



GSHS Health Reform: Community FAQs

Gippsland Southern Health Service (GSHS) and Bass Coast Health (BCH) will merge with Alfred Health, Kooweerup Regional Health Service and Peninsula Health to form a new health service effective 1 January 2026.

The new health service has a working title of Bayside Health, which may be subject to change.

This voluntary merger will allow us to:

- ✓ Improve healthcare access for South Gippsland residents
- ✓ Reduce administrative duplication across multiple health services
- ✓ Strengthen specialist care access and referral pathways
- ✓ Ensure long-term sustainability of rural healthcare services

How will this affect my access to healthcare?

The merger is designed to enhance healthcare access, not reduce it. All current services at GSHS will continue, and additional specialist support and resources will be available through our merging partners.

Will this change where I receive care?

No, local healthcare services at GSHS will remain available. This merger is focused on strengthening rural healthcare and improving access to specialist care without requiring unnecessary travel.

In some cases, patients may be referred more efficiently to specialist services within the Bayside Network, but this will be done with the goal of reducing wait times and ensuring faster access to care.

Will aged care or community health services be affected?

No. Aged care and community health services will continue as usual. Bayside Health (working title) is committed to strengthening these services by leveraging shared resources and expertise.

What are some of the benefits of the merger for the South Gippsland community?

- ✓ Faster access to specialists and better referral pathways
- ✓ Reduced wait times for appointments and treatment
- ✓ More coordinated and efficient healthcare services
- ✓ Greater investment in rural health workforce and training
- ✓ Improved hospital infrastructure and technology

Will private healthcare options still be available?

Yes. Community members will still have the option to access private healthcare if they prefer. The merger is focused on enhancing public healthcare access and coordination, but private healthcare remains an individual choice.

Will referral processes change?

Referral pathways may become more streamlined, making specialist care easier to access and navigate.

This means:

- ✓ Fewer delays in securing specialist appointments
- ✓ A simpler process for patients & GPs when referring to Bayside Health hospitals
- ✓ Improved access to digital health options like telehealth

When will the merger officially take place?

The merger will take effect from 1 January 2026.

GSHS will be working closely with health service partners to plan the transition, ensuring a smooth and well-communicated process.

Will this impact clinical services at GSHS?

The merger is designed to enhance service quality by improving coordination and access to resources. There will be no reduction in clinical care as a result of the merger.

Existing services will be maintained and strengthened through the merger to deliver even better care for the community.

How will this merger impact hospital funding and governance?

The merger will allow for greater collaboration and resource-sharing across network hospitals. This means:

- ✓ More efficient use of funding to improve patient care
- ✓ Less duplication of administrative services, redirecting resources to frontline care
- ✓ Continued strong local governance, ensuring South Gippsland's healthcare needs remain a priority

What does this mean for GSHS staff?

This merger is designed to support and strengthen the healthcare workforce at GSHS. Staff will continue delivering the same high-quality care, with added opportunities for training, professional development, and collaboration with specialists across the network.

How will community members be kept informed?

We are committed to transparent communication throughout this process. You can stay updated through:

- ✦ **Community Meetings** – Direct engagement with leadership and healthcare professionals
- ✦ **Website & QR Code Access** – A dedicated QR code at events, allowing easy access to updates
- ✦ **Social Media Updates** – Follow GSHS on Facebook & LinkedIn for the latest news

Community Representatives: Your Voice in Local Healthcare

As GSHS moves forward with its merger into Bayside Health, ensuring strong community representation is more important than ever. Consumer Representatives play a vital role in shaping healthcare decisions, advocating for patient needs, and keeping services aligned with what matters most to South Gippsland residents.

By joining as a Consumer Representative, you can:

- ✓ Help guide healthcare improvements and decision-making.
- ✓ Ensure rural healthcare remains accessible and patient-focused.
- ✓ Represent your community's voice during this critical transition.

Learn more & apply today! ➡ gshs.com.au