

Title	Triage Clinic: Helping Patients and their Families Navigate a Complex Referral System
Organisation	Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital, Gauteng Province
Innovation	Prior to 2018, the Speech Therapy and Audiology (STA) Department provided two separate paediatric screening services for Speech Therapy and Audiology. This model did not facilitate optimal use of staff, space and equipment and added to the cost for patients as they were required attend additional appointments. It further delayed children's entry into intervention services as waiting times were increased. In 2018 the interdisciplinary clinic was established with the aim of streamlining resources and increasing access for patients. The service protocol was changed to conduct holistic screening for hearing, communication and feeding in 30 minutes. This effective utilisation of time and staff meant that clinicians could see more patients on the day. The clinic accommodates walk-in patients who do not have an appointment, thereby providing a more flexible model of service. Patients are provided with information on developmental milestones and early simulation to facilitate carry-over of early detection and intervention at home. A joint standard operating procedure was drawn up to facilitate skills sharing and role release. The screening form complies to all standards set out by the Patient's Rights Charter and the HPCSA.
Impact	The Triage Clinic has resulted in earlier referrals into diagnostic services. Previously patients with normal hearing were referred directly into diagnostic clinics which caused bottlenecks and increased waiting times. Statistically, 57% of patients who passed their hearing screening in the Triage Clinic were referred to other services for further management and discharged from audiology services. This decreased the waiting time for patients who urgently needed a full diagnostic hearing test battery and alleviated waiting time for patients who failed hearing screening from 10 weeks to 4-5 weeks. The clinic also increased access to an additional 7276 paediatric patients