Accelerated deployment of scalable secure messaging between SWSLHD Cancer Services/Haematology and GPs/Specialists

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Introduction

Communication between South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD), Cancer Services/Haematology, and referring GPs/Specialists traditionally involves hard copy correspondences printed from the service's Oncology Information System (Mosaiq) and sent out via the postal service. This process is time consuming, error prone, often results in varied delivery times, and expensive compared to electronic messaging. SWSLHD in conjunction with eHealth NSW and the Cancer Institute NSW has rolled out a pilot for electronic secure messaging replacing our service's traditional methods. This leverages the existing solutions developed by eHealth for HealtheNet.
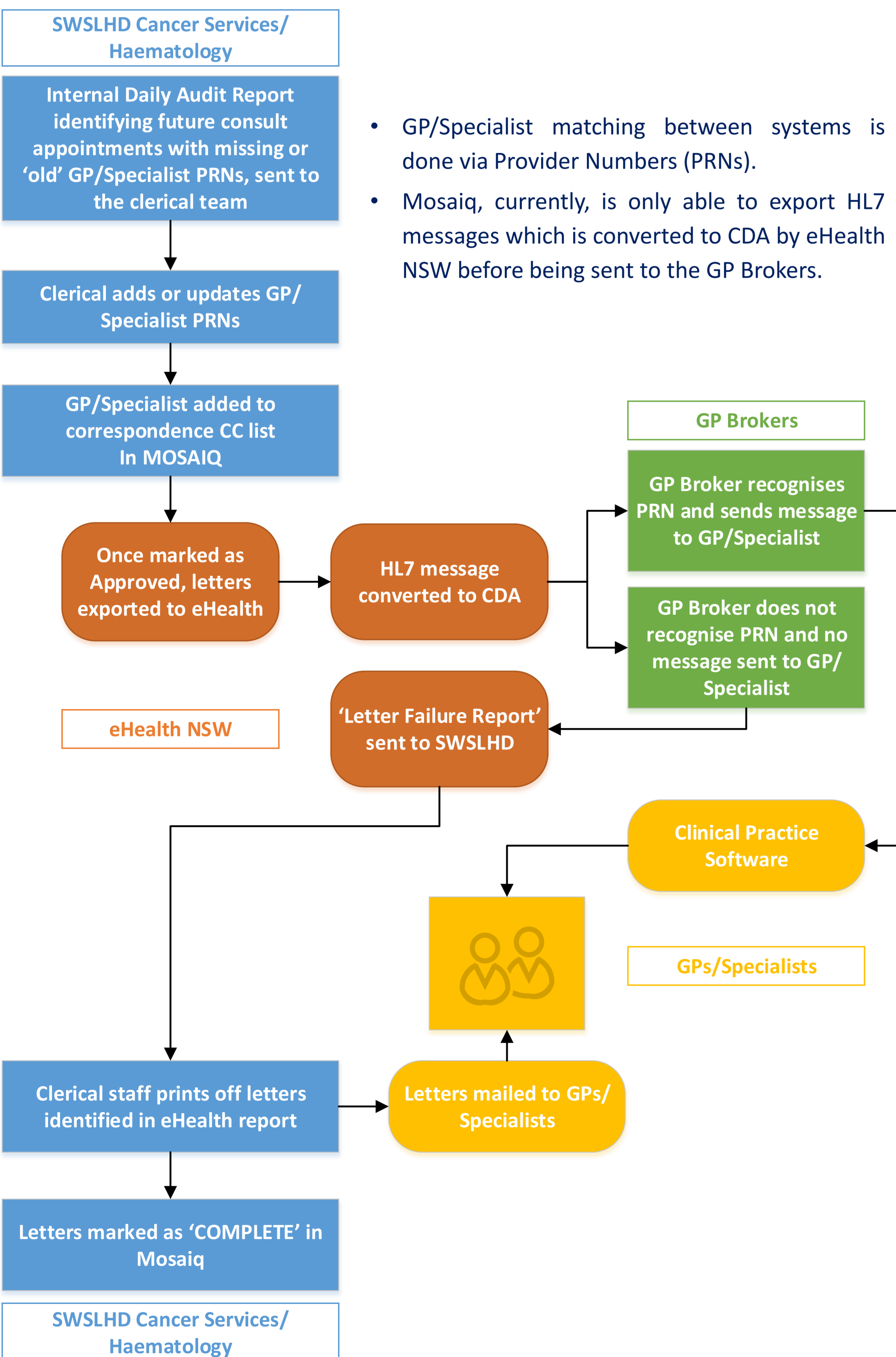
Aim

The aim of the project is to replace the existing physical mail out of letters with an electronic secure messaging solution. Of importance was the ability to rapidly deploy existing document types through the solution whilst having the flexibility of scaling to new document types, without further engagement with eHealth.

Methods

- GP/Specialist matching between systems is done via Provider Numbers (PRNs).
- Mosaiq, currently, is only able to export HL7 messages which is converted to CDA by eHealth NSW before being sent to the GP Brokers.
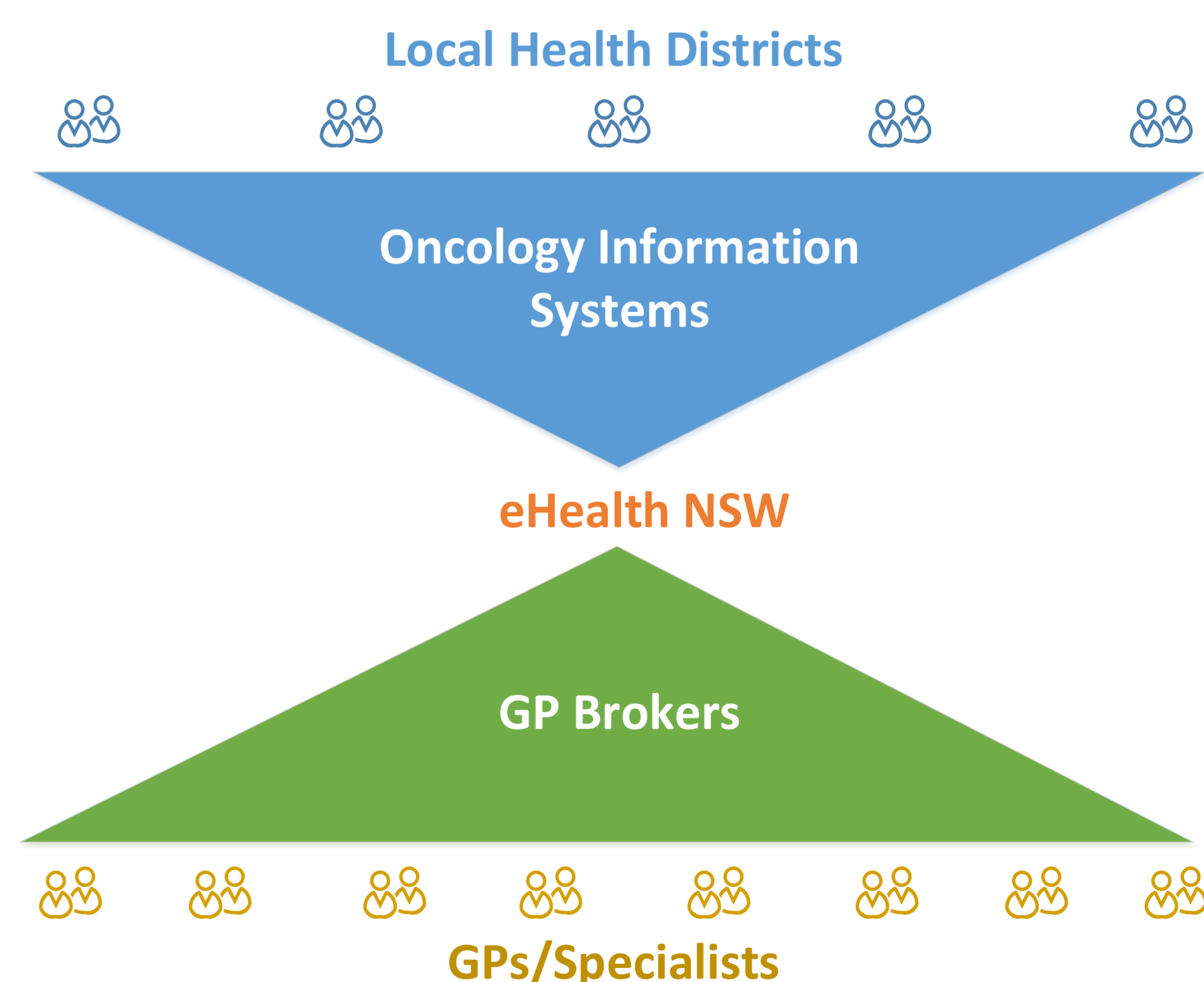
Results

- Delivery of correspondences to GPs/Specialists clinical practice software in near real-time.
- Export of seven specific document types from Cancer Services.
- Over 5000 messages have been exported since May 2019, with currently an average of approximately 400 letters being exported daily.

Implications

- Improved communication times and confirmation of receipt between Cancer Services/Haematology and GPs/Specialists.
- Once the solution completely replaces the existing mail out process, it is expected there will be the reduction of staff time and resources needed to prepare correspondences. This could lead to potentially significant saving in stationary (paper, envelopes, stamps, and printing) costs and requirements.
- Currently, SWSLHD does not receive 'Application Level Acknowledgements' from the GP/Specialist Clinical Practice Software but it is possible that this capability will be available with further development.
- Manual queries to recipients to confirm delivery of correspondences into their Clinical Practice Software is planned before cessation of physical mail out can occur.

Scalability of the implementation

The solution can be scaled to other LHDs. This pilot has shown that systems that are able to export Document HL7 or CDA messages have the potential to adapt eHealth's solution for their correspondence distribution to GPs/Specialists.