuming far too much clinical and administrative capacity and budget.

*"25% of our patients hadn't submitted their information 5 days before surgery.*

*5% even after being chased up still hadn't submitted the information on the morning of their surgery.*

*Under the Personify model, that's been reduced to basically zero."*

JASON SILBY  
ICT MANAGER



Enter Personify Care's Patient Pathways.

Personify Care is a cloud-based platform that's both quick and easy for organisations to set up. It doesn't need to be integrated with internal servers or require IT resources to implement. Plus onboarding of new users takes around 15 minutes. A three-month trial of the Personify Care platform was implemented at Mercy Hospital and within the first three weeks, patients from three of their specialist suites adopted the software.

During this time, the specialists quickly realised that digitising patient pathways was far more efficient and cost-effective than producing, mailing and managing the patient information via physical packs.

Feedback from patients was collected during the trial period and then used to evaluate its effectiveness. 91% of patients opted in, indicating that patients are willing to convert to a digital patient experience, and satisfaction was at 100%. The oldest patient to participate in the trial was 87 years old.

With the success of the trial, Mercy Hospital has since rolled out Personify Care to 10 of their specialist suites. The resulting efficiencies mean that nurses can now spend more time on quality initiatives and directly providing care to patients.

Since the rollout, there has been a 20% increase month on month in patients registering to the platform and the response rate is up at around 80-90%.

*"It's surprised our staff, our oldest patient was 87 years old and there was a huge perception that these older patients would struggle. That hasn't been the case. They all have mobile phones and are all quite capable and prefer the convenience of a digital pathway"*

*– Jason Silby, ICT Manager at Mercy Hospital*



## Digitising Pathways in Response to COVID-19

The successful adoption of Personify Care became even more impactful during COVID. Clinical staff were able to quickly digitise the COVID assessment to track and action symptoms and rapidly add screening questions around symptoms and travel history as per the latest NZ Ministry's advice.

*As surgical lists changed quickly with minimum notice due to COVID – Personify Care allowed information to go out and back from patients within record time. The fastest was about 30 minutes - this wouldn't have been possible with the postal system.*

Today Mercy Hospital use Personify Care to capture basic patient demographics and automatically screen the patient's health history so they can quickly identify risk factors that need to be managed carefully and also provide personalised patient information.