

# 6 tell-tale signs your organisation needs a collaborative health messaging platform



## Introduction:

Purpose-built health messaging platforms stand ready to dramatically improve workplace practices for health care organisations. Coupled with a mobile-ready clinical staff, secure health messaging apps have the potential to improve clinical communication through enhanced accuracy of information sharing and through improved workplace efficiency and productivity<sup>1</sup>.

Solutions may be deployed in a 'Bring Your Own Device' manner negating the need for upfront capital expenditure on expensive, depreciating hardware solutions.

Despite the apparent readiness of many organisations from a technical and capital perspective to adopt these solutions, the utilisation of healthcare messaging apps in many healthcare organisations remains limited<sup>2</sup>.

**Here are 6 tell-tale signs that your organisation may benefit from a purpose-built healthcare messaging solution.**

# #1

You're using multiple channels to communicate with your staff

Are you still using group emails to keep your staff informed, paging to broadcast organisation-wide messages, whilst Management use WhatsApp or other consumer apps to message?

Redundancy in communication systems implementation is vital for any large organisation and the need for more than one communication modality for staff members is undeniable.

However, organisations must balance this need for multiple channels of communication with the very real possibility of 'user fatigue' for staff members. Providing staff with too many platforms on which to communicate is burdensome and risks staff members switching off and disengaging from these systems all together. If a communication channel is only used for one specific purpose and only rarely by that user (e.g. Yammer) then the likelihood that a user will engage meaningfully on that platform is low.

Messaging platforms that have the sophistication to manage both clinical and administrative teams and that have the potential to communicate with users on a one to one, one to many and through role designation rather than name alone are likely to provide the most value to healthcare organisations.

# #2

Shift workers are disconnected with the rest of your organisation.

How are you communicating important clinical updates to staff? How do these channels work for shift workers such as Emergency department staff? Can these staff be reliably informed of important clinical updates on a shift to shift basis?

Advances and changes in medical knowledge evolve constantly meaning staff need to be continually kept abreast of new updates and [medical knowledge that apply to their local context](#). These can range from medication safety updates, changes to medication prescribing, through to new updates around infection control processes for emerging threats.

Hospital in-services and departmental meetings typically don't work well for shift workers such as Emergency Department staff. Work emails typically aren't accessed by staff at home and fail to deliver content in a user-friendly format to allow ready 'digestion' of new clinical updates.

Messaging platforms have the potential to deliver education and organisational content and create 'chat rooms' involving different clinical teams (eg pharmacy departments and emergency workers). Unlike email, many of these apps have the added advantage of being able to add and remove staff to these message groups as they enter and leave certain clinical roles.

## #3

Your junior doctors are still using paper notes to manage clinical handover.

Clinical handover, the transfer of professional responsibility or accountability from one or more aspects of patient care from one provider to another, is an important part of clinical care, and done when done poorly, is a major contributor to poor patient outcomes.

Australia is leading the way on process improvement in clinical handover. The [NSQHS](#) strongly encourages structured processes are utilised, encourage the use of both verbal communication supplemented with written communication and that mobile device solutions be utilised to [facilitate clinical handover](#). Health messaging apps, particularly those with advanced, dedicated workflows to [manage and document clinical handover](#), can become useful adjuncts to clinical staff to manage their handover process.

## #4

Clinical images and information is being sent by SMS or WhatsApp.

By what method do your staff sharing clinical images? Have you ever asked your staff about what method they are using to share clinical images? Do your current Policies and Procedures provide clinically useful guidance for staff on how to safely share clinical images when clinical circumstances dictate call or do they simply avoid this issue?

In Australia, the sending of clinical images by unsecured means such as SMS texting risks breaching State and National Privacy legislation. Typically, this process generally stores clinical images (often of an identifying nature) on the clinician's phone.

The practical workaround to this problem for most clinicians is to undertake such practices only when necessary (e.g. an emergency), and to ask for patient consent and to delete the image from the phone as soon as possible. Nevertheless, such a practice still poses a significant risk of data breach and is broadly a contravention of the [AMA Digital Code of Conduct](#). The AMA guidelines recommend against using SMS and in the event a clinician must do so, it recommends deleting clinical images as soon as possible, and ensuring images are not stored on the phone memory.<sup>2</sup>

Recent data security laws include mandatory reporting within 30 days for security breaches of patient data<sup>3</sup>. Failure to report such breaches carries steep penalties for individual health practitioners (up to \$360,000) and organisations. You can read more about Australia's notifiable data breach scheme in our recent blog post outlining mandatory reporting obligations for health providers.

## #5

Your mobile device policy was last updated 3 years ago.

**Are your mobile device policies overly restrictive to the detriment of your clinical teams?**

**Do your policies and procedures even allow for clinical image sharing on mobile devices?**

Technological advances often outpace changes to organisational device policy, sometimes to the detriment of optimal and efficient clinical care. Speak to your paramedical, emergency and other frontline clinical staff. The use of mobile devices and healthcare messaging platforms to enhance clinical care through clinical image sharing, real-time decision support and team collaboration is real.

Many organisations still have policies stipulating personal mobile devices should not be used for clinical image sharing. Utilised correctly, secure health messaging platforms can be designed and developed on a secure framework that maintains compliance with Australian State and Federal Privacy legislation, yet encourages team collaboration and clinical information sharing.

## #6

Your switchboard wait times are ballooning and admin are overwhelmed

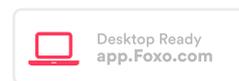
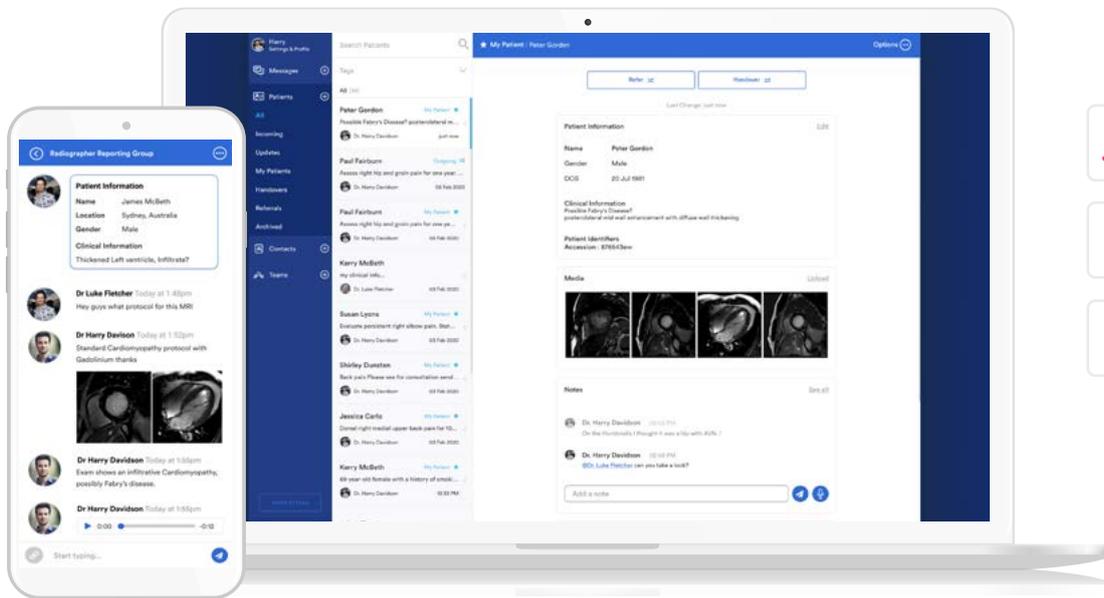
**What is the average wait time for clinical staff at your hospital switchboard? How many interactions with hospital switchboard personal could be solved through modern, self-service communication solutions?**

**Do your desktop paging solutions have the sophistication to account for changes in rostering?**

Direct communication by phone or face-face is a vital aspect of clinical care and hospital switchboards aren't going away anytime soon. Nevertheless, a number of unnecessary interactions occur internally within organisations simply due to a lack of alternatives, other than email, for teams to connect with one another.

# The solution:

Foxo delivers a secure, compliant health messaging platform that has the sophistication to manage both clinical teams and administrative staff and for both individual users and large healthcare organisations. Say goodbye to phone tag and reduce the noise of email forever.



## Private and Secure

We implement state-of-the-art security measures every step of the way. Your information is protected with enterprise-grade encryption.



## Mobile & Desktop Ready

Our tools help you connect from anywhere to anyone, at any time using our iPhone, Android or desktop app.



## Interoperable

Easing the friction between clinical systems is critical. Foxo is integrated with leading clinical software.



## Compliant

Non-compliant and basic messaging tools such as SMS and WhatsApp may be convenient, but they lack critical features and tools required for professional clinical healthcare.



## Free

Our base product is freely available. Invite your extended network for powerful borderless communication.



## Fluid Workflow

Simple yet powerful workflows which enable rapid and real-time clinical collaboration.

Visit [Foxo.com](https://www.foxo.com) to get started

# REFERENCES

1. Ventola, CL. Mobile Devices and Apps for Health Care Professionals: Uses and Benefits. Pharmacy and Therapeutics May 2014.
2. Clinical images and personal mobile devices Australian Medical Association ([https://ama.com.au/sites/default/files/documents/FINAL\\_AMA\\_Clinical\\_Images\\_Guide.pdf](https://ama.com.au/sites/default/files/documents/FINAL_AMA_Clinical_Images_Guide.pdf))
3. Privacy Amendment (Notifiable Data Breaches) Act 2017