

Optimising Health and NDIS Interface through Navigation Model: Better outcomes and timely discharge

We are Eastern Health

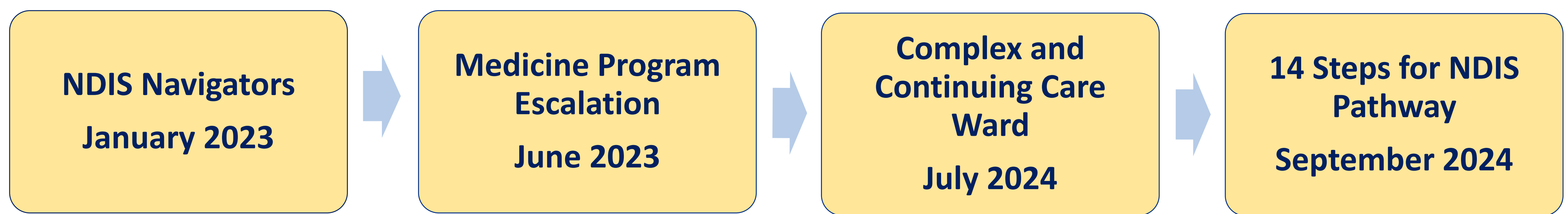
Eastern Health has a proud history of serving our diverse community. We are people led, for people and with people at our heart. Eastern Health has services across the largest geographical area of any metropolitan health service in Victoria. We provide a range of emergency, surgical, medical and general healthcare services to people and communities that are diverse in culture, age, socio-economic status and healthcare needs.

Background

The prolonged hospitalisation of medically stable patients awaiting National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) plan approval represents a critical challenge in healthcare delivery. In 2022, the Victorian average duration from medical stability to discharge for this population was a staggering 160 days. Eastern Health has engaged targeted an innovative strategy to address the barriers resulting in earlier access and better outcomes.

Method of Project Implementation: To tackle this issue, a dedicated multidisciplinary team of NDIS experts with allied health and nursing backgrounds was established to create a structured step pathway. This pathway was designed to assess patients' progress within the NDIS process, identify barriers and bottlenecks, and determine necessary actions for escalations. Additionally, forging stronger relationships within Eastern Health, state government agencies and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) allowed for the implementation of tailored initiatives to reduce barriers within the health service and external services.

These Included:



NDIS Navigator Model

NDIS 14 Step Pathway

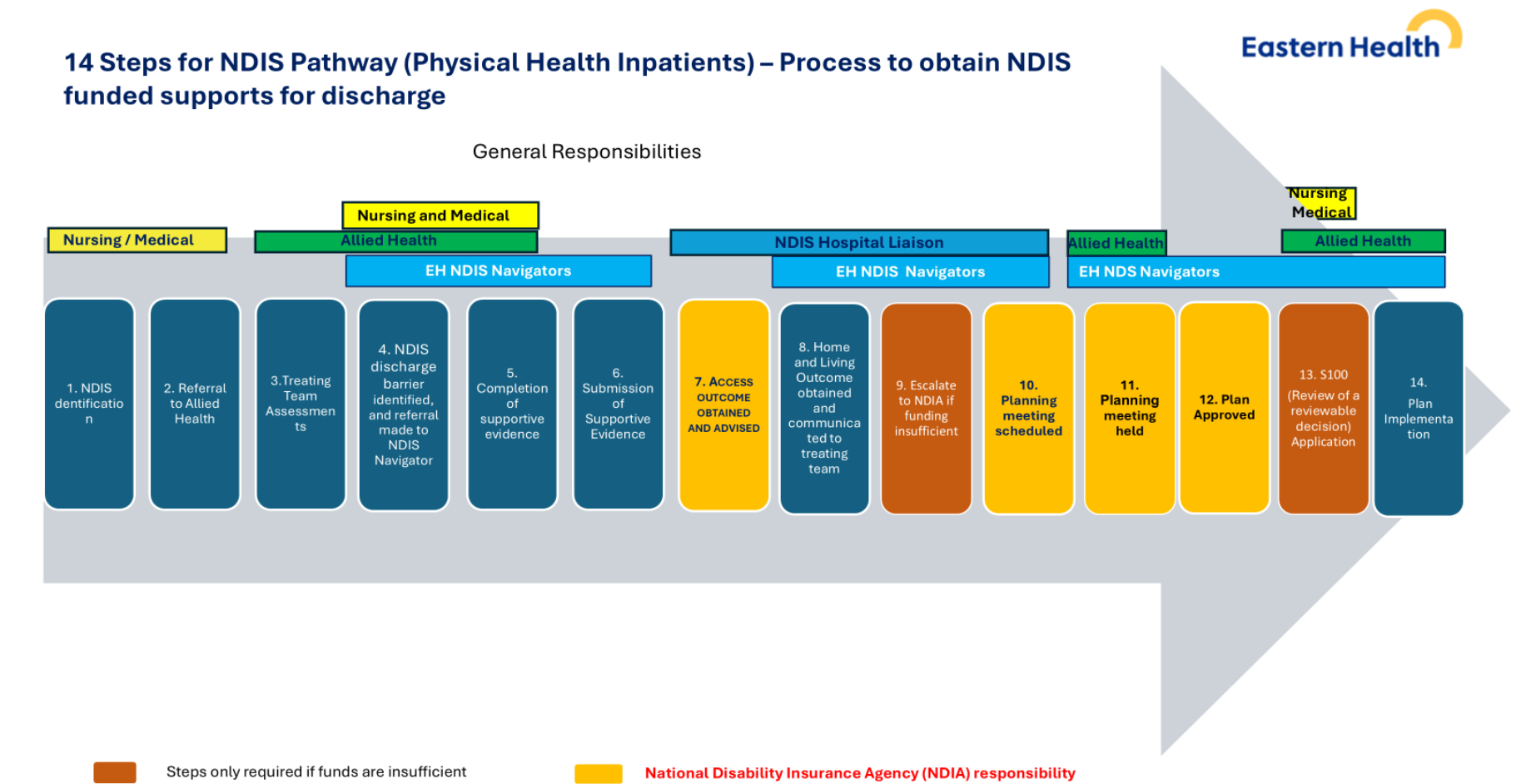
- Multidisciplinary Specialist team
- 3.32 EFT
- Referral criteria- inpatients with **NDIS barriers to discharge**

NDIS Navigators Work Priorities

- Identification and early interventions
- NDIS pathway management
- Education/ Training
- Data Collection and reporting

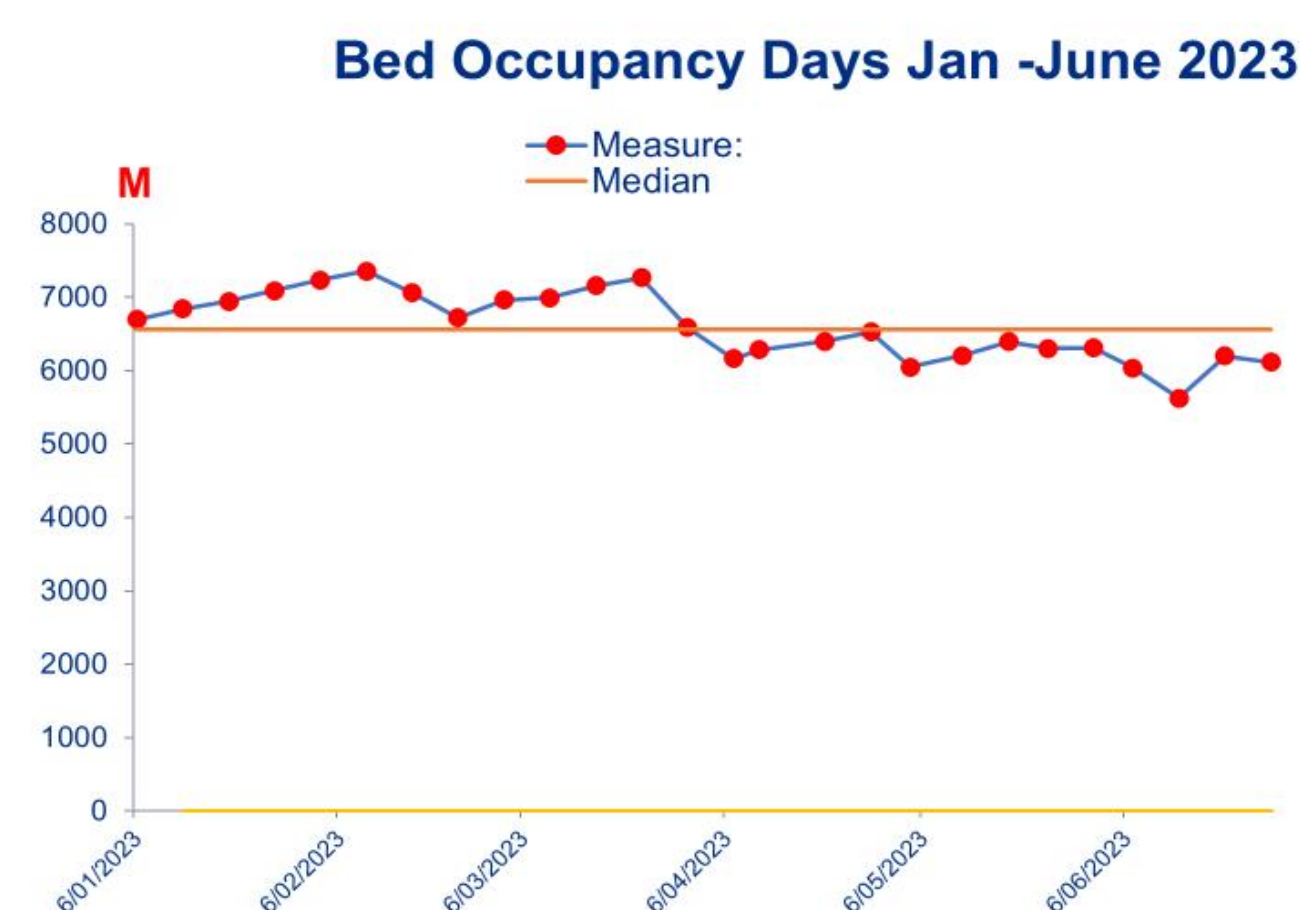


- A tool to identify the needs of inpatients facing barriers to discharge because of access to NDIS supports.
- Provides visibility of barriers to progress care
- Helps identify when escalations to management and NDIA are required
- Clarifies roles and responsibilities of clinicians, NDIS navigators and KPIs
- Utilised for weekly reporting



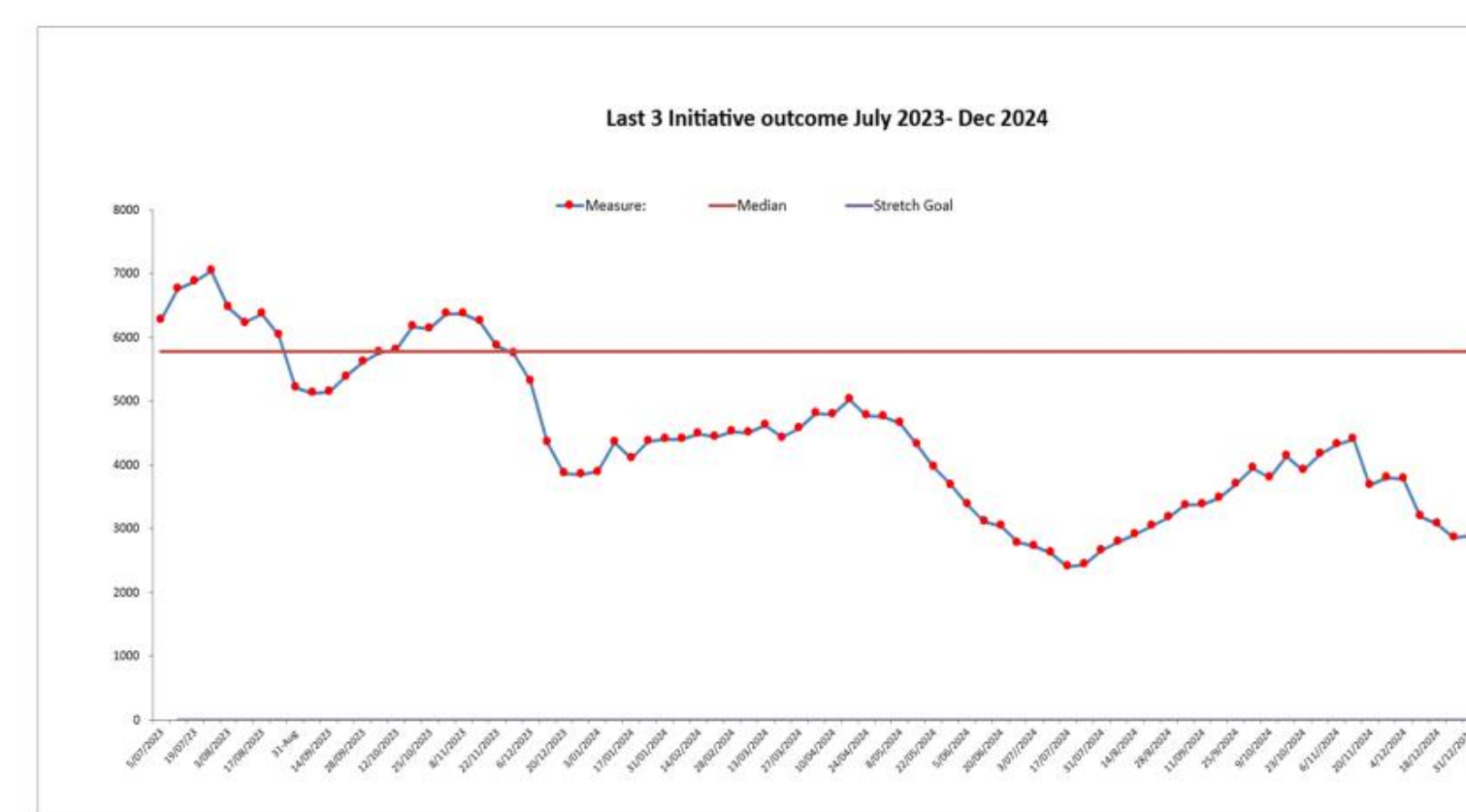
Results

NDIS navigators alone- Initial Outcome



↓ **584** bed occupancy days

Last 3 Initiatives in addition to NDIS navigators- Outcomes



Further ↓ **3384** bed occupancy days

Decreased **Median LOS** from **152** in **January 2023** to **91** at end of **December 2024**

Decreased **average number of days** to progress patients on the **14 Steps for NDIS pathway** from **115** in **May 2024** to **84** in **May 2025**

Discussion

Between January 2023 and January 2025, Eastern Health implemented a series of strategic initiatives to address delays in discharging medically stable patients awaiting NDIS support. The introduction of NDIS Navigators in January 2023 marked a pivotal step in improving discharge planning and coordination. The NDIS Escalation Meetings, launched in June 2023, further enhanced this model by introducing executive-level support, resulting in a significant reduction in patient length of stay.

The 14 Steps for NDIS pathway, introduced in November 2024, offered a structured framework to identify and address discharge barriers. By May 2025, this tool had reduced the average time to progress through the steps by 31 days, improving transparency, accountability, and timely escalation.

Conclusion

The integration of NDIS Navigators, executive escalation support, colocation ward and the 14 Steps pathway has led to measurable improvements in early identification of barriers, patient flow, reduced LOS, and enhanced stakeholder coordination. These initiatives have not only improved patient outcomes but also optimised resource utilization across Eastern Health. The data clearly demonstrates the value of a structured, multidisciplinary approach in overcoming systemic barriers to discharge for NDIS participants. There continues to be high demand and barriers within the NDIS and health interface. The focused initiatives helps identify these barriers early to assist in reduction strategies.

