

# **POLAR**

## **(Population Level Analysis and Reporting)**

### *Frequently asked questions*



#### **Q. What is POLAR?**

The POLAR Explorer platform has been developed by Outcome Health specifically for use by general practice and other key stakeholders. The system integrates data extraction and reporting capabilities to enable practical and user-friendly analysis. POLAR allows practices to analyse their clinical and billing data to support informed clinical and business decision-making. In addition, the platform offers a web-based analytics portal used by health organisations such as Primary Health Networks (PHNs), to undertake self-directed data analysis across a wide range of de-identified datasets. This supports data-driven, evidence-based planning and contributes to improved health outcomes for local communities.

#### **Q. Who is Outcome Health?**

Outcome Health is the owner and developer of POLAR. Based in Melbourne, Outcome Health provides a range of data intelligence and clinical services, supporting thousands of Australia's general practices to improve patient outcomes. CHN has partnered with Outcome Health to provide POLAR to general practices in the ACT.

#### **Q. Who is eligible for POLAR?**

General practices within the ACT are eligible for a subsidised POLAR license through CHN. An agreement to provide de-identified practice data to CHN is required for the use of the POLAR tool.

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

POLAR is suitable for general practice staff who work clinically, have business oversight or use data for accreditation purposes. Access to POLAR can be determined by the practice's assigned POLAR Administrator and can include Practice Principals, GPs, Nurses, Practice Managers, Business Managers and Receptionists.

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

There is no direct cost to the practice. POLAR is fully subsidised by CHN and there will be no ongoing product costs. An agreement to provide de-identified practice data to CHN is required to get access to the tool.

# **POLAR**

## **(Population Level Analysis and Reporting)**

### *Frequently asked questions*



#### **Q: How is the data extracted?**

POLAR operates in accordance with best practice standards for data extraction and data processing. POLAR is authorised to extract data either directly from a database within the general practice environment or via a cloud Application Programming Interface (API) depending on the software in use.

Extracted data is classified according to whether it contains Personally Identifiable Information (PII). All PII is encrypted prior to storing in a secure database. De-identified (non PII) data is processed within the POLAR Data Warehouse with only de-identified and encrypted data made available for analysis through the POLAR Platform. Access to identifiable data is strictly confined to the practice environment and is visible only to authorised practice staff/users with appropriate permissions.

All communications between client systems and POLAR applications are secured using industry-standard encryption protocols, ensuring that data in transit is protected from unauthorised access.

#### **Q: Where is the data stored?**

All data extracted through POLAR is securely stored within an accredited data centre facility located in Australia.

POLAR employs industry best-practice enterprise-grade authentication mechanisms to manage both system and data access. The platform incorporates a suite of security controls including physical (data centre) security, robust platform and network protections, proactive threat detection, auditing processes to comply with regulations and industry certifications. Data is encrypted by default both in transit and at rest and all data including backups and disaster recovery environments, remain within Australian jurisdictions.

#### **Q: How does CHN manage my data?**

De-identified aggregated practice data is stored securely in the POLAR platform and is not for distribution. CHN has oversight of this de-identified data and uses this information to improve population health planning and provide better patient outcomes across the ACT.

This includes:

- population health planning;
- quality improvement activities with practices;
- health service planning;
- identification of service gaps;

# POLAR (Population Level Analysis and Reporting)

## *Frequently asked questions*



- improvement of community health promotion and prevention activities;
- authorised research with appropriate Human Research Ethics Committee approval; and
- supporting the commissioning of local services.

CHN complies with all applicable laws in relation to data privacy and security during collection, storage, access, use, disclosure or transmission of the de-identified Data (including, where applicable, Privacy Laws). CHN will not attempt to identify or re-identify any de-identified data received from the practice. CHN will not release practice level data to any other party without the written consent of the practice.

For more information about how CHN uses data and how this data is managed, consult your data sharing agreement, or speak with our team by emailing [primarycare@chnact.org.au](mailto:primarycare@chnact.org.au) or phoning 02 6287 8026.

### **Q: What are the steps to set up POLAR in the practice?**

Step 1: Your practice will need to sign a data sharing agreement with CHN.

Step 2: Once the agreement is signed, the CHN QI Team will create a practice profile for you in POLAR

Step 3: Depending on the clinical information system your practice is using, our team will contact you to arrange a time for remote installation or provide instructions on how to ensure POLAR is integrated to your system.

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

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

For practices that require installation of POLAR, it is installed on only one server or computer within the general practice or cloud environment and takes approximately 30-60 minutes to complete. A single installation at your practice allows you to use POLAR on any PC within the same network regardless of the size of your practice.

# **POLAR**

## **(Population Level Analysis and Reporting)**

### *Frequently asked questions*



#### **Q: Will CHN subsidise Walrus?**

Yes, Walrus will come with your POLAR license.

#### **Q: Will CHN subsidise Husky?**

ACT general practices using POLAR were previously offered a 6-month free trial of [Husky](#) that ended on 31 December 2025. Practices wishing to continue using the tool after the trial period will need to contact Outcome Health directly at [sales@outcomehealth.org.au](mailto:sales@outcomehealth.org.au) for more information.

CHN does not currently provide ongoing subsidies for Husky beyond the trial period.

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

Practices should inform patients that their de-identified health information will be shared with CHN for reporting, population health insights, and quality improvement purposes. This can be done through new patient intake forms, posters in waiting areas, or information on your practice website. You may also like to explain that the data is transferred securely to CHN through the POLAR platform, with safeguards in place to protect patient privacy.

Patients should also be informed about their rights, including how to request that their data is not shared and that they can withdraw their consent at any time. Providing clear, accessible information ensures transparency and helps maintain trust with your patients.

CHN will provide your practice with a poster to display in your waiting room. Please contact CHN for a copy of the resource if you haven't received one.

#### **Q: How and when can my practice staff learn to use the tool?**

A series of webinars and resources are available through [POLAR Knowledgebase](#) for staff training and ongoing learning. We recommend viewing these resources as a first step. The QI team is also able to visit practices to train staff in using the tool.

# POLAR

## (Population Level Analysis and Reporting)

### *Frequently asked questions*



#### **Q: Where can I go for support?**

For technical issues, please contact the POLAR Support Team. Submit a ticket through your POLAR Account Portal via 'Support' > 'Contact Us' or send them an email on [servicedesk@outcomehealth.org.au](mailto:servicedesk@outcomehealth.org.au).

For guidance materials, troubleshooting support and Quality Improvement activities, please contact your QI Team on [primarycare@chnact.org.au](mailto:primarycare@chnact.org.au).