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CHAPTER 12 – MEDICAL CARE

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<td><strong>GL2018 003</strong></td>
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Last updated 6/05/2020
INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY (PD2019_034)

PD2019_034 rescinds PD2014_004

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to provide direction to health services regarding the management of clinical and corporate incidents, including appropriate feedback to patients, families/support persons and clinicians and the sharing of lessons learned to prevent patient harm, and a statewide system for managing clinical and corporate incidents to ensure health practitioners, managers and staff respond effectively to them.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

NSW Health entities are to manage incidents based on the following principles:

- **Openness about failures** – incidents are reported and acknowledged without fear of inappropriate blame. Patients and their families/support persons are offered an apology and told what went wrong and why
- **Emphasis on learning** – the system is oriented towards learning from mistakes and consistently employs improvement methods for achieving this
- **Obligation to act** – the obligation to take action to remedy problems is clearly accepted and the allocation of this responsibility is unambiguous and explicit
- **Accountability** – the limits of individual accountability are clear, individuals understand when they may be held accountable for their actions
- **Just culture** – individuals are treated fairly
- **Appropriate prioritisation of action** – action to address problems is prioritised and resources directed to the areas where the greatest improvements are possible
- **Cooperation, collaboration and communication** – teamwork is recognised as the best defence of system failures and is explicitly encouraged and fostered within a culture of trust and mutual respect.

IMPLEMENTATION

**All Staff are responsible for:**

- Notifying all incidents in the Incident Information Management System (IIMS)
- Commencing and/or participating in the open disclosure process as appropriate
- Participating in the investigation of incidents as required
- Participating in implementation of recommendations from incident investigation
- Encouraging colleagues to notify incidents that have been identified.

**Local Health Districts and Special Health Networks are responsible for**

- Ensuring staff are trained in incident management (including IIMS) and able to investigate incidents and action recommendations
- Ensuring an effective incident management system is in place for investigating and actioning recommendations for all incidents

Ensuring timely notification of incidents to the Minister’s Office, Secretary, Deputy Secretaries and Patient Experience and System Performance Division, MoH via a

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- Reportable Incident Brief (RIB) as required and notifying by telephone if urgent attention is required
- Ensuring there is timely notification to NSW Treasury Managed Fund (TMF) of all incidents that have the potential to become claims
- Ensuring the monitoring and rating of all risks identified from incident investigation and analysis as per the Risk Management - Enterprise-Wide Risk Management Policy and Framework (PD2015_043)
- Reporting all Severity Assessment Code (SAC) 1 incidents to the MoH within 24 hours or the next business day
- Ensuring processes are in place to manage clinical RIBs as per this Policy to protect statutory privilege under Section 23 of the Health Administration Act 1982
- Conducting privileged Root Cause Analysis (RCA) on clinical SAC1 incidents, and other incidents when appropriate, as per Part 2, Division 6C of the Health Administration Act 1982
- Conducting a detailed investigation of all corporate SAC 1 incidents
- Where a privileged RCA has been conducted, providing RCA reports to the MoH within 70 calendar days of notification of the incident in IIMS
- Providing a report on key findings from corporate SAC 1 investigations to the MoH within 70 calendar days
- Ensuring appropriate incident management and preventing recurrence of incidents
- Reporting of trended incident data and outcomes of RCAs and Corporate SAC 1 investigations to relevant groups within health services
- Ensuring resources for effective incident management and patient safety initiatives
- Implementing policies and local practices to support staff and fostering incident notification and active management of incidents
- Contributing to statewide improvements as required.

Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC) is responsible for

- Reviewing clinical incidents and investigation reports
- Providing advice to the system in response to specific queries about clinical incident management, and in response to analysis of clinical incidents
- Providing advice and regular reports to the MoH on clinical quality, patient safety issues and trends and lessons learned from the clinical incident management process
- Disseminating lessons learned from clinical incident management
- Providing advice to the MoH on strategies to minimise statewide clinical system errors
- Developing statewide policies and strategies about patient safety and health care quality
- Identifying education needs emerging from clinical incident management

NSW Ministry of Health (MoH) is responsible for

- Ensuring health services have systems in place to report, investigate and implement the actions necessary to prevent clinical and corporate incidents, protect patient safety and improve clinical quality
- Establishing and maintaining systems to monitor and manage incidents reported to the MoH
- Receiving and viewing notifications about clinical and corporate SAC1 incidents
- Reviewing advice and reports provided by the CEC on analysis of trends from RCAs and issues arising from all clinical incident (SAC) categories
- Providing advice to the Minister for Health on issues of public concern and media or public attention
- Providing an appropriate statewide response to new risks as they are identified.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aim

The aim of the Incident Management Policy Directive is to
Ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to incident management including the identification, notification, investigation and analysis of incidents resulting in appropriate action
Allow the lessons learned to be shared across the whole health system
Ensure Health Services establish processes that comply with the legal aspects of both clinical and corporate incident management
Establish standard approaches to clinical and corporate incident management including performance indicators to monitor compliance.

1.2 Scope

This Policy Directive
Applies to all incidents that occur in the health system
Provides guidance on the difference between clinical and corporate incidents and the key elements of the different approaches required
Is applicable to clinical and non-clinical staff
Describes roles and responsibilities in the incident management process
Articulates mandated reporting requirements from legal and policy perspectives
Defines the timeframes within which incidents, and the results of the investigation of these incidents, are to be reported
Identifies the state-level processes for incident aggregation, analysis, learning and action
Outlines other policy and legislated incident reporting requirements.

For the purposes of this Policy, the term “Health Services” refers to Public Health Organisations including Statutory Health Corporations and Affiliated Health Organisations and the Ambulance Service of NSW.
Compliance with this Policy Directive is mandatory for all Health Service staff.

1.3 Associated Documents

This Policy Directive is to be read in conjunction with the Incident Management Policy Statement and other policies relating to incident management (see Appendix A)
### 1.4 Key Definitions

The following terms are used in this document:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actual SAC</strong></td>
<td>The IIMS rating applied to each incident when it is reviewed by a manager. Further management of the incident is based on this confirmed rating. See Severity Assessment Code. See Harm Score for ims(^1) system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ambulance Service of NSW (ASNSW)</strong></td>
<td>The Ambulance Service of NSW as defined in the <em>Health Services Act 1997</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Apology</strong></td>
<td>A key aspect of open disclosure is saying sorry or offering an apology to the patient and their family/carer following an incident. An apology is an expression of sympathy or regret, or of a general sense of benevolence or compassion, in connection with any matter, whether or not the apology admits or implies an admission of fault in connection with the matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian Sentinel Event (ASE)</strong></td>
<td>ASEs as defined by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) and approved by the Health Ministers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian sentinel event – discharge or release of a child to an unauthorised person(^1)</strong></td>
<td>A child defined as any person under the age of 15.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian sentinel event – discharge or release of a child to an unauthorised person(^1)</strong></td>
<td>Unauthorised person is defined as a person who is not a parent or legal guardian of the infant or child, or is a person who is the subject of a legal order preventing access to the infant or child.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Australian sentinel event – suspected suicide of a patient within an acute psychiatric unit or acute psychiatric ward\(^1\)** | Acute psychiatric unit or acute psychiatric ward is defined as a specialised unit or ward that is dedicated to the treatment and care of admitted patients with mental illness or mental disorder. This includes specialist psychiatric units or psychiatric wards within emergency departments. For the purposes of this sentinel event ‘acute psychiatric unit’ and ‘acute psychiatric ward’ refer to psychiatric units and wards where all three of the following criteria apply:  
1. The psychiatric unit or psychiatric ward is specifically designed with fixtures and fittings that minimise the opportunity for patient suicide  
2. The psychiatric unit or psychiatric ward is specifically designed to prevent any unauthorised ingress or egress  
3. Observation protocols are applied within the psychiatric unit or psychiatric ward. |
| **Australian sentinel event – unintended retention of a foreign object in a patient** | Unintended incidents are where any relevant objects retained in a patient after surgery or other invasive procedure were not intentionally retained. A foreign object may be intentionally left in the patient where |
| **Australian sentinel event – use of physical or mechanical restraint resulting in serious harm or death**<sup>1</sup> | Restraint is defined as the restriction of an individual’s freedom of movement by physical or mechanical means.  
Physical restraint means the bodily force that controls a person’s freedom of movement.  
Mechanical restraint means a device that controls a person’s freedom of movement. |
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian sentinel events – invasive procedure</strong></td>
<td>An invasive procedure is defined as a medical procedure that enters the body, usually by cutting or puncturing the skin or by inserting a needle, tube, device or scope into the body.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Australian sentinel events - serious harm**<sup>1</sup> | Serious harm is indicated where as a result of the incident the patient:  
requires life-saving surgical or medical intervention, or  
has shortened life expectancy, or  
has experienced permanent or long-term physical harm, or  
has experienced permanent or long-term loss of function.  
**Psychological harm**  
Psychological harm is recognised as an important harm. In the context of the sentinel events list, psychological harm has not been included in the definition of serious harm given the inability to measure psychological harm in the way that physical harm can be measured. |
<p>| <strong>Classification</strong> | Capturing relevant information about an incident to ensure the complete nature of the incident, including causative and contributory factors from a range of perspectives, is documented and understood. |
| <strong>Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC)</strong> | A Board governed statutory health corporation established under the Health Services Act (section 41). It builds on the foundation work carried out by the Institute of Clinical Excellence established in 2001. Under the Act, a statutory health corporation is established to enable certain Health Services and support services to be provided within the State other than on an area/local health district basis. |
| <strong>Clinical Governance Unit (CGU)</strong> | The Clinical Governance Unit (CGU) has the role of support, performance and conformance to develop and monitor policies and procedures for improving systems of care. The CGU will contribute to the Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program by ensuring it is uniformly implemented across the state and for overseeing the risk management of patient safety and clinical quality by building upon existing incident management and investigation. |
| <strong>Clinical Risk Action Group (formerly Clinical Risk Review Committee/Reportable Incident Review</strong> | The NSW Health Clinical Review Action Group (CRAG) is responsible for examining and monitoring serious clinical incidents reported to the MoH via Reportable Incident Briefs and ensuring that appropriate action is taken. The Committee analyses information reported to it on specific incidents, identifies issues relating to morbidity and mortality that may |</p>
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<td>12. Medical Care</td>
<td>The workings of this Committee are subject to special statutory privilege under section 23 of the Health Administration Act 1982.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Committee</td>
<td>have statewide implications and provides strategic direction and advice on policy development to effect health care system improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinician</td>
<td>A health practitioner or Health Service provider of any profession regardless of whether the person is a registered health practitioner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinician Disclosure</td>
<td>An informal process where the treating clinician discusses with a patient and/or their support person(s) the occurrence of a patient safety incident; actively seeks input and feedback from, and listens to, the patient and/or their support person(s); and provides and apology for the occurrence of the event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaint</td>
<td>A complaint is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. An expression of dissatisfaction that may have one or more associated issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. A concern that provides feedback regarding any aspect of service that identifies issues requiring a response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harm Score</td>
<td>The score applied to each incident in the ims+ system which is automatically calculated based on the outcome and treatment and/or resources required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazard</td>
<td>A source or situation with a potential for harm in terms of human injury or ill health, damage to property, damage to the environment or a combination of these.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Service</td>
<td>Refers to Public Health Organisations including Statutory Health Corporations and Affiliated Health Organisations, and the Ambulance Service of NSW.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIMS</td>
<td>The NSW Health Incident Information Management System.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ims+</td>
<td>The incident management system replacing IIMS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incident</td>
<td>Any unplanned event resulting in, or with the potential for, injury, damage or other loss. This includes a near miss.</td>
</tr>
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3 The Incident Information Management System (IIMS) incorporates the Advanced Incident Management System (AIMS®) software application as its underlying database.

4 NSW Health organisations will be progressively transitioning from IIMS to ims+ between October 2019 and October 2020.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incident category</th>
<th>Grouping of incidents in the incident management system, for example clinical, staff, visitor/contractor incidents, property, security, hazard incidents and complaints.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Incident Investigation or review</td>
<td>The management process by which underlying causes of undesirable events are uncovered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incident Management</td>
<td>A systematic process for identifying, notifying, prioritising, investigating and managing the outcomes of an incident and the steps taken to prevent similar occurrences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incident type</td>
<td>The core issues of the incident such as a fall or medication error. There can be more than one type of incident associated with each recorded incident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Health Districts (LHDs)</td>
<td>Bodies corporate constituted under section 17 Health Services Act 1997 that are principally concerned with the conduct of public hospitals and health institutions and the provision of Health Services to residents within a designated geographic area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Dataset</td>
<td>The minimum amount of information to be captured for the incident notification to be considered completed in the incident management system. It refers to the datasets associated with the incident type selected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near miss</td>
<td>Any event that could have had adverse consequences but did not. An arrested or interrupted sequence where the incident was intercepted before causing harm e.g. an incorrect medication added to an infusion but not administered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notification</td>
<td>The process of entering or documenting data about an incident or near miss for any of the incident categories into the incident management system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notifier</td>
<td>Any member of staff of the NSW health system who enters information into the incident management system of an incident or near miss, for any incident category. Consumers may notify an incident via the complaints process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Disclosure</td>
<td>The process of communicating with a patient and/or their support person about a patient related incident. See also Clinician Disclosure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered user</td>
<td>An authorised person nominated by the health district/ network/ service with registered access to the incident management system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reportable Incident</td>
<td>A reportable incident is an incident as described in Appendix E for NSW Health organisations using ims+ and Appendix D in other cases (including users of IIMS).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reportable Incident Brief (RIB)</td>
<td>The method for reporting defined health care incidents to the MoH. The RIB process encompasses clinical and corporate incidents. Clinical RIBs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Root Cause Analysis (RCA)</strong></td>
<td>A method used to investigate and analyse incidents to identify the root causes and factors that contributed to the incident. The process yields recommended actions directed at the prevention of a similar occurrence. All clinical SAC 1 (IIMS) or Harm Score 1 (ims+) incidents are reportable requiring an RCA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Severity Assessment Code (SAC)</strong></td>
<td>A numerical score in IIMS applied to an incident based predominantly on its consequence. Its prime purpose is to direct the level of investigation required for a particular incident (see Appendix B).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Significant Patient Risk</strong></td>
<td>A significant risk is one where there is a high probability of a substantial and demonstrable adverse impact for patients if the practice is to continue. In each case a significant risk will be sufficiently serious to warrant an immediate response to reduce the risks to patients. This may include interventions or changes to systems, the clinical care service environment, or clinical practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specialty Health Networks</strong></td>
<td>Statutory health corporations constituted under section 41 Health Services Act that are specialty network governed pursuant to section 52F Health Services Act 1997.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support Person</strong></td>
<td>An individual identified by the patient as a nominated recipient of the information regarding their care. This may include the patient’s family members, partner, carer or friends. In cases of dispute between the patient’s family members, partner or carer and/or friends about who should receive information the patient’s wishes should be paramount. Where a patient is unable to give consent, the next person responsible under the Guardianship Act 1987 should be approached.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care. Advisory 18/09 Notification of significant risk.*
1.5 Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CE</td>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEC</td>
<td>Clinical Excellence Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGU</td>
<td>Clinical Governance Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHASM</td>
<td>Collaborating Hospitals Audit of Surgical Mortality Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRAG</td>
<td>Clinical Risk Action Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCG</td>
<td>Director of Clinical Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoH</td>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Identification (number)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIMS</td>
<td>Incident Information Management System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ims⁺</td>
<td>Incident management system replacing IIMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LHD</td>
<td>Local Health District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDS</td>
<td>Minimum Data Set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>Policy Directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCA</td>
<td>Root Cause Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIB</td>
<td>Reportable Incident Brief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAC</td>
<td>Severity Incident Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCIDUA</td>
<td>Special Committee for Investigating Deaths Under Anaesthesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHN</td>
<td>Specialty Health Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIPA</td>
<td>Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WH&amp;S</td>
<td>Work Health and Safety</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2 THE INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PROCESS

When an incident occurs in a Health Service a series of actions must follow. The importance of identifying these as separate steps is to ensure that all appropriate action is taken. The incident management process is represented in Diagram 1.

Diagram 1: The NSW Health Incident Management Process
12. MEDICAL CARE

2.1 Step 1 – Identification

Incidents may be identified through a number of methods. These may include: direct observation, team discussion, Coroner’s reports, mortality and morbidity review meetings, death review processes, staff meeting discussions, complaints, audits and/or chart reviews.

Incidents may be identified at the time they occur or at any time after the event. Health Services need to implement processes which facilitate the identification and reporting of all incidents in a timely manner.

2.2 Step 2 – Immediate action

Timely review and response to incidents is important. It may be necessary to take immediate actions following incidents causing minor or no harm. These actions may include:

- Immediate care as needed to the patient, staff or visitor involved in the incident
- Make the situation/scene safe to prevent immediate recurrence of the incident
- Remove malfunctioning equipment or supplies, isolate and preserve them intact
- Gathering basic information from staff while the details are still fresh in the minds

2.2.1 Immediate action following serious incidents

In the event of reportable incidents or incidents potentially due to serious systemic problems, the Health Service takes immediate actions to identify, mitigate and escalate immediate risks including:

- continuing risk of harm to the patient,
- imminent risk of harm to other patients, carers, families or staff,
- potential state-wide implications (e.g. faulty equipment),
- potential notifications required, or
- potential media interest

The early information is collected which can be used to
- confirm the incident severity
- confirm or complete the RIB content
- inform the subsequent Root Cause Analysis (RCA) investigation.

Processes to ensure privilege is maintained when gathering basic early information from staff can be found in Section 4.2.3. Information will not attract privilege unless it is prepared for the dominant purpose of assisting an appointed RCA team in the conduct of its investigation.

2.3 Step 3 – Notification

Staff members are required to notify all identified clinical and corporate incidents, near misses and complaints in the incident management system.

NSW Health is transitioning from the Incident Information Management System (IIMS) to ims+ and this Policy document supports users of both systems. During this transition period, where both systems will be used, some organisations will continue to use IIMS while others will commence reporting using ims+7. Organisations with IIMS will use the SAC rating and SAC Matrix (see Appendix B) and organisations that have transitioned to ims+ will use the Harm Score (see below and Appendix N). HealthShare NSW and NSW Health Pathology will be working across IIMS and ims+ for a period of time, as their on-site services which support LHDs/SHNs will transition to ims+ along with the LHD/SHN.

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**Incident rating using the ims’ Harm Score**

Harm Score 1 – Death and Sentinel Event
Harm Score 2 – Major harm
Harm Score 3 – Minor harm
Harm Score 4 – No harm or near miss

**2.3.1 Documentation of the clinical incident in the health record**

All actual clinical incidents must be documented in the patient’s health record. Only clinically relevant information is included in the health record.

Staff must document the incident management system ID number in the health record with the information about the incident.

If the incident has been identified via a complaint, the complaint details should not be recorded in the health record.

**2.3.2 Incident notification in the incident management system – by the Notifier**

All clinical and corporate incidents, once identified, need to be recorded in the incident management system. The IIMS notifier undertakes an initial assessment of severity of the incident using the SAC (see Appendix B). The ims’ notifier provides information known at that time and a Harm Score is automatically calculated.

Notifiers give their opinion of how the incident may have been prevented and may choose to remain anonymous or include identifying information.

Notification must:

Occur as soon as practicable and preferably by the end of the notifier’s work day

Not include identifiable details such as staff names

There are several mandatory fields that must be entered into the system for each incident. The minimum dataset (MDS) that guides further review, management and classification for each incident is determined by the incident category.

Health Services should have in place a mechanism for patients and/or their family members or carer to report an incident. The use of the complaints management process may be appropriate in some instances, but the patient/family member or carer should be able to notify that the incident has occurred, without the need to register a complaint. In this instance it may be appropriate for a clinician or manager to record the incident in the incident management system.

If it has been necessary initially to record an incident using a paper-based system with a notification subsequently made in the incident management system, it is unnecessary to retain the paper based record once the notification is made in IIMS or ims’ so long as the notification retains all information included in the paper record.

**2.3.3 Incident notification – Management responsibility**

The manager reviews the incident notification, completes the incident management screen. The manager must change the incident status from ‘new’ to ‘investigate’ within 5 days of incident notification for Actual SAC 2, 3 and 4 incidents (IIMS) and Harm Score 2, 3 and 4 incidents (ims’). The incident status of Actual SAC1 incidents (IIMS) and Harm Score 1 incidents (ims’) must be changed within 24 hours.

Managers using IIMS need to apply an actual SAC to change the incident status according to the details of the incident or near miss. Further guidance is provided in Section 4.2.
2.3.4 Notification to Patient – Open Disclosure
As early as possible after the incident, the provider should share with the patient and/or their family or carer what is known about the event and what actions have been taken to immediately mitigate or remediate the harm to the patient. An expression of apology or regret can be extended at that time. Refer to NSW Health policy and guidelines on open disclosure for further guidance (see Appendix A).

2.3.5 Notification to NSW Treasury Managed Fund (TMF)
Incidents with the potential for a medico legal claim must be reported to the TMF as soon as possible.

2.3.6 Notifications for Corporate Incidents
The following policies outlining notification responsibilities may be relevant depending on the nature of the corporate incident (the list is not exhaustive and further relevant policies are listed in Section 6.1.2):
- **Work Health and Safety: Better Practice Procedures PD2018_013** – notifications to SafeWork NSW
- **Significant Legal Matters and Management of Legal Services PD2017_003** - notification to the General Counsel, MoH
- **Corrupt Conduct - Reporting to the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) PD2016_029** - notification to ICAC
- **Public Interest Disclosures PD2016_027** - may involve notification to ICAC or NSW Police
- **Staff PD2016_025** – notification to NSW Ombudsman, Police, Family and Community Services
- **Managing Misconduct PD2018_031** - notification to NSW Police.

2.4 Step 4 – Prioritisation
The purpose of prioritisation by the manager is to determine the level of investigation and action required for an incident or near miss and guides determines the need for additional notification. The Chief Executive of the organisation must be advised of all clinical and corporate SAC 1 (IIMS) and Harm Score 1 (ims⁺) incidents via a RIB.

ims⁺ will automatically generate a Harm Score in the management screen based on a manager’s responses to mandatory questions about outcome and additional care and/or resources required. This is the agreed method for determining the incident rating and reporting requirements. Changing the ims⁺ Harm Score is not recommended.

In IIMS, managers prioritise incident notifications by using the NSW Health SAC Matrix to apply an Actual SAC (see Appendix B). The key consideration for managers is the degree of harm as predicting the likelihood of recurrence can be unreliable. In some situations it has led to inappropriate downgrading of incidents and inadequate analysis and management. Caution is therefore recommended when applying the “frequency” component.

2.4.1 Severity Assessment Code Scoring Steps in IIMS
A SAC is to be applied to all incidents in IIMS. Details about the SAC process can be found at Appendix B. There are two steps required:

**Step 1:** Determine the consequence or outcome of the incident by assessing the actual outcome of the incident based on the definitions provided in the consequence table. The matrix also provides for the calculation of likelihood of recurrence. This can be difficult to assess, and adds little value in the context of deciding the level of investigation for an incident that has already occurred.
Step 2: Implement appropriate action

Each incident is assessed for the actual consequence and the potential consequence. The potential consequence is the worst-case scenario for the incident being assessed. There is a great deal of benefit in investigating near miss incidents especially if the potential consequence of the near miss could have been a SAC 1 or SAC 2 incident.

Wherever possible, and as early as practicable, the patient and/or the family/carer and other relevant persons should be given the opportunity to provide information (verbal or written), as part of the investigation process.

2.4.2 Immediate review following a serious incident

The collection of evidence and basic facts about the incident should commence at the earliest possible time, preferably when the incident is first recognised. For clinical SAC 1 (IIMS) or Harm Score 1 (ims+) incidents, direction is provided at 4.2.3 about the process for appointing core personnel of the RCA team, as soon as possible after the event so that statutory privilege under the Health Administration Act 1997 attaches to the information obtained.

2.5 Step 5 – Investigation

All notified incidents require review at an appropriate level. The SAC (IIMS) or Harm Score (ims+) applied in the manager prioritisation stage guides the level of investigation. If additional input is needed for accurate prioritisation, steps should be taken to address this immediately so that legislated requirements can be met without delay. It may be necessary to make a “judgement call” based on the best evidence available, where the gathering of further evidence will amount to an unacceptable delay.

All Health Services should:
- assign appropriate levels of responsibility for investigation and action on all incidents
- have procedures in place for the investigation of incidents
- provide access to training programs for the investigation of incidents
- have appropriately trained staff to support staff involved in investigations
- assign appropriate levels of resourcing to enable effective investigations to be undertaken
- ensure that Clinical Governance and/or Corporate Governance (or equivalent) provides appropriate oversight of the quality of investigation processes and outcomes

2.5.1 Levels of Investigation

As a general guideline, the following levels of investigation are considered appropriate.

Clinical Incidents

Clinical SAC 1 incidents (IIMS) and Clinical Harm Score 1 incidents (ims+)

All clinical SAC 1 and Harm Score 1 incidents require a privileged RCA investigation. This is a legislative requirement of the Health Administration Act 1982 and Regulations. See section 4 of this policy for detailed information about the requirements for a privileged RCA investigation of clinical SAC 1 and Harm Score 1 incidents. The methodology taught and promoted by the Clinical Excellence Commission should not be deviated from without prior agreement with that organisation. This is to ensure that important considerations of investigation such as privilege and fairness are adhered to.

All clinical SAC1 and Harm Score 1 incidents must have the final RCA report completed and submitted to the MoH within 70 calendar days from the notification of the incident in the incident management system.
Clinical SAC 2 Incidents (IIMS) and Clinical Harm Score 2 incidents (ims+)

The following are the key components of management of clinical SAC 2 and Harm Score 2 incidents.

Senior management is to be notified and management responsibility must be specified.

An investigation is to be undertaken. This may be in the form of an RCA or any other investigation methodology which enables drilling down to the causative or contributory factors of the event. Each organisation is to have policies and procedures in place for the investigation of incidents and training programs in place for staff to investigate incidents.

It should be noted that under the legislation a privileged RCA may be conducted for SAC 2, 3 or 4 incidents (IIMS) or Harm Score 2, 3 or 4 incidents (ims+), if the Chief Executive is of the opinion that the incident may be the result of a serious systemic problem that justifies the appointment of an RCA team. The commissioning of the RCA must be in accordance with this Policy, as outlined at 4.2, to attract the statutory privilege. The RCA Report must be submitted to the MoH within the 70 day timeframe.

If there is disagreement in relation to the type of investigation to be undertaken on a clinical SAC 2 or Harm Score 2 incident, the Director of Clinical Governance (DCG) is to make the final determination.

Organisational level improvement activities are to be developed and implemented.

Investigation should be completed, where possible, within 45 days of being notified in the incident management system or a progress report outlining the management plan with a revised completion date should be submitted to the appropriate senior manager.

Where available, State-wide or LHD tools and templates should be utilised for SAC 2 and Harm Score 2 investigation reports.

Clinical SAC 3 & 4 Incidents (IIMS) and Clinical Harm Score 3 & 4 incidents (ims+)

All SAC 3 and 4 incidents (IIMS) and Harm Score 3 and 4 incidents (ims+) need to be reviewed. Such reviews will be undertaken at the local level, but management responsibility for the review process must be assigned.

It may be considered appropriate to aggregate a number of similar SAC 3 or 4 incidents (IIMS) or Harm Score 3 or 4 incidents (ims+) and to perform a review of the aggregated incidents.

As well as investigation or review at the local level, monitoring of trended aggregated incident data may also identify and prioritise issues requiring a practice improvement project.

Investigation should be completed, where possible, within 45 days of being notified in the incident management system or a progress report outlining the management plan with a revised completion date should be submitted to the appropriate senior manager.

As with SAC 2 (IIMS) and Harm Score 2 (ims+) incidents, a privileged RCA may be conducted for clinical SAC 3 and 4 incidents (IIMS) and clinical Harm Score 3 and 4 incidents (ims+) in the circumstances where the Chief Executive considers the incident may be the result of a serious systemic problem. In these circumstances the RCA report must be submitted to the MoH within the required timeframe of 70 days.

Corporate Incidents

Corporate SAC 1 Incidents (IIMS) and Corporate Harm Score 1 incidents (ims+)

Investigations of SAC 1 (IIMS) and Harm Score 1 (ims+) corporate incidents will be determined by the nature of the incident. They may be in the form of an RCA or any other investigation methodology which involves ascertaining the causative or contributory factors of the event. Relevant MoH and Health Service policy documents should inform the level and nature of the investigation (Appendix A).
All Corporate SAC 1 (IIMS) and Harm Score 1 (ims+) incidents must have a detailed investigation completed and a report submitted to the MoH within 70 days from the notification of the incident in the incident management system.

Corporate SAC 2, 3 and 4 Incidents (IIMS) and Corporate Harm Score 2, 3 and 4 incidents (ims+)

All corporate SAC 2, 3 and 4 incidents (IIMS) and corporate 2, 3 and 4 incidents (ims+) need to be reviewed.

The nature and the level of the investigations will be determined by the incident and its severity. Relevant MoH and Health Service policy documents should be referred to inform the level and nature of the investigation (Appendix A).

Ongoing monitoring of trended aggregated incident data may identify and prioritise issues requiring a quality improvement project.

Investigation should be completed within 45 days of being notified in the incident management system or a progress report outlining the management plan with a revised completion date being submitted to the appropriate manager.

An aggregated de-identified report on all corporate SAC 1, 2, 3 and 4 (IIMS) or Harm Score 1, 2, 3 and 4 (ims+) incidents is to be provided by each LHD and SHN to its Internal Audit Committee. Similarly, an aggregated report on all Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) incidents is to be provided to the Director, Workforce Development and any relevant WH&S Committee.

2.5.2 Investigations and conduct/impairment/performance issues with individual clinicians

Investigations conducted under this Policy should not attempt to assess the adequacy of an individual’s performance or competence. Where a question of individual performance or competence arises, it is to be managed via the organisation’s performance management system and/or PD2018_032 Managing Complaints and Concerns about Clinicians with support from Human Resources as required.

Professional Misconduct, Unsatisfactory Professional Conduct and Impairment

Under section 20O(1) of the Health Administration Act 1982, where the RCA team forms the opinion that an incident may involve professional misconduct, unsatisfactory professional conduct or impairment by an individual clinician/s, the RCA team must notify the CE in writing. In relation to the meaning of “professional misconduct” and “unsatisfactory professional conduct”, see Part 8, Division 1 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW). In relation to the meaning of “impairment”, see S5 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW).

Unsatisfactory Professional Performance

Under Section 20O(2) of the Health Administration Act 1982 where the RCA team forms the opinion that an incident may involve unsatisfactory professional performance by a clinician, the RCA team may notify the CE in writing. Although the RCA team holds discretion to report in these circumstances, it should err on the side of caution and notify the concerns to the CE. “Unsatisfactory professional performance” means professional performance that is unsatisfactory within the meaning of Division 5 of Part 8 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW).

Content of Notification of Conduct, Performance or Impairment issues

The RCA team’s notification is to disclose the identity of the person to whom the notification relates, regardless of whether the person consents to the disclosure. The notification is also to specify whether the concern relates to professional misconduct, unsatisfactory professional conduct or unsatisfactory professional performance or whether the person is or may be suffering from impairment together with a brief description of the nature of the concern. No other information obtained during the privileged RCA should be provided.

See Appendix C for a template letter that may be used by the RCA Team Leader to inform the CE of an incident involving suspected individual conduct, performance or impairment issues. 315(25/07/19)
The CE will determine appropriate action which will be in accordance with **PD2018_032 Managing Complaints or Concerns About Clinicians**.

The RCA Team will take no further action on the matter that relates to the individual.

The RCA Team may continue to investigate the systems issues in the incident. Investigators are expected to explore why staff involved in incidents acted as they did, and should be encouraged to pose appropriate questions to explore the human factors aspects of the incident in question. Typical issues might include fatigue, training and communication. In this way, the team is not endeavouring to judge the competence or adequacy of performance of any individual.

### 2.5.3 Decommissioning RCAs

The only reason for decommissioning an RCA is where the RCA team identifies individual clinician conduct, impairment or performance issues that may be responsible for the incident and there are no readily identifiable systems issues to consider.

The Health Service notifies the MoH following the decommissioning of the RCA and provides the reason for the decommissioning of the RCA by completing the front page of the RCA template and submitting this to the MoH – email address **MOH-Quality@health.nsw.gov.au**.

This is also the email address for submission of completed RCAs.

### 2.5.4 The management of SAC 1/Harm Score 1/Privileged clinical incident investigations across Health Service boundaries

Clinical incidents may occur in one Health Service but be notified through another e.g. when there has been a patient transfer or services provided across organisational boundaries. It is the responsibility of each DCG to oversee the management of cross-boundary incidents.

The management process is:

- The incident is notified through the incident management system and a RIB is completed
- The authority for transfer of a clinical incident from one Health Service to another and acceptance of that transfer resides with the DCGs of each organisation
- If responsibility for managing the clinical incident is transferred to another Health Service this is to be reassigned in the incident management system. A request is to be provided to NSW Health Share helpdesk to arrange incident relocation in the incident management system
- The MoH is informed of action taken in regard to liaison with the other Health Service via the RIB
- The DCG of the Health Service with agreed primary responsibility for managing the clinical incident is responsible for overseeing management of the incident including the RCA and informing the notifying Health Service of their staff’s involvement in the RCA process.

On occasion, both organisations may need to be involved in the clinical incident management when there are issues relevant to both parties, for example by participating in an RCA and accepting responsibility for implementation of recommendations. In that case, the incident should be copied and linked in the incident management system. Both parties may also need to be involved in the open disclosure process.

RCA teams seeking to access patient health information for the purpose of an investigation across two or more Health Services are able to share the information for this purpose without patient consent under the **Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002** and **Health Records and Information Privacy Regulation 2012**.

### 2.5.5 Investigation of clinical incidents across sectors

Some incidents may occur across more than one sector, for example in primary and in secondary care settings or between the public and the private or non government organisation sectors. It is the responsibility of each DCG to ensure appropriate management of cross-boundary incidents.
the severity of the incident, the DCG may need to involve personnel from the other sector(s) in the incident reporting and investigation processes. The incident management process should be discussed and agreed with an appropriate senior representative of the other entity and the process progressed in a manner that meets the legislated/licensing requirements of each and every entity.

Where a clinical incident involves both an LHD/SHN and a private health facility licensed under the *Private Health Facilities Act 2007*, then both entities may be required or permitted to carry out a privileged RCA under legislation (under the *Private Health Facilities Act 2007* licensed private health facilities are required to carry out an RCA in relation to clinical SAC 1 incidents, and are also permitted to carry out an RCA in respect of other clinical incidents where the incident indicates there may be a serious systemic problem).

In that event, it is possible for the LHD/SHN and licensed private health facility to elect to carry out a “joint” RCA investigation as follows:

Each entity would separately appoint the same RCA team members and each team is then able to carry out the statutory functions, on behalf of each entity, concurrently.

The RCA team members conduct meetings, interviews and other investigations acting in the capacity of both RCA teams, effectively at the same time. It is important that documentation of these processes makes it explicit that the RCA team is acting in two different statutory capacities simultaneously in carrying out these activities.

Team members need to ensure that they address the notification requirements of both the *Health Administration Act 1982* and the *Private Health Facilities Act 2007* e.g. in relation to concerns about possible misconduct or unsatisfactory professional performance.

A separate RCA report is required in respect of each Act, although, depending upon the team’s findings and recommendations, the content of these Reports could be the same.

Such a joint RCA process is only appropriate where there may be common factual issues or issues relating to the interaction of the two service providers, for example issues relating to communication between the services or to transfer processes.

**Incidents Involving Multiple States/Territories**

There are several ways in which other jurisdictions may be engaged in an investigation by an RCA team appointed by an LHD or SHN.

Representatives from the involved service or facility can be invited to participate actively as an RCA team member.

The team can request a copy of the relevant medical records and related documentation from the other jurisdiction, to inform the analysis.

RCA team members can include involved parties from the other jurisdiction in the interviewing and fact finding process.

Formal correspondence from the CE to his or her equivalent in the other State or Territory would assist the team in achieving its objectives. This should state clearly what the team is seeking and remind the recipient that participation on the team and provision of information to the team during interviews will be covered by privilege.

Access to relevant medical records held by another jurisdiction for the purposes of the RCA team’s investigation will generally be governed by applicable privacy legislation in that jurisdiction. Further advice may be sought from the CEC.

**Management of Corporate Incidents across Health Service Boundaries**

The responsibility for managing cross boundary corporate incidents rests with the most appropriate Health Service CE.
The management process is:

The incident is notified through the incident management system and a RIB is completed.

The authority for transfer of an incident from one Health Service to another and acceptance of that transfer resides with the CE of each Health Service.

If responsibility for managing the incident is transferred to another Health Service this is to be reassigned in the incident management system. A request is to be provided to NSW Health Share helpdesk to arrange incident relocation in the incident management system.

The MoH is informed of action taken in regard to liaison with the other Health Service via the RIB.

The CE of the Health Service with agreed primary responsibility for managing the clinical incident is responsible for overseeing management of the incident including the RCA and informing the notifying Health Service of their staff’s involvement in the RCA process.

On occasion, both organisations may need to be involved in the corporate incident management when there are issues relevant to both parties, for example by participating in an RCA and accepting responsibility for implementation of recommendations. In that case, the incident should be copied and linked in the incident management system. Both parties may also need to be involved in the open disclosure process.

2.5.6 Secretary Inquiries under the Health Services Act 1997

Clinical and corporate incidents can raise issues which may require a more formal inquiry that is independent of the Health Service. This may arise where a clinical or corporate incident raises broad State-wide or general clinical practice issues, serious public interest matters or matters where there is a potential conflict of interest in the organisation overseeing its own investigation. Where the CE considers an independent external inquiry may be required, he/she should contact the MoH’s Legal and Regulatory Services Branch. In the event that the matter being investigated is clinically focused, the CEC will also have a role in determining further action.

2.6 Step 6 – Classification

This is the process of capturing relevant information from a range of perspectives about an incident to ensure that the complete nature of the incident, including causative and contributory factors, is documented and understood. Classification of all incidents involving patients, staff, visitors, volunteers, contractors or corporate systems can be made in the incident management system.

Classification is undertaken by nominated personnel according to the service delivery model of each Health Service and may include local managers, patient safety managers, Workplace Health & Safety managers and Clinical Governance Units (CGUs).

The SAC (IIMS) or Harm Score (ims+) will determine the amount of information required in order to classify the incident. SAC 1 and Harm Score 1 incidents require advanced classification. SAC 2 and Harm Score 2 incidents require the basic classification. SAC 3 and 4 incidents and Harm Score 3 and 4 incidents require completion of the minimum dataset.

2.7 Step 7 – Analysis

The purpose of analysis is to understand how and why the incident occurred, to identify ways of improving the systems of care and prevent recurrence. Analysis must take place at a number of levels in the system: at the level at which the incident occurred (for example the ward or the patient interface in a primary care setting); at the organisational level and at the State and National level. Different data are analysed and different action is expected at these various levels. Groups of incidents may be analysed to identify trends or emerging themes.

Health Services are responsible for analysis and action at the health organisation level; the MoH and the CEC are responsible for analysis and action at the State level.
2.8  Step 8 – Action

Action is the implementation of recommendations from the investigations and reviews and the development of better systems to ensure improved practice.

A suitable timeframe for the implementation of recommendations must be documented in action plans and the incident management system. Information should also include who will be accountable for the actions.

Where an RCA is involved, the CE is responsible for deciding whether recommendations are accepted and approved and for ensuring implementation of the approved recommendations. The CE must be able to justify in writing at the time of submitting the RCA Report why a particular recommendation is not supported or actioned and what alternative actions might occur. The CE may consult with other staff about the RCA team’s recommendations and provide feedback to the RCA team prior to signoff (see 4.1.4).

Ongoing monitoring is required to ensure recommendations are addressed in a timely manner and to evaluate the success of any action taken to achieve improvement.

2.9  Step 9 – Feedback following investigation

Feedback is an important component of a successful incident management program.

2.9.1  Feedback to Patients and/or Support Person - Open Disclosure

Information about SAC 1 and SAC 2 clinical incidents (IIMS) and Harm Score 1 and 2 clinical incidents (ims+) should be offered to the patient and/or their support person and/or family as it comes to hand. Feedback should be provided in accordance with NSW Health policy on Open Disclosure (see Appendix A).

Disclosures should be made to the individual patient and any family/key support person the patient would like to be present

In circumstances where discussion with the patient is not possible or appropriate, his or her next of kin, designated contact person, or representative should be informed

Consideration must be given to the patient’s cultural and ethnic identity and first language and the support needed.

The information provided to the patient and/or their support person and/or family can be based on a variety of sources. The final report from a RCA is one of those sources. A copy of the RCA report may be given to the patient/support person/family. Ideally, the report should be discussed with the patient/support person/family in person. This will allow for questions to be addressed and to ensure that the often impersonal and clinical nature of the report can be explained.

2.9.2  Feedback to Staff

The success of incident management is dependent on feedback to all staff on the results/outcomes of investigations in a timely manner.

Feedback must be provided to staff involved in the incident and should occur as soon as possible, including after the completion of the RCA. The information to be provided is limited to that which is included in the final RCA report. This way staff involved in the incident will be informed of the conclusions reached by the team and of the recommendations arising from any investigation.

Feedback should also be given to the broader group of clinical providers and managers within the organisation. This feedback will focus on the lessons to be learned by the organisation and system amendments that will provide a greater chance that the incident will not happen again. Such feedback and discussion could take place at; for example, ward meetings, mortality and morbidity review meetings and Grand Rounds.

Regular reports on trended aggregated data and outcomes of RCAs are to be provided to the executive team and board of management, peak quality committee (or other relevant committee) and staff. Feedback should include updates as the changes are made and improvements achieved as a result of these changes.
This will also provide a level of accountability for implementation of the recommendations that come from the RCA or other investigation.

3 REPORTABLE INCIDENT BRIEFS

The Reportable Incident Brief (RIB) system is designed for the reporting of specific health care incidents to the MoH. It is an early declaration, locally and to the MoH, of specific serious clinical and corporate incidents.

Clinical incidents:

All clinical incidents reported in RIBs are referred to the NSW Health Clinical Risk Action Group (CRAG). CRAG is responsible for examining and monitoring serious clinical incidents via a number of mechanisms, including RIBs. The clinical incident RIBs and the work of this Group are subject to special statutory privilege under Section 23 of the Health Administration Act 1982.

Corporate incidents:

Corporate incidents occurring in the health care setting are those involving staff, visitor, contractors, property, security and hazards.

All mandated clinical and corporate incidents must be notified to the MoH via a RIB, within 24 hours of notification of the incident and confirmation by the manager in the incident management system. Where additional information is needed to confirm the incident severity, the Health Service is required to act immediately to obtain such information or advice so that legislated requirements are met.

The RIB does not replace the requirement for early notification of an incident to the appropriate Deputy Secretary and System Management, Patient Experience and System Performance Division of the MoH.

The Chief Executive or his/her delegate is responsible for notifying the Minister’s Office, the Secretary, the Deputy Secretaries and the MoH’s Media Unit when there are incidents which have the potential to become matters of public interest.

Where there is a need to notify the MoH outside of business hours, the relevant Deputy Secretary is to be notified, as well as the on-call Media Unit officer, on pager 9962 9980.

Clinical RIBs are privileged in accordance with Section 23, Health Administration Act 1982, and should be maintained securely and not used for any other purpose.

An incident that has both clinical and corporate components will be covered by statutory privilege. Such incidents should be marked as “clinical” on the RIB.

3.1 RIB reporting requirements

All actual SAC 1 incidents (IIMS) and Harm Score 1 incidents (ims+), both clinical and corporate, must be notified to the MoH via a RIB, within 24 hours of notification of the incident in the incident management system (the RIB does not replace the requirement for early notification of an incident to the appropriate Deputy Secretary and System Management, Patient Experience and System Performance Division of the MoH).

The Chief Executive or his/her delegate is responsible for notifying the Minister’s Office, the Secretary, the Deputy Secretaries and the MoH’s Media Unit when there are incidents which have the potential to become matters of public interest.

Where there is a need to notify the MoH outside of business hours, the relevant Deputy Secretary is to be notified, as well as the on-call Media Unit officer, on pager 9962 9980.

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An incident that has both clinical and corporate components will be covered by statutory privilege. Such incidents should be marked as “clinical” on the RIB.

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A RIB is to be submitted within 24 hours of a SAC 1 (IIMS) or Harm Score 1 (ims+) being confirmed by the manager. Where additional information is needed to confirm the incident severity, the Health Service is required to act immediately to obtain such information or advice so that legislated requirements are met.

The following types of incidents require prompt advice to the MoH as a RIB:

### 3.1.1 Clinical Incidents

**Death** of a patient unrelated to the natural course of illness

**Suspected suicide** of a person (including a patient or community patient) who has received care or treatment for a mental illness from the relevant Health Services organisation where the death occurs within 7 days of the person’s last contact with the organisation or where there are reasonable clinical grounds to suspect a connection between the death and the care or treatment provided by the organisation

**Suspected homicide** committed by a person who has received care or treatment for mental illness from the relevant Health Services organisation within six months of the person’s last contact with the organisation or where there are reasonable clinical grounds to suspect a connection between the death and the care or treatment provided by the organisation

Unexpected **intra-partum stillbirth**

OR

The Australian Sentinel Events, those being:

- Surgery or other invasive procedure performed on the wrong site resulting in serious harm or death.
- Surgery or other invasive procedure performed on the wrong patient resulting in serious harm or death.
- Wrong surgical or other invasive procedure performed on a patient resulting in serious harm or death.
- Unintended retention of a foreign object in a patient after surgery or other invasive procedure resulting in serious harm or death.
- Haemolytic blood transfusion reaction resulting from ABO incompatibility resulting in serious harm or death.
- Suspected suicide of a patient within an acute psychiatric unit or acute psychiatric ward.
- Medication error resulting in serious harm or death.
- Use of physical or mechanical restraint resulting in serious harm or death.
- Discharge or release of a child to an unauthorised person.
- Use of an incorrectly positioned oro- or naso-gastric tube resulting in serious harm or death.

OR

An incident with “**major clinical consequences**” and a “**frequent**” or “**likely**” probability of recurrence (IIMS) being:

- Major permanent loss of function (sensory, motor, physiologic or psychological) unrelated to the natural course of the illness and differing from the expected outcome of patient management;
- Significant patient disfigurement as a result of the incident;
- At significant risk due to being absent against medical advice/absconding;
- Subjected to threatened or actual physical or verbal assault requiring external or police intervention.

OR

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Intravascular gas embolism resulting in death or neurological damage (former National Sentinel Event)
Maternal death associated with pregnancy, birth or the puerperium (former National Sentinel Event)
Procedures involving the wrong patient / body part regardless of the outcome (that is, SAC 1 to SAC 4 or Harm Score 1 to 4)
For reportable clinical incidents which require a privileged RCA investigation, refer to:

Appendix D for incident management systems other than ims⁺ (including IIMS)
Appendix E for the ims⁺ incident management system

3.1.2 Corporate Incidents

Unexplained death of a staff member
Suspected suicide or attempted suicides by a staff member where the staff member was not a client of mental Health Services
Fire, bomb or other threatening activities in the health facility
Critical equipment breakdown or failure
Serious threats affecting the facility’s operation
Complete loss of service i.e. power or water failure
Criminal activity in or related to the workplace
Non-accreditation of service provider
Violence or threats of assaults on patients, staff or other persons in the Health Service. This includes incidents involving:
Assaults on, and or abuse of, patients (including children) and other vulnerable patients by staff or other persons and incidents involving abuse of staff by patients or other persons
Staff members assaulting other staff members.
Incidents for which reporting is mandated – (see 3.1.3 below)

Note that when Health Services are reporting incidents involving patient on patient or patient on staff assaults resulting in injury or death of a patient or staff member and there are reasonable clinical grounds to suspect a connection between the assault/death and care provided by the organisation these are reported as a clinical RIB.

3.1.3 Mandated reporting - Legal and Policy Requirements

There are matters that require mandatory notification via a RIB to the MoH regardless of the SAC or Harm Score. These include but are not limited to:
Deaths or other incidents reportable to the Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol Office
When methadone or buprenorphine is associated with or potentially associated with a child's presentation or admission to hospital
Deaths in custody
Significant legal action initiated by or against a Health Service. See Significant Legal Matters and Management of Legal Services PD2017_003, for further information concerning the notification of significant legal matters
Industrial disputes, particularly where an interruption may be marked
The commencement of a SafeWork prosecution

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All incidents that involve the incorrect patient, procedure or site
Radiation incidents reportable to the Radiation Advisory Council (RAC) under the Radiation Control Act (2003)
Other matters either raising issues likely to have a major impact on the Health Service or have State-wide implications such as assault or violence against a patient/client by an employee
Child related allegations, charges and convictions against staff which are notifiable to the Child Protection Helpline or Child Wellbeing Unit (where appropriate), NSW Police and/or Ombudsman and require investigation by the Health Service. These allegations may be work or non-work related
Criminal charges against a staff member related to the workplace or that are outside of work but impact on the workplace in terms of risks, e.g. sexual assault criminal charges
Accreditation agency notification to a health service of the detection of one or more significant risks to patient harm. See Appendix A for policy directives and legislation outlining existing reporting requirements.

3.2  RIB reporting process

The RIB reporting process is as follows:
RIBs are to be completed in the incident management system or its approved equivalent
The Chief Executive (CE) is responsible for authorising the RIB.
The RIB is then submitted to the MoH (MOH-Quality@health.nsw.gov.au) within 24 hours of the incident being notified in the incident management system. RIBs must be forwarded under the signature of the CE or nominated delegate and dated. Where IIMS or ims+ is in use, this will be by a system generated email.
If the issue requires urgent State-level response and/or involvement, the Health Service is to provide telephone advice that a RIB has been emailed. This information should be relayed to the Chief Executive at CEC and to the System Management.
Patient Experience and System Performance Division of the MoH during business hours. After hours the on call media officer for the MoH should be notified.
If further relevant information becomes available, the RIB can be updated and re-submitted. The text of the RIB must indicate that this is an update of a previously submitted RIB and include the MoH TRIM number. The updated RIB should be sent to the MoH within 48 to 72 hours or as directed by MoH.
If there is a requirement for the SAC or Harm Score to be altered after a RIB has been submitted, the CE is responsible for authorising any change to the SAC or Harm Score documented in the RIB. Once the CE authorises the change, the RIB is resubmitted to the MoH. When the RIB is resubmitted the text of the RIB must clearly indicate that this is an update of a previously submitted RIB, quote the previous MoH TRIM number and provide a reason for the update.

All RIBs involving suspected suicide or suspected homicide by patients of Mental Health Services must be referred to the local Director of Mental Health Services for review of the SAC or Harm Score prior to submission of the RIB to the DCG.

Clinical RIBs are privileged documents. There are restrictions on their distribution.

8 The Australian Health Service Safety and Quality Accreditation (AHSSQA) Scheme also requires approved accrediting agencies to notify regulators if a significant patient risk is identified during an onsite visit to a health service organisation.
9 Or later if it is not possible to determine that the incident is a SAC 1 or Harm Score 1 at this time. See Section 3.1 for further explanation.
They should not be used for purposes other than providing information to CRAG in accordance with the *Health Administration Act 1982*.

Health Districts/Networks/Services should have processes in place to ensure security of RIBs.

### 3.3 Information required in the RIB report

RIBs must provide a succinct description which clearly outlines the key issues and the circumstances of the event.

The RIB template follows an SBAR structure familiar to clinicians\(^{10}\)

RIBs must state the incident type (clinical or corporate), the actual SAC (IIMS) or manager’s Harm Score (ims\(^+\)) and the reason for reporting the incident to the MoH.

The RIB must not have patient, staff, facility or service identifiers.

The RIB is to contain facts.

Opinion and subjective comments are to be avoided.

The RIB information must include:

- Initial analysis
- Actions taken to ensure people and the environment are safe
- Planned future actions and, confirmation that clinician disclosure has occurred

Do not send attachments such as health care records, pathology or autopsy reports and other patient identifying reports with the RIB.

As identifying details are required on the Client Death Report Form that is completed for notification of deaths of mental health patients, this form should be sent directly to the Mental Health office at the MoH.

### 4 PRIVILEGED ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS UNDER THE *HEALTH ADMINISTRATION ACT 1982*

All clinical SAC 1 (IIMS) and Harm Score 1 (ims\(^+\)) incidents under Division 6C of the *Health Administration Act 1982* require the appointment of an RCA team, and the RCA process is afforded statutory privilege (see *Appendix D for IIMS and Appendix E for ims\(^+\)*). The provisions under the *Health Administration Act 1982* apply to all LHDs, the statutory health corporations and the affiliated health organisations listed in *Appendix F*.

Further, the CE has discretion to appoint an RCA team to investigate any clinical incident of a lesser severity than SAC 1 (IIMS) or Harm Score 1 (ims\(^+\)), if the CE is of the opinion that the incident may be the result of a serious systemic problem that justifies the appointment of such a team. In that event, the RCA process will also enjoy statutory privilege. Health Services should implement processes to allow local quality assurance committees and mortality and morbidity committees to recommend to the CE that an RCA team be appointed to review incidents or issues that may be indicative of serious systemic problems.

The legislation does not provide privilege for the investigation of corporate SAC 1 (IIMS) or Harm Score 1 (ims\(^+\)) incidents.

### 4.1 Statutory Privilege

#### 4.1.1 What the Privilege covers

The privilege provided under Division 6C of the *Health Administration Act 1982*, applies to:

- Any document prepared
- Any communications, whether written or verbal, between RCA team members and any other person (e.g. clinicians involved in the incident)

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\(^{10}\) Situation – Background – Assessment - Recommendation
Where the document is prepared, or the communications are made, for the dominant purpose of the conduct of the investigation by the RCA team. Privilege will not apply to documents or communication created before an RCA team has been commissioned.

This means that:

RCA team members cannot be compelled to produce or give evidence of any document created by or on behalf of, at the request of, the RCA Team, where the document was for the dominant purpose of the conduct of the investigation by the RCA team

Any person who is not a member of the RCA team who creates a document or makes communications (written or verbal) that is for the dominant purpose of assisting with the conduct of the investigation by the RCA team (this may include administrative assistants to the RCA team, clinicians involved in the incident investigated by the team, or experts engaged by the RCA team to assist it with the investigation) cannot be compelled to produce or give evidence of the document or communication

The final RCA report prepared by the RCA team cannot be adduced or admitted as evidence in any proceedings (including coronial proceedings, or any proceedings in which it is claimed a procedure or practice was careless or inadequate)

RCA team members acting in good faith for the purposes of the exercise of the RCA team’s function are also protected from personal liability, including actions for defamation.

The legislation also establishes tight confidentiality requirements, making it an offence for a team member to disclose any information obtained during the investigation, unless it is for a purpose that is part of the RCA process.

4.1.2 Internal Working Documents of the Privileged RCA team

During the RCA process, the team will generate documents, including preliminary notes, records of interviews with staff/clinicians, minutes of meetings and records of discussions with various people either involved in the incident or with fundamental knowledge of the incident or processes involved. During the RCA process some of these items may need to be transferred to other team members or, in limited circumstances, to the CE e.g. in relation to proposed recommendations. **All of this material is privileged.**

**Storage and transfer of privileged RCA material**

To protect the privilege, these records are to be maintained in a separate RCA team file marked “privileged” and stored securely in a location nominated by the Director of Clinical Governance to ensure the privilege is upheld in the event of a subpoena or application for access under GIPA.

Privileged material is not to be sent in the general post but should be sent by secure internal transport processes. Health Services need to have appropriate policies and procedures in place to manage the transfer of such materials.

**Retention of RCA documents related to clinical incidents**

Records relating to RCAs are required to be retained under the same rules applying to “legal matters and incident management” under clause 1.14 of the General Retention and Disposal Authority — Public Health Services; Patient/Client Records (GDA 17). Under this requirement, the RCA records must be retained for a minimum of 7 years after the last action. As the records are not admissible in court or other proceedings, and can only be accessed by members of the RCA team, the 7 year period applies whether or not legal proceedings have been commenced.

4.1.3 What the privilege does not cover

Statutory privilege does not cover:

Pre-existing documents, such as clinical incident summaries, medical records or other records created in the course of providing general care of patients or management of the Health Service, and not as part of the RCA
12. MEDICAL CARE

Notifications made by the RCA team under section 20O of the Health Administration Act 1982, which relates to the responsibility of the RCA team to notify the CE where the RCA team forms the opinion that the incident raises matters that may involve professional misconduct, unsatisfactory professional conduct, impairment or unsatisfactory professional performance of an individual clinician.

Information entered into the incident management system

The final RCA report

Any communication that is not for the dominant purpose of the RCA process.

4.1.4 Disclosure of information

The privilege does not prevent information being given by an RCA team to another privileged committee (for example an RCA team is entitled to give information to The Special Committee for Investigating Deaths Under Anaesthesia (SCIDUA), The Collaborating Hospitals Audit of Surgical Mortality Committee (CHASM); and the NSW Clinical Risk Action Group (CRAG)). Information provided in this way will retain privilege through the protections granted to those committees under Section 23 of the Health Administration Act 1982.

Further, an RCA team may disclose information about recommendation(s) proposed by the team to the CE of the Health Service that appointed the RCA team; for the purposes of informing the CE about the proposed recommendation(s) and enabling the CE to consult with other staff members of the Health Service about the proposed recommendation(s), and provide feedback to the RCA team regarding the proposed recommendation(s). All such communication between the CE and the RCA team about the proposed recommendation(s) will remain privileged, and should be done formally in writing.

4.2 The Privileged RCA Process

There are four key tasks involved in the root cause analysis process.

4.2.1 Task 1 – Appointment and membership of the RCA Team

The CE is responsible for appointing and signing off the membership of an RCA team.

At least some of the members of the team should have fundamental knowledge of the care processes in the area where the incident occurred. No member of the RCA team should have been directly involved in the incident or in the care of the patient.

Where possible, the RCA team should include at least one member who is external to the LHD or Health Service. Further, RCA team members should not have any personal or non-professional connection with any clinician who has been involved in the incident. A direct line manager should not be a member of an RCA team which is investigating an incident involving his or her department or unit. All persons involved in overseeing the quality of the RCA process itself should be appointed members of the RCA Team. This will ensure they are covered by statutory privilege.

An RCA team investigating suspected suicide should include a senior mental health clinician who is independent of the facility involved in care. An RCA team investigating suspected homicides or other serious crimes should in its membership include a senior mental health clinician who is independent of the service involved in care. Team members receive a letter of appointment (see template at Appendix G).

Informing team members of their roles and responsibilities

When appointed, RCA team members are to be informed of their role and responsibilities. (see template letter at Appendix H).

Record of RCA Team appointment

The statutory privilege will only apply if it can be shown that the RCA team was properly constituted under the Health Administration Act 1982. As such, it is critical that comprehensive records are prepared and retained relating to the appointment of the RCA team.
Records will include:

An original copy of the letters of appointment of the RCA team members
The date of appointment
Clear identification of the incident under RCA investigation
The names of the RCA team members.

**Process for appointment of RCA Team**

The identification of appropriate personnel for appointment to an RCA team can delay the appointment of the RCA team. Best practice in conducting RCA investigations globally recognises the advantages of the immediate collection of evidence and facts pertaining to the event, particularly in the first 48 hours following a serious clinical incident. Health Services should have in place a process that enables the immediate appointment by the CE of core personnel to an RCA team as soon as a clinical SAC 1 incident (IIMS) or Harm Score 1 incident (ims+) is notified to the CE. This process would involve a standing instrument of appointment for certain experienced and trained personnel, who can facilitate the early collection of such information and material for the RCA investigation e.g. the DCG and/or Patient Safety Manager. A template for the immediate appointment of a “core” RCA team member is provided at Appendix I.

Once the remaining proposed RCA team members are identified, a further instrument of appointment should be executed by the CE that refers to the earlier instrument of appointment, and appoints the balance of the members of the RCA team. A template for the later appointment of additional members after appropriately qualified and/or expert individuals have been identified, is provided at Appendix J.

This process will ensure that statutory privilege attaches to all documents and communications prepared for the purposes of the RCA team in the initial period immediately following the incident, and prior to the appointment of the full RCA team.

**Documents provided to the RCA team**

To support the RCA investigation, the RCA Team receive a copy of the incident record.

**4.2.2 Task 2 – Notification to staff involved in the incident**

The RCA team will contact staff involved to discuss the incident and gather information as part of the investigation. A template that can be used to inform staff of the RCA process and to explain the staff members’ legal rights and responsibilities is provided at Appendix K.

**4.2.3 Task 3 – The RCA Investigation**

There are six key steps in undertaking an RCA investigation:

1. Interviews and gathering information – interviews of people relevant to the incident are undertaken. This must include clinicians who were involved in the incident as well as the patient and/or the family or carers. It may also include people relevant to current policy and process e.g. the pharmacist, the biomedical engineer or the hospital architect
2. Simple flow charting – a process to help determine what the team knows about the sequence of events, what they do not know and what they need to find out
3. Detailed flow charting – to enable the identification of the most significant problems where barriers might interrupt the flow of events for future prevention of similar events. Further causal analysis will centre on these issues to determine the underlying root causes
4. Causal/contributory factor charting – by asking what changed, what conditions were present and what was not done at each of the key potential barrier points, the team identifies the underlying causal issues and depicts them in a causal sequence. These causal factors are then analysed to
determine root causes. A complex healthcare case will typically identify between 3 and 5 root causes, although this number can vary

5. Causation/contributory factor statements – a written description of each of the causal/contributory sequences presented in a statement linking the root causes/contributory factors to the outcome

6. Recommendations – the team recommends actions that would most likely prevent or mitigate the root causes/contributory factors.

4.2.4 Task 4 – Reporting

All privileged RCA Teams must prepare a final report. Once this final report is signed off by the CE it is not protected by statutory privilege. The report must contain:

A de-identified description of the reportable incident

A clear written description of the findings of the analysis of the information gathered about the reportable incident

The incident ID from the incident management system and MoH RIB number

Causation and/or contributory factors statement/s that indicate the reasons the RCA Team considers the incident occurred (assuming that causation has been established). These should be written in accordance with the rules of causation established by NSW Health (see Appendix L).

Recommendations for system changes to improve procedures or practices to minimise recurrence of the incident if root causes have been determined and such recommendations can be made.

The final RCA report must not include the name or address of an individual patient or service provider involved in the incident, unless that person has consented, in writing, to that information being disclosed. The final report must also not disclose, as far as is practicable, any other material that identifies or may lead to the identification of such an individual. It should not contain details about the membership of the RCA team.

The final RCA report may contain recommendations about system improvement opportunities that have been identified during the investigation, but have not contributed to the adverse outcome.

See Appendix M for the final report template. Organisations should use this template to ensure the final report meets legislative and policy requirements.

Signing off the final report

Prior to final sign-off, the RCA team may seek a formal written opinion from the CE about any proposed recommendations, in accordance with 4.1.4

At the conclusion of the RCA, the RCA team must submit a copy of its signed report (but no other documentation) to the CE

The CE is to review the RCA report and endorse the report prior to submission to the MoH

Any disagreement that the CE may have with any of the recommendations in the final report is to be documented separately and submitted with the final report. It should outline the reason/s for the disagreement and any proposed alternative action. The original RCA team report is to be submitted unchanged accompanied by this additional documentation.

The CE may delegate the responsibility for endorsing the final report prior to submission to the MoH, but remains ultimately accountable for its content.

4.2.5 Variation in RCA Process

There are instances when a variation to the RCA process is acceptable. These instances include:

Assigning more than one incident to an RCA team where incidents are of the same classification
Resolution of the RCA process in a shorter timeframe due to early completion of the investigation. Any variation to the RCA process is to be documented in the final Report for sign off by the CE or nominated delegate.

4.2.6 Timeframes for RCA Process

The maximum time allowed for an RCA to be completed and the final report to be submitted to the MoH is 70 calendar days from when the incident was notified in the incident management system. This time frame and requirement for submission applies to all privileged RCAs.

4.2.7 Incidents involving the Coroner or Police

A referral for investigation of a death to the Coroner or the Police does not affect the requirement to undertake an investigation of an incident, including, where appropriate, an RCA.

If the Coroner requests a copy of the final RCA report, the LHD should provide it so that the Coroner is aware of any system changes that are occurring since the incident. The RCA report cannot, however, be tendered in evidence. If lawyers have been engaged to represent the LHD/SHN, the panel firm should forward the RCA report to the Coroner using a standard pro-forma letter which alerts the Coroner to S20R of the Health Administration Act 1982. If lawyers are not engaged, the CE should provide a covering letter with the report noting that the RCA has been provided for information only and that pursuant to S20R of the Health Administration Act 1982, it cannot be adduced or admitted in any proceedings.

A police or coronial investigation should not delay the commencement of an RCA.

4.3 The Corporate RCA Process

4.3.1 Detailed investigation for Corporate SAC 1 (IIMS) and Harm Score 1 (ims+) incidents

All corporate SAC 1 and Harm Score 1 incidents require either a root cause analysis or a detailed investigation to be undertaken. The RCA Report or Detailed Investigation Report must be provided to the MoH within 70 calendar days after the incident is notified in the incident management system. RCAs of corporate SAC 1 and Harm Score 1 incidents do not attract the statutory privilege outlined in section 4 that applies to RCAs conducted in respect of clinical SAC 1 and clinical Harm Score 1 incidents.

Nevertheless, it is important that any serious or major corporate incident that receives a SAC 1 (IIMS) or Harm Score 1 (ims+) rating be properly investigated, so that the cause of the incident can be identified, and any appropriate remedial action is implemented to mitigate against a similar incident occurring again.

4.3.2 Membership of the Corporate Investigation Team

The RCA or Detailed Investigation Team should generally consist of 3 to 5 members. The members should have fundamental knowledge about the corporate processes in the area where the incident occurred, but not have been directly involved in the incident.

4.4 Steps in the Investigation

There are six key steps in undertaking the detailed investigation.

1. Assessment of the incident to determine whether the issues, e.g. negligence, criminal, corruption and make initial reports if appropriate e.g. police, ICAC
2. Planning the investigation – identify scope, potential sources of information and resources required
3. Conduct interviews and collect detailed information about the incident
4. Assessing the results – once all information has been gathered, analyse the findings
5. Barriers and recommendations – identify the barriers that would most likely prevent or mitigate the problem – then determine appropriate recommendations.

6. Reporting to the CE and the MoH.

4.5 Timeframes for Corporate Investigation Process

The RCA Report or Detailed Investigation Report must be submitted to the MoH within 70 calendar days of the incident being notified in the incident management system.

4.6 The Final RCA or Detailed Investigation Report

All RCA Teams or Detailed Investigation Teams must prepare a final Report. The Report must contain:
A description of the reportable incident
The Incident ID from the incident management system
A causation statement/s that indicates the reasons why the Investigation Team consider the incident occurred
Recommendations for system changes to improve procedures or practices to minimise recurrence of the incident.

Signing off the final report
At the end of the investigation, the Investigation Team is to provide a copy of their Report to the CE.
The CE reviews the recommendations for consideration and endorsement before the Report is submitted to the MoH.
The CE is able to seek clarification from the Investigation Team if the rationale for any recommendation is unclear.
The CE is also able to add recommendations to the final report but this must be clearly documented.
If the CE does not agree with any of the recommendations then this is documented in the final report with the reason/s why and the proposed alternative action.
The CE is to ensure that any relevant final internal and external notification requirements as outlined in legislation and relevant policies is attended to including the NSW Health Service Check Register.

5. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Clinical Incidents
The DCG is responsible for monitoring and evaluating notifications in the incident management system at the local level to ensure:
The effective management of incidents that occur within health facilities
The effectiveness of risk mitigation strategies
The DCGs are to provide a report to their peak quality committee on the management of risks identified through incident management on a regular basis. This report includes a suite of performance indicators relevant to the LHD or SHN including those listed in Section 6.1.

5.1 Performance Indicators

5.1.1 Clinical Incidents
The key performance indicator in this Policy is:
Submission of final RCA Report to the MoH within 70 calendar days of incident notification in incident management system.

The following performance indicators should be included in the quarterly reports to the peak LHD/SHN quality committee:

Submission of a RIB to the MoH, concerning all SAC 1 (IIMS) and Harm Score 1 (ims⁺) incidents, both clinical and corporate, within 24 hours of notification in the incident management system

Proportion of obligatory external notifications made within required time frames

Proportion of SAC 2 (IIMS) and Harm Score 2 (ims⁺) incident investigations completed within 45 days as monitored in the incident management system or have a progress report outlining the management plan with a revised completion date being submitted to the appropriate senior manager

Proportion of SAC 3 and 4 (IIMS) and Harm Score 3 and 4 (ims⁺) investigations completed within 45 days as monitored in the incident management system or have a progress report outlining the management plan with a revised completion date being submitted to the appropriate senior manager

Proportion of SAC 1 (IIMS) and Harm Score 1 (ims⁺) incidents notified where incident status = new in ≤ 24hrs of incident occurring

Proportion of SAC 2, 3 and 4 (IIMS) and Harm Score 2, 3 and 4 (ims⁺) incidents notified where incident status = new in ≤ 5 days of incident occurring

Proportion of all actual SAC 2, 3 and 4 (IIMS) and Harm Score 2, 3 and 4 (ims⁺) incidents where incident status = complete in ≤ 45 days of incident occurring

Proportion of RCA recommendations completed within stated timeframe

Proportion of incidents notified which have recommendations for action

Proportion of incidents notified where recommendations have been completed.

5.2 Corporate Incidents

The key performance indicator in this Policy is:

Submission of final RCA Report (where relevant) to the MoH within 70 calendar days of incident notification in the incident management system.

The following performance indicators should be included in the incident management framework at a Health Service level for corporate incidents:

Submission of a Reportable Incident Brief to the MoH, concerning all SAC 1 (IIMS) and Harm Score 1 (ims⁺) corporate incidents within 24 hours of notification in the incident management system

Proportion of obligatory external notifications made within required time frames

Proportion of SAC 2 (IIMS) and Harm Score 2 (ims⁺) incident investigations completed within 45 days as monitored in the incident management system or have a progress report outlining the management plan with a revised completion date being submitted to the appropriate senior manager

Proportion of SAC 3 and 4 (IIMS) and Harm Score 3 and 4 (ims⁺) investigations completed within 45 days as monitored in the incident management system or have a progress report outlining the management plan with a revised completion date being submitted to the appropriate senior manager

Proportion of SAC 1 (IIMS) and Harm Score 1 (ims⁺) incidents notified where incident status = new in ≤ 24hrs of incident occurring

Proportion of SAC 2, 3 and 4 (IIMS) and Harm Score 2, 3 and 4 (ims⁺) incidents notified where incident status = new in ≤ 5 days of incident occurring
Proportion of all actual SAC 2, 3 and 4 (IIMS) and Harm Score 2, 3 and 4 (ims+) incidents where incident status = complete in ≤45 days of incident occurring

Proportion of RCA recommendations completed within stated timeframe

Proportion of incidents notified which have recommendations for action

Proportion of incidents notified where recommendations have been completed.

6 APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix A – Relevant NSW Health legislation, Policy Directives, Guidelines, Information Bulletins and other resources

6.1.1 Relevant NSW Health legislation


1) Health Administration Act 1982
2) Health Administration Regulation 2018
3) Health Care Complaints Act 1993 (NSW)
4) Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002
5) Health Records and Information Privacy Regulation 2012
6) Health Services Act 1997
7) Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
8) Private Health Facilities Act 2007
9) Private Health Facilities Regulation 2010
### 6.1.2 Relevant NSW Health Policy Directives and Guidelines


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<td>PD2016_027</td>
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<tr>
<td>Significant Legal Matters and Management of Legal Services</td>
<td>PD2017_003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with Children Checks and Other Police Checks</td>
<td>PD2019_003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Health and Safety: Better Practice Procedures</td>
<td>PD2018_013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

315(25/07/19)
### 6.2 Appendix B – Severity Assessment Code (SAC) June 2019

#### STEP 1 Consequences Table

(For notification, consider the actual consequence or outcome using this table as a guide. The examples listed here are not exhaustive.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consequences</th>
<th>Serious</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Minor</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CLINICAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Patient      | Patients with Death unrelated to the natural course of the illness and differing from the immediate expected outcome of the patient management or:  
- Suspected suicide  
- Suspected homicide  
- Unexpected intra-partum stillbirth, or any of the following:  
  * Sentinel events  
  * Surgery or other invasive procedure performed on the wrong site resulting in serious harm or death  
  * Surgery or other invasive procedure performed on the wrong patient resulting in serious harm or death  
  * Wrong surgical or other invasive procedure performed on a patient resulting in serious harm or death  
  * Intended retention of a foreign object in a patient after surgery or other invasive procedure resulting in serious harm or death  
  * Haemolytic blood transfusion reaction resulting from ABO incompatibility resulting in serious harm or death  
  * Suspected suicide of a patient within an acute psychiatric unit or acute psychiatric ward  
  * Medication error resulting in serious harm or death  
  * Use of physical or mechanical restraint resulting in serious harm or death  
  * Discharge or release of a child to an unauthorised person  
  * Use of an incorrectly positioned oro- or naso-gastric tube resulting in serious harm or death |  
- Patients suffering a Major permanent loss of function (sensory, motor, physiologic or psychological) unrelated to the natural course of the illness and differing from the expected outcome of patient management or any of the following:  
  * Suffering significant disfigurement as a result of the incident  
  * Patient at significant risk due to being absent against medical advice  
  * Threatened or actual physical or verbal assault of patient requiring external or police intervention |  
- Patients with Permanent reduction in bodily functioning (sensory, motor, physiologic, or psychological) unrelated to the natural course of the illness and differing from the expected outcome of patient management or any of the following:  
  * Increased length of stay as a result of the incident  
  * Surgical intervention required as a result of the incident |  |  |
| **STAFF** | Death of staff member related to work incident or suicide, or hospitalisation of 3 or more staff | Permanent injury to staff member, hospitalisation of 2 staff, or lost time or restricted duty or illness for 2 or more staff or pending or actual SafeWork NSW prosecution | Medical expenses, lost time or restricted duties or injury / illness for 1 or more staff | First aid treatment only with no lost time or restricted duties | No injury or review required |
| **CORPORATE** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Visitor      | Death of visitor or hospitalisation of 3 or more visitors | Hospitalisation of up to 2 visitors related to the incident / injury or pending or actual SafeWork NSW prosecution | Medical expenses incurred or treatment of up to 2 visitors not requiring hospitalisation | Evaluation and treatment with no expenses | No treatment required or refused treatment |
| Service      | Complete loss of service or output | Major loss of agency / service to users | Disruption to users due to agency problems | Reduced efficiency or disruption to agency working | No loss of service |
| Financial    | Loss of assets replacement value due to damage, fire etc > $1M. Loss of cash/investments/assets due to fraud, overpayment or theft > $100K or SafeWork NSW claims > $100K | Loss of assets replacement value due to damage, fire etc $100K-$1M, loss of cash/investments/assets due to fraud, overpayment or theft $10K-$100K or SafeWork NSW claims $50K-$100K | Loss of assets replacement value due to damage, fire etc $50K to $100K or loss of cash/investments/assets due to fraud, overpayment or theft to $10K | Loss of assets replacement value due to damage, fire etc to $50K | No financial loss |
| Environmental| Toxic release off-site with detrimental effect. Fire requiring evacuation | Off-site release with no detrimental effects or fire that grows larger than an incipient stage | Off-site release contained with outside assistance or fire incipient stage or less | Off-site release contained without outside assistance | Nuisance releases |

---

11 Suspected suicide of a person (including a patient or community patient) who has received care or treatment for a mental illness from a Health Service or other PHO where the death occurs within 7 days of the person’s last contact with the organisation or where there are reasonable clinical grounds to suspect a connection between the death and the care or treatment provided by the organisation.

12 Suspected homicide committed by a person who has received care or treatment for mental illness from a Health Service or other PHO within 6 months of the person’s last contact with the organisation or where there are reasonable clinical grounds to suspect a connection between the death and the care or treatment provided by the organisation.
### STEP 2 Likelihood Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Probability Categories</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequent</td>
<td>Is expected to occur again either immediately or within a short period of time (likely to occur most weeks or months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Will probably occur in most circumstances (several times a year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible</td>
<td>Possibly will recur – might occur at some time (may happen every 1 to 2 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlikely</td>
<td>Possibly will recur – could occur at some time in 2 to 5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>Unlikely to recur – may occur only in exceptional circumstances (may happen every 5 to 30 years)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### STEP 4 Action Required Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Required</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Extreme risk – immediate action required – Reportable Incident Brief (RIB) for all SAC 1 incidents must be forwarded to the MoH within 24 hours. A Privileged Root Cause Analysis (RCA) investigation must be undertaken for all Clinical SAC 1 incidents with a report being submitted to the MoH.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>High risk – need to notify senior management. Detailed investigation required. Ongoing monitoring of trended aggregated incident data may also identify and prioritise issues requiring a practice improvement project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Medium risk – management responsibility must be specified – Aggregate data then undertake a practice improvement project. Exception – all financial losses must be reported to senior management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Low risks – manage by routine procedures – Aggregate data then undertake a practice improvement project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB – An incident that rates a SAC 2, 3 or 4 should only be reported to the MoH if there is the potential for media interest or requires direct notification under existing MoH legislative reporting requirements or NSW MoH Policy Directive.

### STEP 3 SAC Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONSEQUENCE</th>
<th>Serious</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Minor</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LIKELIHOOD</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlikely</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Every incident assessed against the Severity Assessment Code Matrix should be scored separately for both their actual and potential consequence or outcome.
6.3 Appendix C – Sample letter informing CE of issues that may involve individual performance

DATE

INSERT NAME

INSERT FACILITY

INSERT ADDRESS

Dear [Insert Name],

I am writing to advise you that the RCA Team appointed on [Insert date] to investigate the Clinical incident [insert the incident management system ID], has identified that the incident raises issues that may relate to individual conduct.

The RCA Team is of the opinion that the incident raises matters that may involve (Please delete which ever of the following is not relevant).

- professional misconduct or unsatisfactory professional conduct
  \textit{(mandatory reporting requirement)}

or

- a person suffering from an impairment
  \textit{(mandatory reporting requirement)}

or

- unsatisfactory professional performance
  \textit{(discretionary reporting)}

The above concerns of the RCA Team relate to [insert name of the staff member who is of concern]. In brief the matter of concern is [Insert a brief outline of the matter of concern]

The matter is referred to you in accordance with the terms of section 20O of the Health Administration Act 1982 for appropriate action.

The RCA Team will continue to investigate the systems issues related to the incident. / The RCA Team will now conclude its investigation of this incident. (Please delete whichever is not relevant).

Yours sincerely

Signature

Name

Designation

RCA Team Leader

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6.4 Appendix D – Reportable Incident Definition under Section 20L of the Health Administration Act 1982 – For users of the SAC Matrix

Under the provisions of Division 6C of Part 2 of the Health Administration Act 1982 when a “reportable incident” involving a relevant Health Services organisation is reported to the Chief Executive of the organisation, the organisation is to appoint a root cause analysis team in relation to the reportable incident.

The Ministry of Health and Health Administration Regulation 2005 has determined that “Reportable Incident” is defined as follows. A “Reportable Incident” involves:

1) The incident must have had “serious clinical consequences” (as defined below) and the probability of recurrence must fall into one of categories (i) to (iv) listed below; OR

2) The incident must have had “major clinical consequences” (as defined below) and the probability of recurrence must fall into one of categories (i) to (ii) listed below;

Under section 20M of the Act, an RCA is required to be conducted once the incident has been reported to the Chief Executive.

The Chief Executive should be notified via a Reportable Incident Brief in accordance with this Policy.

“Serious Clinical Consequence”

An incident with “serious clinical consequence” is one that involves:

The death of a patient unrelated to the natural course of the illness and differing from the immediate expected outcome of the patient management;

Suspected suicide of a person (including an inpatient or community patient) who has received care or treatment for a mental illness from the relevant Health Services organisation where the death occurs within 7 days of the person’s last contact with the organisation or where there are reasonable clinical grounds to suspect a connection between the death and the care or treatment provided by the organisation;

Suspected homicide committed by a person who has received care or treatment for mental illness from the relevant Health Services organisation within six months of the person’s last contact with the organisation or where there are reasonable clinical grounds to suspect a connection between the death and the care or treatment provided by the organisation;

Unexpected intra-partum stillbirth; OR

Sentinel Events, those being:

Surgery or other invasive procedure performed on the wrong site resulting in serious harm or death.
Surgery or other invasive procedure performed on the wrong patient resulting in serious harm or death.
Wrong surgical or other invasive procedure performed on a patient resulting in serious harm or death.
Unintended retention of a foreign object in a patient after surgery or other invasive procedure resulting in serious harm or death.
Haemolytic blood transfusion reaction resulting from ABO incompatibility resulting in serious harm or death.
Suspected suicide of a patient within an acute psychiatric unit or acute psychiatric ward.
Medication error resulting in serious harm or death.

315(25/07/19)
• Use of physical or mechanical restraint resulting in serious harm or death.
• Discharge or release of a child to an unauthorised person.
• Use of an incorrectly positioned oro- or naso-gastric tube resulting in serious harm or death.

“Major Clinical Consequences”
An incident with “major clinical consequences” is one which involves a patient:
• Suffering a major permanent loss of function (sensory, motor, physiologic or psychological) unrelated to the natural course of the illness and differing from the expected outcome of patient management;
• Suffering significant disfigurement as a result of the incident;
• At significant risk due to being absent against medical advice/absconding;
• Subjected to threatened or actual physical or verbal assault requiring external or police intervention.

Probability of Recurrence
(i) Frequent - expectation that the incident will recur immediately or within weeks or months
(ii) Likely - probability incident will recur more than once within 12 months;
(iii) Possible - possibility incident may recur at some time every 1 to 2 years;
(iv) Unlikely - possibility incident may recur at some time in 2 to 5 years.

As per Section 4 of this Policy, the CE has discretion to appoint an RCA team to investigate any clinical incident of a lesser severity than SAC 1 (IIMS) or Harm Score 1 (ims+), if the CE is of the opinion that the incident may be the result of a serious systemic problem that justifies the appointment of such a team. In that event, the RCA process will also enjoy statutory privilege.
6.5 Appendix E – Statutory health corporations and Affiliated health organisations

In addition to Local Health Districts the following facilities are defined as “relevant health Services organisations” subject to the RCA privilege provisions under the Health Administration Act 1982:

Statutory health corporations

- The Agency for Clinical Innovation
- Bureau of Health Information
- Clinical Excellence Commission
- Health Education and Training Institute
- The Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network
- The Sydney Children’s Hospitals Network (Randwick and Westmead) (incorporating The Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children)

Affiliated Health Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of organisation</th>
<th>Recognised establishment or recognised service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benevolent Society of New South Wales</td>
<td>• Central Sydney Scarba Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Early Intervention Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Eastern Sydney Scarba Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• South West Sydney Scarba Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvary Health Care (Newcastle) Limited</td>
<td>• Calvary Mater Newcastle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvary Health Care Sydney Limited</td>
<td>• Calvary Health Care Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrington Centennial Care Ltd</td>
<td>• Carrington Centennial Nursing Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Healthcare Limited</td>
<td>• St Vincent’s Health Service, Bathurst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lourdes Hospital and Community Health Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(other than Holy Spirit Dubbo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hammondcare Health and Hospitals Limited</td>
<td>• Braeside Hospital, Prairiewood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Greenwich Hospital, Greenwich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Neringah Hospital, Wahroonga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Northern Beaches Palliative Care Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karitane</td>
<td>• Child and Family Health Services at Carramar, Fairfield, Liverpool and Randwick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercy Care Centre, Young</td>
<td>• Mercy Care Centre: Young, excluding Mount Joseph’s Nursing Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercy Health Service Albury Limited</td>
<td>• Mercy Health: Albury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors</td>
<td>• NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(STARTTS)</td>
<td>(STARTTS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney</td>
<td>• Tresillian Family Care Centres at Belmore, Penrith, Willoughby, Wollstonecraft and Lismore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Society for the Welfare of Mothers and Babies</td>
<td>• Sacred Heart Health Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• St Joseph’s Hospital (Auburn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• St Vincent’s Hospital, Darlinghurst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewart House</td>
<td>• Child health screening services at Stewart House Preventorium, Curl Curl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The College of Nursing</td>
<td>• Nursing Education Programs conducted under agreement with the NSW Department of Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Uniting Church in Australia</td>
<td>• Lottie Stewart Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• War Memorial Hospital (Waverley)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7Current as the date this Policy Directive was issued
6.6 Appendix G – Appointment of RCA Team

In accordance with Part 2, Division 6C of the Health Administration Act 1982

I, (insert name of Chief Executive) in accordance with section 20M of the Health Administration Act 1982, do hereby appoint the following persons to a Root Cause Analysis Team:

Insert name, title, background, employing organisation (team leader)
Insert name, title, background, employing organisation (team member)
Insert name, title, background, employing organisation (team member)
Insert name, title, background, employing organisation (team member)
Insert name, title, background, employing organisation (team member)

...to consider and determine the root causes and contributing factors for the Clinical incident (insert the incident management system incident ID)

[insert summary of incident (include date)]

and to prepare a report of the root cause analysis in accordance with section 20O of the Health Administration Act 1982.

A root cause analysis conducted in accordance with this appointment shall be privileged in accordance with the terms of Part 2, Division 6C of the Health Administration Act 1982.

(signed)
(name of CE)
(date)
6.7 Appendix H – Letter to RCA Team Member

DATE

INSERT NAME
INSERT FACILITY
INSERT ADDRESS

Dear (Insert Name)

I am writing to you to advise that in accordance with Division 6C of the *Health Administration Act 1982* and the *NSW Health Incident Management Policy*, you have been appointed to an RCA team to determine the root cause and contributing factors for the Clinical SAC 1 reportable incident (insert the incident management system ID), as set out in the attached appointment document.

You have been selected as a member of this team because your expertise and experience is essential to the review of this incident.

The work of the RCA team will be privileged in accordance with the *Health Administration Act*. This has a number of implications, of which you should be aware:

1. **Restrictions on disclosure of information**

You are required to maintain confidentiality in relation to your work as a member of this team, and you must not make your own record or discuss the investigation with anyone who is not part of the team, except for the purposes of exercising the function or any recommendation of an RCA team or for the purposes of preparing a report on the RCA.

2. **Statutory Privilege**

The internal workings of RCA Teams appointed under the Health Administration Act are privileged. This means:

- Members of the team cannot be compelled to give evidence about information obtained by them as part of their work on the RCA Team.
- Members of the team cannot be compelled to produce to court, papers created or communications (written or verbal) made for the dominant purpose of the RCA Team carrying out its functions.
- The final RCA report prepared by the RCA Team cannot be adduced or admitted as evidence in any proceedings (including coronial proceedings, or any proceedings in which it is claimed a procedure or practice was careless or inadequate).
- Members of the team are protected from personal liability, including actions for defamation, provided they act in good faith as a part of the RCA Team function.
- Team members should be aware there are limits to the privilege:
- The privilege will not apply to pre-existing documents such as a notification in the incident management system, or medical records or other records created for general care or management reasons.
- The privilege does not prevent release of the final report outside the organisation, to the patient or family of the patient.

202(13/02/14)
3. **Concerns or complaints about an individual clinician not to be investigated**

The RCA Team does not have any authority to investigate concerns or complaints about an individual clinician. Under the terms of the *Health Administration Act*, where the RCA Team considers the reportable incident *may* involve professional misconduct or unsatisfactory professional performance or possible impairment issues the team **must** notify the CE in writing.

The RCA Team may, at its discretion, notify the CE if an incident *may* involve unsatisfactory professional performance.

Following notification to the CE the team will take no further action on the individual matter.

4. **Requirements for the Final RCA Report**

The final report must contain:

- the incident management system incident number
- the MoH RIB number
- a description of the incident
- causation statements outlining root causes, where root causes have been determined
- recommendations for change and improvement where appropriate and
- monitoring processes for follow-up of recommended actions.

The final report is to be submitted to the CE on the *(insert date)*

Thank you for your participation in this important patient safety activity.

Yours sincerely

Signature
Name
Designation
6.8 Appendix I – Appointment of Core RCA Team Members

In accordance with Part 2, Division 6C of the *Health Administration Act 1982*, I, (insert name of Chief Executive) in accordance with section 20M of the *Health Administration Act 1982*, do hereby appoint the following person/s to a Root Cause Analysis Team:

Insert name, title, background, employing organisation (Team leader)
Insert name, title, background, employing organisation (Team member)

to consider and determine the root causes and contributing factors for the Clinical incident (*insert the incident management system incident ID*)

[insert summary of incident (include date)]

and to prepare a report of the root cause analysis in accordance with section 20O of the *Health Administration Act 1982*.

The Root Cause Analysis Team member/s listed above shall form the core personnel of the team, and may commence work immediately gathering material relevant to the discharge of the RCA Team’s statutory functions under the *Health Administration Act*. I intend to appoint additional members to the RCA Team to assist it in its work as soon as further individuals with appropriate expertise and/or experience have been identified.

A root cause analysis conducted in accordance with this appointment, including any activities carried out by the core RCA Team members appointed by this instrument in carrying out their statutory functions, shall be privileged in accordance with the terms of Part 2, Division 6C of the *Health Administration Act 1982*.

(signed)

(name of CE)

(date)
6.9 Appendix J – Appointment of Additional Member to RCA Team

On [insert date] in accordance with Part 2, Division 6C of the Health Administration Act 1982, I appointed core members of an RCA Team to consider and determine the root causes and contributing factors for the Clinical incident [insert the incident management system incident ID].

A copy of the original instrument of appointment is attached and marked “A”.

Having regard to the nature of the incident and the appropriate expertise and/or experience required by the RCA Team in order to properly carry out its statutory functions, in accordance with section 20M of the Health Administration Act 1982. I have determined to appoint the following additional members to that RCA Team:

- Insert name, title, background, employing organisation (team member)
- Insert name, title, background, employing organisation (team member)
- Insert name, title, background, employing organisation (team member)
- Insert name, title, background, employing organisation (team member)

and to prepare a report of the root cause analysis in accordance with section 20O of the Health Administration Act 1982.

A root cause analysis conducted in accordance with this appointment shall be privileged in accordance with the terms of Part 2, Division 6C of the Health Administration Act 1982.

________________________
(signed)

________________________
(name of CE)

________________________
(date)

202(13/02/14)
6.10 Appendix K – Notification of staff involved in incident

Dear [insert name]

Following the recent reporting of incident number xxx in the Incident Information Management System and in accordance with the Health Administration Act 1982 and the NSW Health Incident Management Policy, the [insert name] Local Health District Chief Executive has appointed a Root Cause Analysis (RCA) Team. The team will review systems and processes surrounding the incident to determine the root cause and factors contributing to the clinical incident [provide a brief description of the incident]. Because of your knowledge of this incident, a member of the RCA Team may contact you to arrange a suitable time to discuss the circumstances of the incident from your perspective. You are entitled to have a support person with you during the interview should you so wish.

The Health Administration Act 1982 outlines specific restrictions on and responsibilities of RCA Teams. These include:

1. **Restrictions on disclosure of information**

   Members of the Root Cause Analysis Team are required to maintain confidentiality in relation to this investigation. They must not make their own records or discuss the investigation with anyone who is not part of the team, except for the purposes of the RCA Team or for the purposes of preparing a report on the RCA.

2. **Statutory Privilege**

   The internal workings of RCA Teams appointed under the Health Administration Act are privileged. This means:
   - RCA Team members cannot be compelled to produce or give evidence of any document created by or on behalf of, at the request of, the RCA Team, where the document was for the dominant purpose of the conduct of the investigation by the RCA Team.
   - Any document that you prepare, or any communication (written or verbal) that you make, that is for the dominant purpose of assisting with the conduct of the investigation by the RCA Team cannot be produced before any court, tribunal or other person.
   - The final RCA report prepared by the RCA Team cannot be adduced or admitted as evidence in any proceedings (including coronial proceedings, or any proceedings in which it is claimed a procedure or practice was careless or inadequate).
   - RCA Team members acting in good faith for the purposes of the exercise of the RCA Team’s function are also protected from personal liability, including actions for defamation.
There are limits to the privilege:

- The privilege will not apply to pre-existing documents such as incident management system notification classification, or medical records or other records created for general care or management reasons.
- The privilege does not prevent release of the final Report outside the organisation, to the patient or family of the patient.


3. **Concerns or complaints about an individual clinician not to be investigated**

The RCA Team does not have any authority to investigate concerns or complaints about an individual clinician. Under the terms of the Health Administration Act, where the RCA Team considers the reportable incident may involve professional misconduct or unsatisfactory professional conduct or possible impairment issues the team must notify the Chief Executive in writing.

The RCA Team may, at its discretion, notify the Chief Executive in writing if an incident may involve unsatisfactory professional performance.

Once the CE has been notified the team will take no further action on the individual matter.

If you wish to discuss this matter, further please feel free to contact

*insert name, title and contact number*

Thank you for your participation in this important patient safety activity.

Yours sincerely

---

Signature
Name
Designation
6.11 Appendix L – The Five Rules of Causation

*Adapted from David Marx and the Veterans Affairs National Center for Patient Safety

The five rules of causation are designed to improve the analysis and documentation of causal issues within the RCA process.

Rule 1 - Causal Statements must clearly show the “cause and effect” relationship.

When describing why an event has occurred, you should show the link between your root cause and the bad outcome. Focus on showing the link from your root cause to the undesirable patient outcome you are investigating.

Example:

- **Incorrect**: The established rostering practices in the surgical unit were inappropriate.
- **Correct**: The established rostering practices in the surgical unit led to the resident’s fatigue which increased the likelihood that he submitted a test request for the incorrect patient via the electronic system.

Rule 2 – Use specific and accurate descriptors for what occurred, avoiding negative or vague words

To force clear cause and effect expressions (and avoid inflammatory statements), avoid the use of vague or negative words that can be replaced by a more accurate, clear description. Even words like “carelessness” and “complacency” are bad choices because they are broad, negative judgments that do little to describe the actual conditions or behaviours that led to the mishap.

Example:

- **Incorrect**: Poorly trained nurse.
- **Correct**: The level of the nurse’s training increased the likelihood that she misunderstood the IV pump controls which led to missing steps in the programming of the dose and rate. This resulted in the patient receiving a rapid infusion of the drug and his cardiac arrest.

Rule 3 – Identify the preceding cause(s), not the human error

Most of our mishaps involve at least one human error. Unfortunately, the discovery that a human has erred does little to aid the prevention process. You must investigate to determine WHY the human error occurred. It can be a system-induced error (e.g., step not included in medical procedure) or an at-risk behaviour (doing task by memory, instead of a checklist).

**For every human error in your causal chain, you must have a corresponding cause.** It is the cause of the error, not the error itself, which leads us to productive prevention strategies.

Example:

- **Incorrect**: The registrar did not review the discharge summary.
- **Correct**: The absence of replacement medical staff to cover registrars on sick leave led to the registrar being rushed and taking short cuts resulting in the patient being discharged with the wrong discharge summary. This resulted in the GP continuing the wrong dose of anticoagulant therapy and the patient’s gastro-intestinal bleed.
Rule 4 - Each procedural deviation must have a preceding cause.

Procedural violations are like errors in that they are not directly manageable. Instead, it is the cause of the procedural violation that we can manage. If a clinician is violating a procedure because it is the local norm, we will have to address the incentives that created the norm.

Example:

- **Incorrect**: The pharmacy technician did not follow the correct dispensing procedure.
- **Correct**: The absence of an orientation programme led to the pharmacy technician being unaware of the practice of routine checking by two persons which resulted in the incorrect dispensing of the medication. This led to the provision of the wrong strength of solution resulting in the respiratory arrest of the child.

Rule 5 - Failure to act is only causal when there was a pre-existing duty to act.

The duty to act may arise from standards and guidelines for practice; or other duties to provide patient care. We need to find out why this mishap occurred in our system as it is designed today. For instance, a doctor’s failure to prescribe a cardiac medication after an infarct can only be causal if he was required by established guidelines to do so.

Example:

- **Incorrect**: The Visiting Medical Officer (VMO) did not review the patient after surgery.
- **Correct**: The absence of a requirement for VMOs to review patient’s after they have undergone a surgical procedure led to the patient not being attended by a specialist for 10 days which contributed to the delay in recognition of the patient’s deterioration and her subsequent death.
12. MEDICAL CARE

6.12 Appendix M – Final RCA Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health District / Network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Final RCA Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference Numbers (where applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MoH RIB No:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIMS No:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LHD TRIM No:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LHD File No:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCA No:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LHD RIB No:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Incident Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Incident:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of Incident Notification in IIMS:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Reporting Details

Staff member/s responsible for feedback to staff (include position)

By when?

Final RCA report signed off by RCA Team on:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date report due to CE:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date signed by CE:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Date due to be submitted to NSW Ministry of Health:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date submitted to NSW Ministry of Health:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Notification of decommissioning of RCA

RCA decommissioned: YES / NO

Reason for decommissioning:

If the RCA has been decommissioned has an investigation been undertaken on the systems issues: YES / NO (please select)

### Comments

### Referral to other committees/agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Care Complaints Commission</th>
<th>Coroner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Contact Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LHD / SHN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact Person:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone Number:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Address:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Final RCA Report cont

Description of incident that was investigated
(this is a concise chronological account of what happened to the patient)

Summary of RCA Team findings and recommendations

The following summary provides an analysis of the event, any contributing factors and what the team is recommending to prevent a similar occurrence in the future.

On investigation, the RCA Team found...

Following the investigation, the RCA team (Please select the appropriate box/boxes)

- was unable to identify any root causes or contributory factors
- was unable to identify any gaps in service delivery
- identified systems improvement opportunities unrelated to the root causes / contributing factors.

For Internal use only:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attached in TRIM</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copied to the CEC</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filed</td>
<td>File No.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 – Root Cause/Contributing Factors Table (a requirement when causes have been identified)

Documentation of causation statements is a legislative requirement. All causation statements must comply with the Rules of Causation. Each root cause displayed must be addressed in the action plan.

Describe the root cause and categorise the cause or contributing factor according to the triage cards and flip chart definitions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No.</th>
<th>Description (of Root Cause / Contributory factor)</th>
<th>Category (described in the Checklist Flip Chart for Root cause Analysis Teams)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 – RCA Team Recommendations (a requirement when causes have been identified)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causation statement number(^8)</th>
<th>Recommendation/s Description of action to be taken</th>
<th>Risk Classification. Eliminate, Control Accept(^9)</th>
<th>Position of person responsible for implementation Recommendation/s</th>
<th>Outcome measure</th>
<th>Completion date e.g. 3 months = 22/02/06</th>
<th>Management Concurrence Y/N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

\(^8\) The number here relates to the numbered causation statement in Table 1 ROOT CAUSE/CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TABLE

\(^9\) Actions can be classified as eliminating, controlling or accepting the risk. If accepting the risk, risk minimisation strategies need to be in place. Weaker actions are those that accept the risk and include redundancy/double checks, warnings and labels, new procedures and policies, new memorandums, training in absence of knowledge deficit and additional study/analysis. Medium actions are those taken to control the risk and include checklists and cognitive aids, increased staffing, decreased workload, use of read backs, eliminating look-alikes and sound alikes and eliminating or reducing distractions. Stronger actions are those taken to eliminate the risk and include simplified processes that remove unnecessary steps, standardise equipment, processes or care plans.
Table 3 – Systems improvement opportunities unrelated to root causes or contributing factors (modification of these issues would not have helped to prevent the event)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Position of person responsible for implementation Recommendation/s</th>
<th>Outcome measure</th>
<th>Completion date e.g. 3 months = 22/02/06</th>
<th>Management Concurrence Y/N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RCA Report Final Sign Off

The recommendation/s from the Root Cause Analysis of the incident are endorsed/not endorsed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ CE / Service Director]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I, ____________________________ from ____________________________

endorse /endorse with the following provisions/ do not endorse\(^\text{a}\) the recommendations of this RCA.

(Signature)

______________________________
Chief Executive / Service Director
Date

\(^\text{a}\) If not endorsed, please provide reasons and document revised action.
Appendix N – Overview of ims⁺ Harm Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact/Outcome</th>
<th>Harm Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unexpected Death or Sentinel Event (Clinical)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death (WHS)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete loss of service (Corporate)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major harm¹³ (Clinical &amp; WHS)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major loss or disruption (Corporate)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor harm (Clinical &amp; WHS)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor loss or disruption (Corporate)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No harm or near miss (all)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The Harm Score is auto calculated in ims⁺ based on the incident outcome and the additional treatment / resources required
- It applies to:
  - Clinical - Patient
  - Corporate – Worker, Visitor, Relative
  - Corporate – No Person
  - It does not apply to consumer feedback or complaints

¹³ Refer to Appendix B for definitions of harm.
SAFETY ALERT BROADCAST SYSTEM (PD2013_009)

PURPOSE

The NSW Ministry of Health Safety Alert Broadcast System (SABS) is the mechanism to provide a systematic approach to the distribution of patient safety information to the NSW health system and includes a mechanism to ensure the required action and management of patient safety issues by health services.

The SABS includes three tiers of notifications to provide NSW health services with early warnings of issues, namely:
- Safety Alert
- Safety Notice
- Safety Information

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Safety Alerts
Local Health Districts/Specialty Health Networks must:
- Distribute the SAB to staff identified in the Alert (and other staff as relevant).
- Acknowledge receipt of the SAB within the defined timeframe.
- Ensure completion of required actions within the designated timeframe.
- Submit required responses to the CEC within the designated timeframe.

Safety Notices
Local Health Districts/Specialty Health Networks must:
- Distribute the SAB to staff identified in the Alert (and other staff as relevant).
- Consider the relevance of the information to the Local Health District.
- Review relevant policies and procedures to address the issues.
- Identify any actions required and implement those actions.
- Submit required responses to the CEC within the designated timeframe.

Safety Information
Local Health Districts/Specialty Health Networks must:
- Distribute the SAB to all staff.
- Consider the relevance of the information to the Local Health District.
- Identify any actions required and implement those actions (if appropriate).
- Submit required responses to the CEC within the designated timeframe.

IMPLEMENTATION

NSW Clinical Excellence Commission is responsible for
- assessment of information received and production of SABS document
- distribution of SABS notifications to NSW health services in a timely manner
- monitoring State-wide implementation of requested actions
- providing reports to the Clinical Risk Action Group (CRAG) on compliance of mandatory actions with SABS
- reviewing the SABS Policy Document in accordance with PD2014_043, NSW Health Policy Directives and Other Policy Documents.
Chief Executives are responsible for establishing an efficient and effective process for
• receipt, distribution, implementation and effectiveness for SABS notifications,
• ensuring distribution of SABS notifications to the appropriate people within the health service,
• acknowledging receipt of SABS Safety Alerts within a time frame defined at the time of release, ideally within 2 days.

Directors of Clinical Governance are responsible for
• ensuring implementation of nominated action/s, where relevant,
• monitoring the effectiveness of the SABS within the health service.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 About this document

The NSW Ministry of Health and the Clinical Excellence Commission are made aware of issues affecting patient safety from a variety of sources. These include but are not limited to:

a. Incident Information Management System (IIMS) incident notifications.
b. Reportable Incident Brief (RIB) information and Root Cause Analysis (RCA) reports.
c. Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC) and Coroners reports.
d. Information from Health Services, the Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC), the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare, and other jurisdictions.
e. Safety alerts, product recalls and notices issued by organisations including the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), international authorities such as the US Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) and the UK Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

This Policy Directive outlines the NSW Ministry of Health’s approach to the communication and management of statewide patient safety issues raised through these sources.

The Safety Alert Broadcast System (SABS) aims to:

a. Provide a coordinated approach to the management and distribution of patient safety information within NSW Health Services.
b. Ensure that SABs notifications have been received by the Chief Executive of each Local Health District/Specialty Health Network or service and that appropriate distribution of the information occurs.
c. Monitor NSW Health service implementation of risk management strategies.

SABs policy does not apply to:

a. Public Health alerts issued by the Chief Health Officer (CHO) about environmental health issues, food safety, or consumer products or public health events related to communicable diseases such as SARs or pandemic influenza.
b. Corporate alerts relating to areas such as equipment (other than medical devices), power supply and information technology.
c. WorkCover alerts and notices.
Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all health service staff.

Private health facilities should review the information provided in SABS and implement any action as appropriate to ensure patient safety.

**Key definitions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEC</td>
<td>A board governed statutory health corporation established under the Health Services Act as part of the NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program (PSCQP). It builds on the foundation work carried out by the Institute of Clinical Excellence established in 2001.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Governance</td>
<td>Clinical governance can be considered as the responsibility of governing bodies to demonstrate sound strategic and policy leadership in clinical safety and quality, to ensure appropriate safety and quality systems are in place and to ensure organisational accountability for safety and quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ministry</td>
<td>NSW Ministry of Health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCG</td>
<td>Director, Clinical Governance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Services</td>
<td>For the purposes of this policy, the term “health services” refers to Public Health Organisations, Justice and Forensic Mental Health Network and the Ambulance Service of NSW.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCCC</td>
<td>Health Care Complaints Commission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIMS</td>
<td>Incident Information Management System.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRR</td>
<td>Information Risk Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Health Districts, Specialty Health Networks and Services</td>
<td>Organisations constituted under the Health Services Act 1997 that are principally concerned with the provision of health services to residents within a designated geographic area and/or service type.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Health Facilities</td>
<td>Private health facilities licensed under the Private Health Facilities Act 2007.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health Organisations (PHO)</td>
<td>This term refers to Local Health District, statutory health corporations or an affiliated health organisation in response to its recognised establishments and recognised services as defined in the Health Services Act 1997.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSCQP</td>
<td>Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program (<a href="#">PD2005_608</a>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIB</td>
<td>Reportable Incident Brief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCA</td>
<td>Root Cause Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SABS</td>
<td>Safety Alert Broadcast System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TGA</td>
<td>Therapeutic Goods Administration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **SABS NOTIFICATIONS**

The SABS notifications provide a systematic three-tiered approach to the distribution, prioritisation and management of patient safety information. This includes a standardised system for monitoring the implementation of required actions by health services.
The three notifications issued under the SABS use the following colour coding to indicate the level of urgency.

1. **Safety Alert** (Red)
2. **Safety Notice** (Amber)
3. **Safety Information** (Green)

### 2.1 Safety Alert (Red)

The aim of the **Safety Alert** is to quickly disseminate information to Local Health Districts (LHDs)/Specialty Health Networks about a safety matter needing **immediate attention and action**. The Safety Alert will specify **mandatory** action/s to be taken by health services and the timeframes in which such actions should occur and assign responsibility for action. The colour coding for Safety Alerts is **RED**. This Alert takes precedence over any contrary policy/procedure/guideline contained in a Policy Directive or Guideline. On receipt of a Safety Alert, LHDs/Specialty Health Networks are to ensure local policies/procedures/guidelines comply with the information contained therein.

### 2.2 Safety Notice (Amber)

The aim of the **Safety Notice** is to inform Local Health Districts/Specialty Health Networks about potential quality and safety issues requiring **risk assessment at the local level** to determine appropriate action/s regarding any identified problems. The colour coding for Safety Notices is **AMBER**.

### 2.3 Safety Information (Green)

The aim of the **Safety Information** is to disseminate quality and safety information to health services to ensure lessons learned from State-wide, national and international sources are shared across the NSW Health System in an active manner. The Safety Information may include items such as updates on State-wide initiatives implemented under the NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program, information about Policy Directives and Guidelines and access to the most current information focusing on clinical quality and patient safety issues and research. The colour coding for Safety Information is **GREEN**
### Table 1 Easy Guide to health service responsibilities for receipt and management of a SABS notification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SABS document</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Distribution strategy*</th>
<th>Health service response on receipt of SABS document</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Safety Alert  | Alert LHDs/Specialty Health Networks to a safety matter needing **immediate attention and mandatory action.** The colour coding for Safety Alerts is **RED.** | The CEC distributes SABS to:  
• The Chief Executive; and  
• The officer responsible for designated action/s (indicated on the SABS).  
The LHD/Specialty Health Network distributes SABS to:  
• staff identified in the Alert; and  
• other relevant staff. |  
• Acknowledge receipt within a defined timeframe, usually 2 working days.  
• Ensure completion of required action/s within designated timeframe.  
• Ensure local policies and guidelines are updated to include new information if required.  
• Submit required responses to the CEC within the designated timeframe at quality@cec.health.nsw.gov.au. |
| Safety Notice | Informs LHDs/Specialty Health Networks or services about potential quality and safety issues requiring **risk assessment at the local level** to determine appropriate action regarding any identified problems. The colour coding for Safety Notices is **AMBER.** | The CEC distributes to:  
• The Chief Executive; and The officer responsible for suggested action/s.  
The LHD/Specialty Health Network distributes SABS to:  
• staff identified in the Notice; and  
• other relevant staff. |  
• Consider relevance of information to the LHD/Specialty Health Network or service.  
• Review relevant policies and procedures in place to address the issues.  
• Identify required action/s and implement.  
• Submit required responses to CEC within the designated timeframe at quality@cec.health.nsw.gov.au. |
| Safety Information | Disseminates quality and safety news to LHDs/ Specialty Health Networks or services to ensure lessons learned are shared across health services. May include updates on initiatives implemented under the NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program, information about policy directives and guidelines and provide access to the latest information and research focusing on clinical quality and patient safety. The colour coding for Safety Information is **GREEN.** | The CEC distributes to:  
• The Chief Executive and the Director of Clinical Governance.  
The LHD/Specialty Health Network ensures:  
• the availability of Safety Information to all staff. |  
• Consider relevance of the information to LHD/Specialty Health Network.  
• Identify any action/s and implement (if any). |

---

179(30/05/13)
3. DISTRIBUTION OF SABS NOTIFICATIONS TO LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICTS/SPECIALTY HEALTH NETWORKS

The Clinical Excellence Commission will ensure that the SABS notification is distributed by the following process:
1. Email to all Chief Executives.
2. Copy of the email to each Chief Executive nominated person.
3. Copy of email to all Directors of Clinical Governance.
4. Copy of email to position assigned responsibility for action in the SABS document.
5. Copy of email to Director, Private Health Care for distribution to licensed private health facilities.
6. Copy of email internally to Clinical Excellence Commission staff.
7. Copy of email to Corporate Governance and Risk Management Branch.
8. Copy of email to Strategic Relations and Communications Branch.


3.1 Distribution of Safety Alerts out of normal business hours

The CEC will contact the Chief Executive by telephone should there be need to disseminate a Safety Alert or an emergency drug recall out of business hours. The distribution of the formal Safety Alert will be on the first day of the CEC’s normal business hours.

3.2 Local Health District/Specialty Health Network Distribution of SABS notifications

Each SABS notification will include a recommended distribution list for use by the CEC. Local Health Districts/Specialty Health Networks are responsible for ensuring an effective internal distribution strategy is in operation.

3.3 Local Health District/Specialty Health Network or Services request for response from SABS notification

When Local Health Districts/Specialty Health Networks are required to respond back to the CEC, then it is the responsibility of the Chief Executive or equivalent of that entity to ensure that:

a. Responses back (where requested) are received within the stipulated timeframe.
b. A system is developed so that only one response from each Local Health District/Specialty Health Network is returned back to the CEC.

The response should be emailed to the CEC at quality@cec.health.nsw.gov.au

3.4 Local Health District/Specialty Health Network responsibility for actions arising from SABS notification

When LHDs/Specialty Health Networks are required to take action resulting from a SABS notification then it is the responsibility of the Director of Clinical Governance to ensure that:

a. the nominated actions have been implement in the stated timeframe;
b. a written response has been returned to the CEC (where requested) of the actions taken arising from the SABS notification;
c. the response should be emailed to the CEC at quality@cec.health.nsw.gov.au
d. the Directors of Clinical Governance are to report the implementation status of actions arising from SABS notifications to the local peak Quality Committee.

179(30/05/13)
3.5 Review of SABS Notifications

All Safety Alerts will have a mandatory review date consistent with other Policy Directives. This review establishes if the document remains active, requires updating or is obsolete.

The Clinical Excellence Commission will review and update all Safety Alerts and Notices as new information becomes available.

4. EVALUATION OF SABS

The Director of Clinical Governance is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the SABS at the local level to ensure compliance with the CEC Quality Systems Assessment Program.

5. RELEVANT NSW HEALTH POLICY DIRECTIVES AND REFERENCES

5.1 Relevant NSW Health Policy Directives

NSW Health Policy Directive, Guidelines and Information Bulletin can be accessed at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSW Policies Directives</th>
<th>Document No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lookback Policy</td>
<td>PD2007 075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Disclosure Policy</td>
<td>PD2014 028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program</td>
<td>PD2005 608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW Health Policy Directives and Other Policy Documents</td>
<td>PD2014 043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaint Management Policy</td>
<td>PD2006 073</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

5.2 References


Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) available at http://www.mhra.gov.uk

US Food and Drug Administration FDA available at http://www.fda.gov/
6. ATTACHMENTS

6.1 Safety Alert Template

---

**Safety Alert 00#/YY**

**Title**

**Distributed to:**
- Chief Executives
- Directors of Clinical Governance
- XXXX
- XXXX

**Action required by:**
- Chief Executives
- Directors of Clinical Governance
- XXXX

**We recommend you also inform:**
- XXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXX
- XXXXX

**Deadline for completion of action**

(dd month year)

**Expert Reference Group**

Content reviewed by:
- XXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXX
- XXXXX

**Clinical Excellence Commission**

Tel. 02 9282 0500
Fax. 02 9282 0599

Email: quality@pec.health.nsw.gov.au

Internet Website: http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/sals

Intranet Website: http://internal.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/sals

**Review date**

(month year)

---

**Actions required by Local Health Districts / Specialty Health Networks**

1. Text text style step 2
2. Text text

---

179(30/05/13)
6.2 Safety Notice Template

Safety Notice 00#/YY

Title

Distributed to:
- Chief Executives
- Directors of Clinical Governance
- XXXXX
- XXXXX

Action required by:
- Chief Executives
- Directors of Clinical Governance
- XXXXX

We recommend you also inform:
- XXXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXX
- XXXXX
- XXXXX

Expert Reference Group
Content reviewed by:
- XXXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXX
- XXXXX
- XXXXX

Clinical Excellence Commission
Tel. 02 9269 5500
Fax. 02 9269 5599
Email: quality@cecc.health.nsw.gov.au
Internet Website: http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/nahs
Intranet Website: http://intranet.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/nahs/

Suggested actions by Local Health Districts / Specialty Health Networks
1. Forward information to appropriate area for action.
2. Ensure a system is in place to document actions taken.

Review date
month year

(DD Month Year)
6.3 Safety Information Template

**Title**

**Heading**

**Paragraph**

**Clinical Excellence Commission**

**Tel.**: 02 9266 5500
**Fax**: 02 9205 0599

**Email**: quality@pec.health.nsw.gov.au


**Review date**

**Review month year**

**Suggested actions by Local Health Districts / Specialty Health Networks**

1. Forward information to appropriate area for action.
2. Ensure a system is in place to document actions taken.

**179(30/05/13)**
ADULT AND PAEDIATRIC HOSPITAL IN THE HOME GUIDELINE (GL2018_020)
GL2018_020 rescinds GL2013_006

PURPOSE
The purpose of this Guideline is to support the implementation and expansion of the Hospital in the Home (HITH) program within NSW Health by providing standardised guidance for local health districts and networks. It will assist districts and networks develop, monitor and evaluate HITH services while meeting local needs and state-wide standards.

KEY PRINCIPLES
HITH is a hospital substitution program which means that the patient admitted to HITH would otherwise be accommodated in a hospital. Access is needs based and available regardless of age, diagnosis, disability, geography, culture or gender. The objective being to provide patient centred care as close to home as possible.

Admission to a HITH service is voluntary and should not result in the patient incurring costs additional to what they might have had they been admitted to hospital.

HITH services provide integrated clinical care that meets National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards.

USE OF THE GUIDELINE
Districts and networks should use this Guideline to:
- develop district/network level governance for HITH
- integrate HITH as part of an overall acute demand strategy
- establish appropriate systems for clinical engagement

GUIDELINES FOR ANIMAL VISITS AND INTERVENTIONS IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HEALTH FACILITIES IN NSW (GL2012_007)

GL2012_007 rescinds GL2006_012.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the guideline is to outline protocols for implementing and supporting assisted animal visits and interventions for patients in NSW public and private health facilities in NSW.

KEY PRINCIPLES

Animal visits and interventions are patient-driven and implemented to create a better health experience.

All types of animal visitation programs are to be conducted in accordance with relevant NSW Health policies and legislation relating to best practice in healthcare, infection control, patients rights and animal welfare.

Health facilities and health organisations are responsible for informing all staff about the roles and responsibilities associated with managing and coordinating animal visits/intervention activities.

Health services and animal agencies have responsibilities for hosting animal visitation programs and maintaining an animal’s health and well-being.

USE OF THE GUIDELINE

In support of the principles outlined above, Chief Executives and delegated officers are expected to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and government and health policies by communicating and implementing the guideline to all health service personnel and relevant non-government organisations with direct or indirect responsibilities associated with animals visiting patients in public and private health facilities in NSW.

The Guideline includes the following sections:

- Animal Visitations Programs (Which type of program/animal visitation)
- Implementing Effective Animal Visitation Programs (Identifying animals for patient interaction Consultation, Communications and Planning)
- Key Elements of Animal Visitation Programs
- Personal Pet Visitations
- Resident Animals
- Therapy Animal Organisations
- NSW Health Policies and Legislation

WAITING TIME AND ELECTIVE SURGERY POLICY (PD2012_011)


PURPOSE

The Waiting Time and Elective Surgery Policy is the reference guide for facilities to manage elective surgical waiting lists. The policy covers the procedures that facilities are required to follow and adequately manage waiting lists.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

This policy has been developed to promote clinically appropriate, consistent and equitable management of elective surgery patients and waiting lists in public hospitals across NSW. Local Health Districts, Sydney Children’s Hospitals Network, St Vincent’s Health Network and hospitals must actively manage in compliance with the contents of this policy.

IMPLEMENTATION

Local Health Districts, Sydney Children’s Hospitals Network and St Vincent’s Health Network are responsible for the implementation of the Waiting Time and Elective Surgery Policy.

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring:
• There are mechanisms in place to implement this policy
• Compliance with NSW Department of Health requirements
• Validation of the accuracy and integrity of reported data
• Regular review of individual hospital performance
• Training and education programs are in place for staff involved in managing elective patients and waiting lists
• All patients requiring elective surgery/procedure (with an allocated surgical indicator procedure code) regardless of admission type are recorded on the Inpatient Patient Administration System (PAS)/WLCOS.

The responsibilities of various positions under this policy are detailed in the Introduction (page 1) of the procedure.

1. INTRODUCTION

Each year approximately 200,000 patients have elective procedures/surgery in NSW public hospitals. Patients are placed on a waiting list and given a clinical priority depending on the seriousness of their condition. Clinical priority categories 1, 2, 3 referred to in this policy align with Commonwealth Categories in the National Data Dictionary.

Managing elective surgery patients and waiting lists is a key priority for the Government and NSW Health. The community insists on transparency and accountability. Patients expect timely, accessible and high quality patient centred services.

Waiting list management is a challenging, dynamic and complex process requiring input from and coordination by a multidisciplinary team.
12. MEDICAL CARE

The Waiting Time and Elective Surgery Policy has been developed to promote clinically appropriate, consistent & equitable management of elective surgery patients and waiting lists in public hospitals across NSW and has been approved by the Surgical Services Taskforce (SST). Hospitals must actively manage in compliance with the contents of this document.

This policy covers both Local Health Districts and the two networks (St Vincent’s Health Network & Sydney Children’s Hospitals Network).

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring:
• There are mechanisms in place to implement this policy.
• Compliance with NSW Health Department requirements.
• Validation of the accuracy and integrity of reported data.
• Regular review of individual hospital performance.
• Training and education programs are in place for staff involved in managing elective patients and waiting lists.
• All patients requiring elective surgery/procedure (with an allocated surgical indicator procedure code) regardless of admission type are recorded on the Inpatient Patient Administration System (PAS)/WLCOS.

Consistent, equitable and efficient waiting list management through the application of this policy is expected to achieve the following outcomes:
• A transparent, patient focused process.
• Well informed patients and staff (clinical and non clinical) who understand the process, their roles and responsibilities.
• Patients are assigned to the correct clinical priority category.
• Patients are treated within clinically appropriate timeframes.
• There is timely notification and effective communication with the patient in relation to their planned admission date for surgery and practical arrangements.
• Active management of patients and their waiting list booking.
• Appropriate and timely removal of patients from the waiting list.
• Accurate data collection and documentation.
• Accurate and timely auditing and reporting.
• Regular system evaluation, monitoring and improvement.
• Efficient and effective management of demand vs available resources to promote the most effective use of available resources.
• Access to treatment is based on clinical need regardless of health insurance status.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of the Patient
• Follow the procedures and advice outlined in the information provided by the hospital.
• Advise the hospital of any change in decision to undergo the procedure/treatment.
• Follow hospital admission procedure and advise of any changes to the proposed admission such as availability or change of address or other contact details.
• Attend any preadmission appointments as required and present, on the day of admission.

Responsibilities of the GP
• Arrange referral for patients to a hospital which has surgeons with the appropriate expertise and waiting time for the anticipated elective surgical procedure (outpatient or private rooms waiting time, travelling time and patient choice should be considered).
12. MEDICAL CARE

- Provide the hospital with appropriate health information and personal details of the patient with referral.
- Liaise with the referring surgeon if there is a change in indications for surgery or change in patient’s health with implications for surgery and treatment.

Responsibilities of the Surgeon
- Explain proposed procedure/treatment, options for treatment and potential complications.
- Anticipated length of stay and obtain written informed consent from the patient.
- Assign a clinical priority category for the procedure/treatment, as it applies to the individual patient as per the “Advice for Treating Doctors”.
- If patient is classified as staged, the time interval when the patient will be ready for care should be indicated.
- Ensure that RFA forms are legible and minimum data set is completed.
- Forward the completed RFA direct to the hospital within 3 working days of the patient agreeing to the proposed procedure/treatment (via the most relevant means e.g. mail, hand delivery, by patient or carer).
- Initiate prompt and appropriate communication with the referring GP regarding management of the patient.
- Referring doctors must ensure they are available to perform the procedure within the clinical priority timeframe. Alternatively, the clinician should make arrangements for another clinician to perform the procedure within the appropriate clinical timeframe.
- Review Waiting List at least monthly and verify with the hospital.

Responsibilities of the Surgical Booking Clerk
- Ensure all relevant data is entered on the waiting list system within 3 working days, including changes notified by the patient, GP, surgeon, registrar, administrative or other staff.
- Check allocated Clinical Priority Categories against the Reference List (IB2012_004).
- Ensure all documentation and electronic data input is accurate, legible and complete.
- Comply with local procedures/protocols for administrative processes that support this Policy.
- Ensure procedures included in the excluded or discretionary list of procedures are not added to the waiting list without approval from the Clinical Director of Surgery.

Responsibilities of the Clinical Director of Surgical Services
- Ensure clinician compliance with this Policy.
- Review and manage applications to perform cosmetic and discretionary procedures or exceptions to the Policy.
- Promote efficient and effective waiting list management by clinicians within their hospital.
- Liaise with the District/Network Program Director of Surgical Services for escalation of any issues.

Responsibilities of the District/Network Program Director of Surgical Services
- Ensure all staff comply with this Policy.
- Ensure that mechanisms, including clear administrative and clinical procedures/protocols, are in place to implement this Policy and promote efficient and effective waiting list management within all levels of hospital management. This includes the provision of adequate facilities/staff/work environment to facilitate the surgical management of patients referred to the hospital.
- Facilitate prompt and appropriate communication with the referring GP regarding management of the patient.
- Liaise with the State Program Director of Surgery and the Surgical Services Taskforce.

146(02/02/12)
2. REFERRING PATIENTS TO THE WAITING LIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLICY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Recommendation for Admission Form (RFA) only accepted from clinicians who are currently contracted and appropriately credentialed with the Local Health District/Network or facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recommendation for Admission Form (RFA) must be complete, legible and accurate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The referring doctor must:
• Have fully informed the patient about the planned procedure or treatment and obtained their consent (see PD2005_406) |
• Complete an approved Recommendation for Admission Form (RFA) |
• Forward the completed RFA to facility within 3 working days

2.1. Clinical Priority Categories

Categorisation of Elective patients by clinical priority is required to ensure they receive care in a timely and clinically appropriate manner. A Clinical priority category is assigned by the referring doctor.

Clinical Priorities are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clinical Priority Category</th>
<th>A clinical assessment of the priority with which a patient requires elective admission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category 1</td>
<td>Admission within 30 days desirable for a condition that has the potential to deteriorate quickly to the point that it may become an emergency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 2</td>
<td>Admission within 90 days desirable for a condition which is not likely to deteriorate quickly or become an emergency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 3</td>
<td>Admission within 365 days acceptable for a condition which is unlikely to deteriorate quickly and which has little potential to become an emergency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 4</td>
<td>Patients who are either clinically not ready for admission (staged) and those who have deferred admission for personal reasons (deferred)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.1. Reclassification of Clinical Priority Category

Documented evidence must be readily available to validate any changes to a patient’s clinical priority category (see Advice for Referring & Treating Doctors, Reference List for Clinical Priority Categories, (IB2012_004)). Documentation must be signed by the relevant staff member and include date and time of notification of priority change, the person notifying priority change, reason for priority change (Appendix 12).
If there is no supporting clinical information supplied then the referring doctor should be contacted to provide the additional clinical information that supports the selected Clinical Priority Category (CPC). In addition there should be an escalation process to a senior manager where clinical information is missing.

Only an authorised doctor may undertake reclassification of patients between categories 1, 2 and 3.

If any changes are made to a patient’s original clinical priority category, by an authorised doctor, then the referring doctor should be notified, in writing (Appendix 7), of the change.

Written advice of any clinical priority category change should always be sent to the treating doctor.

The documentation must be attached to or be part of the RFA and will become part of the patient’s medical record. The electronic waiting list must be updated with any changes.

2.2. Urgent Surgery - Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

The Category 1 Clinical Priority Category is specifically reserved for those patients whose clinical condition has the potential to deteriorate to the point that an emergency admission may eventuate if the condition is not treated within 30 days.

This category is not to be used to advance the date for elective surgery patients whose clinical condition is not likely to become an emergency e.g. vasectomy, joint replacement surgery, routine cataract surgery, routine tonsillectomy, removal of pins and plates unless for extenuating clinical reasons which have been discussed with senior management or the Local Health District/Network Program Director of Surgery or equivalent.

Where there is concern regarding the allocation of the Category 1 status, the issue should be referred to senior management and the Local Health District/Network Program Director of Surgery.

Refer to “Advice for Referring and Treating Doctors” booklet for further information, IB2012_004.

2.3. Cosmetic & Discretionary Surgery - Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

Surgery should meet an identified clinical need to improve the physical health of the patient.

- The approval of the Local health District/Network Program Director of Surgery, in consultation with senior management should be sought by the referring doctor before cosmetic and discretionary procedures are undertaken in any public hospital facility
- The referring doctor should document on the Request for Admission form, at the time a patient is referred, objective medical criteria supporting the decision for surgery for all procedures that may be considered cosmetic or discretionary. This requirement supports appropriate documentation of clinical decision-making and the review process
- For procedures not appearing on the list below or where there is doubt about the nature of the proposed surgery, the request should be referred to the Local Health District/Network Program Director of Surgery for review prior to the patient being added to the waiting list.
- The patient should be advised when the Recommendation for Admission is going through the approval process.
The following list of surgical procedures should not routinely be performed in public hospitals in NSW unless there is a clear clinical need to improve a patient’s physical health.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cosmetic Procedure</th>
<th>Exception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bilateral breast reduction</td>
<td>Severe disability due to breast size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilateral breast augmentation</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replacement breast prosthesis</td>
<td>Replacement for post cancer patients only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair transplant</td>
<td>Disfiguring hair loss due to severe burn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blepharoplasty/Reduction of upper or lower eyelid</td>
<td>Severe visual impairment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total rhinoplasty</td>
<td>Major facial trauma - congenital abnormality – paediatrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liposuction</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdominal lipectomy (Abdominoplasty)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meloplasty/Facelifts</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correction of bat ear (&gt;16 years old)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tattoo removal procedure</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal of benign moles</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candela Laser</td>
<td>Congenital abnormality - paediatrics &lt;17 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varicose Veins</td>
<td>CEAP Grade &gt;C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laser photoocoagulation</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discretionary Procedure</th>
<th>Exception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender reassignment surgery</td>
<td>Congenital abnormalities in children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lengthening of penis procedure</td>
<td>Congenital abnormalities in children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insertion of artificial erection devices</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reversal of sterilization</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social circumcision</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TMJ Arthrocentesis</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labioplasty</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Procedures and Prostheses

Local Health District/Network New Interventions Assessment Committees or equivalent must formally approve new procedures not previously undertaken and the clinicians should be appropriately credentialed by relevant committee to undertake the procedure before patients are added to the waiting list. A doctor may only refer patients for addition to the waiting list for procedures for which the doctor has been given privileges by the relevant credentials committee.

For additional information refer to:
12. MEDICAL CARE

Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring of the addition of these excluded procedures to the waiting list will be undertaken by each Local Health District/Network as part of normal waiting list management according to NSW Health Department policy.

Demand Management

Patients added to the elective surgery waiting list should be treated within their clinical priority timeframe.

Managers & Department Heads should actively monitor the current volume of each surgeon’s waiting list plus the additions to the waiting list to ensure that there is capacity to undertake the patient’s surgery within the recommended timeframe. If the surgeon does not have the capacity to undertake the surgery within the clinical priority timeframe then this should be managed in conjunction with the surgeon, patient and referring General Practitioner by considering:

- Additional theatre time at same or other facility.
- Transfer of patients to another surgeon with a shorter waiting list at the same facility.
- Transfer of patients to another surgeon with a shorter waiting list at another facility.
- Private sector option if the above prove unsuccessful (Local Health District/Network responsible for expenses incurred).

Dental Surgery

For operating lists that are dedicated to the Priority Oral Health Program – patients must be eligible for treatment as identified in the Priority Oral Health Program and List Management Protocols Policy Directive (PD2008_056).

2.4. Completion of Recommendation for Admission Form (RFA)

- The following minimum data set on the Recommendation for Admission Form (RFA) is to be obtained by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referring Doctor</th>
<th>Admission/Booking Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Patient’s full name</td>
<td>• Planned admission date (if allocated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Patient’s address</td>
<td>• Anticipated election status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Patient’s contact information (home, work &amp; mobile telephone)</td>
<td>• Status review date (staged patients)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Patient’s gender</td>
<td>• Short notice/Standby offers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Patient’s date of birth</td>
<td>• Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander Status (NSW Health Data Dictionary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Medicare number</td>
<td>• Clinical priority category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If classified as staged, the time interval when the patient will be ready for care should be indicated</td>
<td>• Discharge intention (i.e. day only, or indication of number of nights in hospital)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Significant medical history (including allergies)</td>
<td>• Presenting problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Treating doctor (if different)</td>
<td>• Planned procedure/treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Patient’s signed consent (if available)</td>
<td>• Short notice/Standby offers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• General Practitioner’s name and address (if available)</td>
<td>• Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander Status (NSW Health Data Dictionary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interpreter required</td>
<td>• Clinical priority category</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Any other relevant information should be included on the RFA e.g.
- Estimated operating time (especially if expected that the procedure will be outside benchmark timeframes)
- Specific preadmission requirements
- Special operating theatre equipment
- Requirement for an ICU/HDU bed post procedure

The referring doctor must:
- Forward the completed RFA direct to the hospital within 3 working days of the patient agreeing to the proposed procedure/treatment (via the most relevant means e.g. mail, hand delivery, by patient or carer)
- Facsimiles (fax) RFA’s should not be routinely used and only be accepted for urgent admissions where there is limited time to send a hard copy. An RFA (hardcopy) is to follow as soon as possible.
- Where patients require additional time to consider their options, the referring doctor must organise for the completed RFA to be forwarded within 3 working days of the patient’s acceptance of the surgical option
- Expedite the transmission of RFA’s for any urgent admissions e.g. patients in Category 1 (admission within 30 days)
- Where an urgent admission is requested, a facsimile can be used to communicate the information required and expedite receipt of the required information from the referring doctor’s rooms or clinic

2.5. Information for Patients

| P | Patients must be fully informed about the risks and benefits of the procedure and have consented to the treatment offered |
| O | Patient’s consent should ideally be obtained prior to placing the patient on the waiting list and not deferred to time of admission or pre-admission clinic |
| L | Consent must be confirmed in writing by having the patient sign the consent form included in the Recommendation for Admission Form (RFA) |
| I | Under the Medicare principles, public patients are allocated to a doctor by the hospital. While generally public patients will be admitted under the care of the referring surgeon this is not guaranteed. This must be explained to patient when they agree to be treated as a public patient. |

The referring doctor must provide information to patients as follows:
- Explain the procedure/treatment:
  o What is involved
  o The risks associated with the proposed procedure/treatment
  o Other options for management of the condition
  o The need for consent
12. MEDICAL CARE

• Explain the waiting list:
  o The reason for referral to the waiting list.
  o The waiting list process, including clinical priority categories.
  o The circumstances in which care might be provided by another doctor or health service.
  o That prioritisation is according to clinical need, regardless of whether the patient elects to be treated as a public or private patient.

• Explain difference between admission as public or private patient:
  o Provide the patient with sufficient information to enable them to choose whether to be treated as a private or public patient.
  o Where a patient elects to be treated as a private patient, the referring doctor must also ensure the patient is advised of the associated costs of treatment and that priority of treatment will be based on clinical priority regardless of insurance status.

Consent should be obtained in line with Department of Health Policy Directive PD2005_406 Consent to Medical Treatment - Patient Information

3. ACCEPTANCE OF RECOMMENDATION FOR ADMISSION FORM (RFA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>Y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• RFA forms are complete, accurate, legible and date stamped.</td>
<td>• Patients should be placed on the electronic waiting list within 3 working days of receipt of a completed RFA.</td>
<td>• An RFA with a requested admission date of &gt;12 months should be discussed with the treating doctor before confirmation of acceptance.</td>
<td>• If an RFA is not presented within 3 months of the date the RFA was signed by the referring doctor a review of the patient’s clinical condition may be required before the RFA is accepted.</td>
<td>• At the time of lodgement of the RFA, a patient should be ready for care and be able to accept an assigned planned admission date.</td>
<td>• If the RFA is for a staged procedure, the time interval when the patient will become ready for care must be stated on the RFA.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1. Completeness, Accuracy and Legibility

When RFA forms are received from the referring doctor, they should be examined by hospital staff to ensure completeness, accuracy and legibility of the relevant information. (Section 2.4 lists the minimum data set required for acceptance.)

• RFA forms must be date stamped upon receipt.
• It is recommended to use the RFA Checklist (Appendix 13) when in receipt of RFAs to ensure that they are complete appropriately or escalated to senior manager.
• When information is missing on the RFA, a telephone call to the referring doctor may be an appropriate option to ascertain the missing information.
• If minimum data set items are not provided or are illegible, the information should be sought as soon as possible in writing from the referring doctor (Appendix 1).
12. MEDICAL CARE

- When a Recommendation for Admission Form is received by the hospital, the hospital should ensure that the patient is placed on the waiting list within 3 working days. The practice of holding Recommendation for Admission Forms and not entering them onto the Patient Administration System is not permitted.

- Where there is a query about the appropriateness of the CPC, a discussion should occur immediately between the referring doctor and senior management to resolve the issue and ensure that the patient is added to the waiting list within 3 working days from receipt. If there is no clinical evidence provided on the RFA then the Reference List CPC (IB2012_004) should be used until clarification is sought from the treating doctor.

- The original RFA should remain in the booking office following presentation regardless of missing information. A copy of the RFA and incomplete RFA letter proforma (Appendix 1) or telephone call to the doctor should be used to complete the mandatory information. This is to ensure that the RFA is not lost or misplaced.

- If an RFA is presented with a planned operation date >12 months ahead, discussion with the referring doctor will be required. The RFA will only be accepted if the patient’s clinical condition requires surgical intervention within 12 months.

- Ideally, the referring doctor should have obtained the patient’s consent prior to placing the patient’s name on the waiting list and not deferred to time of admission or pre-admission clinic.

- The hospital is not obliged to add a patient to its waiting list if information is incomplete, but patient circumstances should be considered.

- The original listing date stamped on the RFA should be used when adding the RFA to the PAS.

- If there are problems with an RFA, the hospital must advise the referring doctor as soon as possible. Patients should not be asked to ferry the RFA between hospital and referring doctor. Communications about missing minimum data set information should be between the referring doctor and the hospital staff.

- Arrangements should be in place to ensure equitable access to services for all eligible persons, regardless of their geographical location as per the Australian Health Care Agreement.

3.2. Clinical Priority Timeframes

- Referring doctors must ensure they are available to perform the procedure within the clinical priority timeframe. Alternatively, the clinician should make arrangements for another clinician to perform the procedure within the appropriate clinical timeframe.

- Where the surgeon does not have the capacity to undertake the procedure in the clinical priority timeframe or has not organised an alternative option, then the case should be escalated to senior management to explore alternative options for treatment.

3.3. Variations from Standard Bookings

- Procedure/treatment not provided - if a procedure/treatment is not provided at the hospital nominated on the RFA, the RFA cannot be accepted. The referring doctor should be informed and alternative arrangements negotiated with senior management before accepting a revised RFA.

- New Procedures - a Local Health District/Network New Interventions Assessment Committee or equivalent must formally approve new procedures. The RFA is not to be accepted by the hospital until approval for the procedure is given. A copy of the decision is to be forwarded to the hospital’s admissions manager.
12. MEDICAL CARE

- For additional information refer to:
  - RACS/ASERNIP-S [http://www.surgeons.org/asernip-s/]

- **Bilateral Procedures** - e.g. right and left cataract extractions, right and left hip replacements
  - An RFA will only be accepted for one procedure unless the bilateral procedure is occurring in the same admission.

- **Multiple bookings** - can be accepted if the treatments/procedures are independent of each other, e.g. cataract extraction and joint replacement. Referring doctor must specify which procedures are prioritised. This may be indicated by the clinical category assigned to both bookings e.g. if one is category 2 (within 90 days) and the other is category 3 (within 365 days) then the category 2 takes precedence. However if both RFAs have the same clinical category the referring doctor should be asked to specify the priority.

The only exception to the above is for ongoing regular treatment e.g. tissue expansion or change of supra pubic catheters.

- **Duplicate bookings** - an RFA will not be accepted for the same procedure with different referring doctors at the same hospital; or same procedure at a different hospital. The patient is to be advised of the situation and asked to make a decision as to the preferred waiting list they wish to remain on.

- **Patients treated as Privately Referred Non Inpatients (PRNIP)**
  - All Elective Surgical patient’s names should be added to the public hospital waiting list (PAS) regardless of admission type
  - A copy of the Recommendation for Admission Form is to be held at the public hospital
  - The patient should be managed as per the Waiting Time & Elective Surgery Policy.

- **Contracts with other Local Health District/Network** - Where a contract exist with a another Local Health District/Network to undertake public patient’s surgery/procedures, the following actions should be undertaken:
  - Patient should remain on the original public hospital waiting list (PAS)
  - Patient should be added to the receiving public hospital waiting list (PAS) with the new listing date
  - A copy of the Recommendation for Admission Form is to be held at the original public hospital (with the original being forwarded to the new hospital)
  - The patient should be managed as per the Waiting Time & Elective Surgery Policy
  - The hospital where the procedure is undertaken should advise the original public hospital when the procedure is undertaken and patient is to be removed from the original hospitals waiting list.

- **Contracts with Private Hospitals** - Where a contract exist with a private hospital to undertake elective surgery/procedures for the Local Health District/Network, the following actions should be undertaken:
  - Patient should be added to the public hospital waiting list (PAS)
  - A copy of the Recommendation for Admission Form is to be held at the public hospital
  - The patient should be managed as per the Waiting Time & Elective Surgery Policy
  - The private hospital should advise the public hospital when the procedure is undertaken and patient is to be removed from the public hospital waiting list.

146(02/02/12)
4. **REGISTRATION ON THE WAITING LIST**

   - Accurate entry of data on to the electronic waiting list is essential

4.1. **Registration Requirements**

- The date stamped on the RFA form is the date used for wait list registration (this is the date when the RFA is first received by the hospital).
- RFA forms should be added to the waiting list when minimum data set available. The listing date is the original date of receipt of the RFA.
- Patients should be placed on the electronic waiting list within 3 working days of first receiving the RFA form.
- Where there is a question about the appropriateness of the CPC, then all efforts should be made to ensure that the patient is added to the waiting list within 3 working days.

4.2. **Notification - Patient**

Within 3 working days of the patient being added to the waiting list:
- Send notification letter to the patient advising them that they have been placed on the waiting list, including approximate waiting time, any changes to contact details (Appendix 2) or with a planned admission date.
- Attach any patient documentation to the RFA

4.3. **Notification - General Practitioner**

The hospital should notify the nominated general practitioner in writing of the patient’s placement on the waiting list within 3 working days of being added to the waiting list (Appendix 3)

Notification should include:
- Patient’s name and address
- Date of placement on the waiting list
- Proposed procedure
- Clinical priority category and definition
- Hospital contact information, including who to contact if the patient’s condition changes
- NSW Health’s Waiting Times Web Site

5. **MANAGING PATIENTS ON THE WAITING LIST**

5.1. **Compilation of a Waiting List**

A **Waiting List** is kept by the hospital and contains the names and details of all patients registered as requiring elective admission to that hospital.
5.2. Waiting Times

The **Listing Date** is the date of receipt of the RFA. Calculation of waiting time starts from this date.

Calculation of a patient’s waiting time includes only the time a patient spends as **Ready for Care**. Waiting time thus reflects a genuine waiting period.

Periods when patients are **Not Ready for Care** should be excluded in determining waiting time.

5.3. Clinical Review

- **Clinical Review** is defined as review of a patient on the waiting list to ensure that their waiting time is appropriate for their clinical condition.
- Examination may result in the patient being assigned a different priority rating from the initial category.
- Patients and GPs can initiate review, as some conditions will change while the patient is waiting for treatment.
- Patients remain in their current clinical priority category while undergoing clinical review (they should not be moved into NRFC).
- Following the clinical review, a new RFA is not required unless the original procedure being undertaken has changed.

The **major objectives** of clinical review are to determine:

- Change in the clinical condition of the patient.
- Any change in priority for the procedure, with the resulting need to revise the patient’s clinical priority category.
- Whether admission is still required

The clinical review is to be organised by the hospital and conducted by an appropriate clinician:

- Treating doctor or delegate.
- General Practitioner (GP).
- Specialist Consultant or delegate e.g. registrar.
- Registered nurse.

**Note: The clinical review must be at no cost to the patient**

Circumstances triggering a Clinical Review:

5.3.1. Category 1 Patients:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circumstance</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When patient is listed as Category 1 but then requests deferment as Not Ready for Care &gt;15 cumulative days</td>
<td>Consult with treating doctor, activate a management plan within 5 working days that includes documented Ready for Care date and if clinically appropriate, re-categorise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When total RFC time is &gt;30 days</td>
<td>Request clinical review by appropriate clinician within 5 working days that includes documented Ready for Care date and if clinically appropriate, re-categorise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3.2. Category 2 Patients:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circumstance</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| When patient is listed as Category 2 but then requests deferment as Not Ready for Care >45 cumulative days | Category 2 patients may require: 
  - Clinical review by the appropriate clinician preferably within 15 working days, but not exceeding 30 days 
  - Depending on Clinical Review outcome: 
    - Allocated date 
    - Re-categorisation 
    - Removal from the waiting list 
  - Advise patient 
  - Advise GP |
| When total RFC time is >90 days | Category 2 patients may require: 
  - Clinical review by the appropriate clinician preferably within 15 working days, but not exceeding 30 days. 
  - Depending on clinical review outcome: 
    - Allocated date 
    - Re-categorisation 
    - Removal from the waiting list 
  - Advise patient 
  - Advise GP |

5.3.3. Category 3 Patients:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circumstance</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| When patient is listed as Category 3 but then requests deferment as Not Ready for Care >180 cumulative days | Category 3 patients may require: 
  - Clinical review by the appropriate clinician preferably within 15 working days, but not exceeding 30 days 
  - Depending on Clinical Review outcome: 
    - Allocated date 
    - Re-categorisation 
    - Removal from the waiting list 
  - Advise patient 
  - Advise GP |
| At 270 days, if the patient has no planned admission date within the timeframe | Category 3 patients may require: 
  - Clinical review by the appropriate clinician preferably within 15 working days, but not exceeding 30 days 
  - Depending on Clinical Review outcome: 
    - Allocated date 
    - Re-categorisation 
    - Removal from the waiting list 
  - Advise patient 
  - Advise GP |

- When a patient declines or fails to attend a Clinical Review, a decision regarding the patient’s status on the waiting list should be discussed with the surgeon or delegate and senior management as to whether the patient requires to remain on the waiting list.
- If a patient fails to attend a pre-admission clinic appointment then their risk for surgery remains undetermined. In this case their status on the waiting list should be discussed with their treating doctor.
When a patient declines treatment, fails to arrive or requests removal from the waiting list, notification of the treating doctor is required (Appendix 8b). The patient is to be removed from the waiting list after 5 days if the treating doctor has not advised that the patient is to remain on the waiting list.

Status Review Date is defined as the date when it is estimated or recorded on the RFA that a deferred or staged patient will become ready for admission, i.e. Ready for Care.

A Status Review Date must be set each time a patient:
- Is added to the waiting list as a staged admission (Not Ready for Care) or defers admission whilst on the waiting list.
- Status changes from Ready for Care to Not Ready for Care.
- Status remains Not Ready for Care after assessment.
- Specifies a forward planned admission date for his or her own non-medical reasons.

A Status Review Report, listing details of each patient whose status review date will become due in the following month, must be generated at least monthly. Following an assessment, patients will either:
- Be assigned another status review date.
- Be returned to Ready for Care with the appropriate clinical priority category.
- Have a planned admission date scheduled.
- Be removed from the waiting list.

5.4. Ready for Care

A Ready for Care patient is defined as a patient who is available for admission to hospital for their planned procedure/treatment.

5.4.1. Delayed Patients

A patient remains classified as Ready for Care if their admission is postponed/delayed due to reasons other than their own availability, e.g. unavailability of doctor, operating theatre or bed.

5.4.2. Declined Patients

The hospital must record the reason for patients declining a planned admission date on the electronic waiting list and on the patient’s RFA.

5.5. Not Ready for Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLICY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>staged - not ready for clinical reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deferred - not ready for personal reasons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Not Ready for Care patient can be defined as a patient who is not available to be admitted to hospital until some future date, and is either:
12. MEDICAL CARE

- There are timeframes for patient deferring treatment:
  - Cat 1 - 15 days (however, patient deferring their treatment in this category should be discussed with the referring doctor)
  - Cat 2 - 45 days
  - Cat 3 - 180 days

- Hospitals are required to actively manage Not Ready for Care patients to ensure they become Ready for Care or are removed from the waiting list.

- Not Ready for Care (NRFC) implies that the patient will once again become Ready for Care within the timeframes as indicated above. Should a patient require to be NRFC for a prolonged period of time (e.g. significant weight loss) prior to undergoing surgery, then the patient should not be placed on the waiting list or they should be removed from the waiting list (following discussions with the treating doctor) until the desired outcome is achieved.

- The hospital must record the reason for staging and deferring patients on the electronic waiting list and on the patient’s RFA.

STAGED PROCEDURES

**Not Ready for Care - Staged Only**
- On request for admission the Not Ready for Care timeframe should be identified by the treating doctor and a RFC clinical priority category indicated.
- Once the identified NRFC staged timeframe is completed the patient then returns to the RFC category as indicated by the treating doctor.
- A PAD/TCI can be arranged whilst the patient is in the category of Not Ready for Care.

DEFERRED PROCEDURES

5.5.1 Not Ready for Care - Deferred Only

- The period of time the patient request deferment should be determined and the patient returned to the original CPC at that timeframe.
- A deferred patient should not exceed the timeframes for their clinical priority category as indicated above.

5.5.2. Staged Patients

The hospital must record the reason for staging patients on the electronic waiting list and on the patient’s RFA. Reasons recorded may be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons to be Recorded for Not Ready for Care Staged (Clinical)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unfit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A co-morbidity exists which, until resolved, renders them unfit for the proposed treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A patient requiring treatment periodically (e.g. check cystoscopy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A patient requiring treatment as part of a staged procedure (e.g. removal of pins and plates)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.5.3. Deferred Patients

The hospital must record the reason for deferring patients on the electronic waiting list and on the patient’s RFA. Reasons recorded may be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons to be Recorded for Not Ready for Care Deferred (Personal)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Patient is going on holidays and will be unavailable for admission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Patient is unable to obtain home support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Patient is unable to accept a date due to work commitments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Patient is unable to accept a date for other significant reasons e.g. personal carer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• A patient who specifically requests a forward planned admission date, for his or her own convenience or commitments should only have their status changed to Ready for Care once the hospital is advised that the patient is now Ready for Care.

• A decision to remove the patient from the waiting list may be made if a patient defers > two occasions or exceeds the maximum number of Not Ready for Care days. Refer to section 5.10 Removing Patients from the Waiting List.

5.6. Admission Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLICY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Effective admission and discharge processes are required to ensure optimal use of operating theatre time and beds.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• **Equity and Priority of Access for Admission** - the following criteria must be considered when choosing patients from the waiting list for admission:
  • Clinical priority.
  • The length of time the patient has waited in comparison with similar category patients.
  • Previous delays.
  • Pre-admission assessment issues/factors, e.g. elderly people living alone or those having to travel long distances.
  • Resource availability, e.g. theatre time, staffing, equipment and hospital capacity.

• Relevant consultation with staff from:
  • Treating Doctor
  • Theatres
  • Admissions
  • Pre-admission
  • Division of Surgery waiting list coordinator
  • Other Departments if relevant e.g. Medicine, Radiology
  • Community Care and Post discharge services for an effective communication to handover patient care to their General Practitioner or other relevant community services as required.
  • Aboriginal Liaison Officer (ALO) if available, so the patient/carer is asked if they would like to request an ALO visit during their admission.
Planned Admission Date

The **Planned Admission Date** is the date on which it is proposed that a patient on the waiting list will be admitted for an episode of care and entered on the electronic waiting list.

- Once a planned admission date is determined the patient should be contacted by the most appropriate means (telephone or letter - Appendix 4) to determine acceptance of admission.
- Patient should be supplied with relevant information for their hospitalisation, including the proposed length of stay, discharge procedures and post operative follow up.

Pre-admission Assessment


Short Notice Patients

**“Short notice” list Patients** - Patients may agree to be available on the “short notice” list to have their surgery performed, e.g. if there is a cancellation.

**Selection of “short notice” list patients**
- Patients must agree to be on the “short notice” list.
- Patients that have undergone a pre admission assessment.
- Patients that have been clinically screened as not requiring attendance at the pre admission clinic and deemed suitable for the “short notice” list by the nurse screener.
- Patients should reside within a reasonable travelling distance to the hospital.

**Calling in “short notice” list patients**
- Patients should be given as much notice as possible about their proposed advancement on the list.
- Patients on the “short notice” list should be called as “in turn” as much as possible.
- Once a patient has been on called in as a “short notice” list patient and their procedure has not gone ahead, a definite PAD should be made to ensure the patient is not inconvenienced further.

5.7. Hospital Initiated Postponements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>POLICY</strong></th>
<th>Patient postponements should be avoided and only occur when all options are exhausted and senior management have made the decision. If a postponement is to proceed then the following steps should be taken:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Record the reason</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Patient rescheduled on next available list according to clinical priority category</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A new PAD allocated within 5 working days of the postponement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The patient should be advised of a new PAD within 5 working days of postponement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Patients who are postponed by the hospital or doctor or for non clinical reasons remain Ready for Care “delayed” and the following actions taken.
5.7.1. Factors to Consider in Selecting Patients for Postponement

- Category 1 patients who have arrived must not be postponed without authorisation of a senior member of management and treating doctor or delegate e.g. registrar.

- Postponed patients must have priority over others not previously postponed. Postponed patients are to be placed on the next available procedure/treatment list, appropriate to the patient’s clinical priority category. Where possible, postponed patients should be prioritised on the procedure/treatment list to minimise the chance of delay (e.g. first on list where appropriate).

- If a patient has been postponed twice and cannot be treated within appropriate clinical priority timeframes, the Local Health District must actively investigate options for procedure/treatment to be undertaken at another facility (public or private). The cost is to be borne by the originating Local Health District/Network.

Decisions to postpone must involve relevant medical and operating theatre staff, bed manager, waiting list manager, senior hospital management and consider:

- Reason for the postponement.
- Clinical priority.
- Postponement history.
- Length of time on the waiting list.
- Medical input from treating doctor or delegate.

If a postponement is to proceed then the following steps should be taken:

- Record the reason.
- Patient rescheduled on next available list according to clinical priority category.
- A new PAD allocated within 5 working days of the postponement.
- The patient should be advised of a new PAD within 5 working days of postponement.

5.7.2. Informing Patients of their Postponement

- Provide the patient with the maximum possible notice. Category 1 patients and patients postponed on the day of procedure/treatment should be notified by a senior member of the surgical/medical team or senior hospital manager.

Any patient cancelled or postponed by the hospital or doctor on the day of their planned admission date after arrival to the hospital must be reported to relevant personnel - head of unit or specialty, medical administrator, clinical director, divisional manager, operating theatre manager, waiting time coordinator, hospital executive officer and Local Health District/Network Chief Executive or delegate.

- Offer the following support options to the patient, where relevant:
  - Contact a family member or friend.
  - Arrange and pay for transport home, accommodation, food, etc.
  - Counselling services.
  - Access to a complaints service.

- Reschedule the patient on the next available list date for their procedure/treatment and notify the patient of the new admission date within 5 working days (Appendix 5).

- Patient is to be rebooked with original listing date and history where appropriate, including previous admission dates and delays.
5.7.3. Patient Admitted and Surgery Not Performed

If a patient arrives for treatment/procedure and is admitted and then the surgery is postponed due to hospital reasons, the following actions should be taken:

- The patient should be admitted and discharged.
  - The patient should be rebooked with the original listing date and history (clinical priority categories and delays etc). Postponed patients are to be placed on the next available procedure/treatment list, appropriate to the patient’s clinical priority category.
  - A new PAD should be allocated within 5 working days of the postponement.

5.8. Patient Initiated Postponements

When a patient postpones an agreed date for procedure/treatment for personal or social reasons, a patient initiated postponement should be:

- Recorded on electronic waiting list and RFA.
- Reviewed to determine if:
  - A new date is to be scheduled.
  - The patient is to be categorised as Not Ready for Care “deferred”, or
  - Removed from the waiting list.
- Patients are only permitted to postpone maximum of 2 times for personal or social reasons.

If a patient arrives for treatment/procedure and decides to cancel after admission, the following steps should be taken:

- The surgeon should be advised.
- The patient should be admitted and discharged.
- The reason for cancellation should be recorded and an appropriate clinician should discuss with the requirement for surgery with the patient’s General Practitioner.
- If the surgery is still clinically required and the patient agrees, the patient should be re-booked on day of discharge with original listing date.
- Or removed from the waiting list.

5.9. Avoiding Exceeding Clinical Priority Time Frames

To avoid exceeding Clinical Priority time frames, at least weekly, a review of the waiting list should be undertaken and hospitals should consider the following options:

- Clinical Review - refer to section 5.3.
- Contact the Local Health District Patient Access Coordinator - they may have viable options.
- Transfer of Patients to Doctors with a shorter waiting time (see 5.9.1) for more details).
- Transfer of Patients to another facility within the Local Health District (see 5.9.2 for more details).
- Increase theatre utilisation (e.g. extra sessions).
- Use of short notice or standby lists.
- Other options including contracting work out to the private sector.

It is not acceptable to have patients waiting past Clinical Priority time frames.

Hospitals must implement active management strategies to avoid this and are required to achieve the following Clinical Priority time frames:
Clinical Priority Category | Recommended allocation of PAD
--- | ---
No patient in Category 1 should wait longer than **30 days** | PAD on booking
No patient in Category 2 should wait longer than **90 days** | PAD within 45 days
No patient in Category 3 should wait longer than **365 days** | PAD within 270 days

### 5.9.1. Transfer of Patients to Doctors with a shorter waiting time

The offer to the patient has to be considered “reasonable”. This needs to be determined for each individual and the following considered:

- The circumstances of the patient (e.g., age, available support, public transport, physical condition and the required procedure).
- The offer must be specific. The name of the clinician, hospital, and planned admission date or an estimate of the likely waiting period must be given.
- The offer must be a credible alternative and be available if the patient decides to accept the offer.
- Where the patient declines **two** genuine offers of treatment with another doctor or at another hospital, then the patient should be advised that they may be removed from the waiting list. The Local Health District Program Director of Surgery should review the patient’s status on the waiting list in consultation with the original treating doctor prior to the patient being removed from the waiting list.

The new Doctor will determine the requirement to review the patient.

The patient’s listing date and history must be that of the original booking. In this way an accurate record of waiting time is maintained. Where there is a delay in listing the patient on the shorter list, the patient must remain on the original list, pending confirmation of the patient’s acceptance by the second doctor. The patient’s current clinical priority category must be maintained, unless altered after clinical review by the new treating doctor.

### 5.9.2. Transferring Patients to Another Facility

When a patient is booked at one hospital and subsequently has the procedure carried out at a different hospital within the same Local Health District/Network, the following steps must be followed:

- The booking at the hospital where the patient will be treated is entered with the same listing date and history as the booking at the original hospital, and with the current clinical priority category.
- The booking at the original hospital should be removed using the reason code treated elsewhere, on confirmation of the patient’s booking at the receiving hospital.
- The original RFA should be sent to the receiving hospital and a copy retained for auditing at the original hospital.

For patients being treated by another LHD/Network see section 3.3 Contracts with the other Local Health Districts/Networks.
5.10. Removing Patients from the Waiting List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Category 1, 2 &amp; 3 Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patient declines treatment or requests removal for other reasons</td>
<td>• Forward a copy of the RFA with a covering letter (Appendix 8b) to the treating doctor within 24 hours of notification, informing removal of patient from the waiting list unless treating doctor advises otherwise within 5 working days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient fails to arrive to treatment on &gt;1 occasion without giving prior notice and with no extenuating circumstances</td>
<td>• Obtain authority for Category 1 (30 day) patients prior to removal from waiting list. Once decision is made to remove patient from waiting list:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusal of Clinical review</td>
<td>• Obtain written authorisation of a Senior Medical Officer or delegate to remove.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient refused or failed to attend a clinical review or a pre-admission clinic when required.</td>
<td>• Remove patient from the waiting list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusal of Clinical review</td>
<td>• Advise referring doctor and GP that patient has been removed (Standard Letter Appendix 8a).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient not contactable on 2 occasions (one by phone, one by letter)</td>
<td>• Obtain authority for Category 1 (30 day) patients prior to removal from waiting list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient deceased</td>
<td>• Attempt to obtain patient’s correct contact details via all these methods:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Referring doctor, GP, medical records, next of kin &amp; telephone directory search.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Obtain written authorisation of a Senior Medical Officer or delegate to remove.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Remove patient from the waiting list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Advise referring doctor and GP that patient has been removed (Standard Letter Appendix 8a and 8b).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Document actions on RFA and electronic record (refer to section 6.4.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Obtain verification (usually verbally from the patient’s relative, general practitioner or specialist).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Remove patient from the waiting list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Document actions on RFA and electronic record (refer to section 6.4.).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
If a patient was initially removed from the waiting list due to reasons other than admission and in the following month the waiting list record needed to be re-activated for the same procedure, then the patient should be re-booked with the original listing date and history (clinical priority category and delays etc.).
6. RECORD KEEPING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hospitals must keep accurate records of waiting list information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Document any changes on RFA and electronic waiting list.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any changes made to a patient’s booking must be validated with documented evidence and reasons, and signed by relevant staff member. The documentation must be attached (Appendix 11) or be part of the RFA. The electronic waiting list must also be updated to reflect any changes.

6.1. Postponement of Planned Admission

• Accurate records are to be maintained for patients postponing and the reason for postponement (electronic waiting list and RFA).
• A patient’s postponement history should be readily available to the staff making decisions about postponing future patients.

6.2. Exceeded Planned Admission Dates

• Generate and review report to identify patients who have exceeded planned admission dates at least monthly

6.3. Procedure being Undertaken at Another Hospital within same LD District/Network

• Listing date and clinical priority category at other hospital will be same as original hospital.
• The booking at the original hospital should be removed using the reason code (treated elsewhere) on confirmation of the patient’s booking at the receiving hospital.

6.4. Removal of Patients from the Waiting List (other than admission)

• All patients who have been removed from the waiting list (other than admission) require documentation detailing reason for removal and date of removal. This should be part of or attached to the RFA.
• Treating doctors and GP’s should be advised (Appendix 8a and 8b).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Information to be Recorded/Filed (RFA &amp; Electronic)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patient Deceased</td>
<td>• Record the name of the person who has notified the hospital that the patient is deceased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non contactable</td>
<td>• Evidence of contact:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o patient letters returned (return to sender)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o documentation of attempts to contact through referring doctor, GP, medical records, next of kin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&amp; telephone directory search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decline treatment or clinical review</td>
<td>• Documentation that patient has been informed of the potential risks to their health and advised to contact referring doctor (Appendix 8c).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not required</td>
<td>• Obtain authority for Category 1 (30 day) patients prior to removal from waiting list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail to Arrive for Treatment</td>
<td>• Documentation that:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Patient has failed to arrive for treatment on the planned admission date &gt;1 occasion without prior notice and without good reason.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Advise patient to be clinically reassessed by treating doctor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.5. Reporting

- Hospitals must ensure they have a documented process for removing patients from the waiting list (other than admission). Hospital to compile a list of patients who have been removed for authorisation by a senior hospital executive. This authorisation is to occur monthly. Removals list must be retained for the normal retention period and include the following information:
  - Patient’s name
  - Reason for the patient’s removal
  - Patient’s clinical priority category
  - Patient’s diagnosis
  - Patient’s procedure

- Monthly reports must be provided to the hospital Executive Officer and Local Health District/Network CEO or delegate with the following information:
  - Patients who have incurred a delay during the month (previous month).
  - Patients on the list who have had two or more delays to their admission.
  - All delayed patients who do not have a rescheduled planned admission date.

- Duplicate bookings are to be monitored by each Local Health District/Network monthly. The Health Services Performance Improvement Branch at NSW Health will monitor duplicate bookings across NSW and distributed reports to Local Health Districts every six months.

- Any patient cancelled or postponed by the hospital or doctor on the day of their planned admission date after arrival to hospital must be reported to the hospital Executive Officer.

7. AUDITING THE WAITING LIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLICY</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>L</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
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<td>Y</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Patient details on the waiting list are accurate, valid and complete.
- Transport processes are in place for equitable access to elective surgery.
- Records relating to audits must be kept for three years.

7.1. Clerical Audit

- Each hospital is to identify a person responsible for the clerical audit of hospital waiting lists. The responsibility includes conducting audits and reporting the outcome of the audit to relevant management.
- Each Local Health District/Network is to nominate a person responsible for monitoring the clerical audit program across all hospitals, maintaining clerical audit standards and addressing issues arising from the audits.
- A review of the waiting list must be undertaken (at least weekly) to ensure that accurate information is provided to clinicians and administrators on request.
- Elements of the clerical audit that should be undertaken weekly include:
  - Ascertaining whether the patient has already has their procedure/treatment.
  - Checking for duplicate bookings.
  - Ensuring clinical priority category is appropriately assigned.
  - Updating Status Review Date for Category 4 patients (dependant on original clinical priority category) see 5.3.1 & 2 & 3.
12. MEDICAL CARE

- Reviewing Exceeded Planned Admission Dates.
- Identifying patients on waiting list admitted through emergency department for the same procedure.
- Ensuring delayed patient is rescheduled for next available theatre session in consultation with treating doctor.

• Documentation must provide a clear audit trail and must be readily available to validate any changes made to a patient’s booking (electronic and RFA).
• RFAs should have:
  o A dedicated section to record all changes; or
  o A designated form attached to the RFA (appendix 11).
• On completion of clerical audits, a report signed by the responsible person conducting the audit must be sent to the relevant manager and appropriate committees and be available on request.
• This report must include:
  o The type of audit conducted, methodology used, problems identified and recommendations for improvement.
  o The number of patients removed and reasons for removal from the waiting list.
• An evaluation of the audit process must be conducted regularly (at least quarterly) by the staff responsible for waiting list management at each facility.
• NSW Health departmental officers conduct regular hospital visits and also engage an independent auditor to review the waiting list management process on a regular basis.

7.2. Review of Waiting List by Treating Doctor

• The hospital must provide a comprehensive list of patients to each treating doctor monthly.
• Treating Doctors must confirm waiting list with waiting time coordinators.
• Changes required by treating doctor are to be undertaken.

7.3. Patient Audit

• Ready for Care and Not Ready for Care Patients on the waiting list should be contacted if they have been waiting for greater than six months from listing date, to ascertain if they still require admission. Two contacts should be attempted, one by letter (Appendix 9) and one by telephone.
• Audit letter must include:
  o Information on alternative options where available.
  o Advice for clinical reassessment by treating doctor or GP.
  o Hospital & District/Network contact details.
• Documentation of the patient audit must be readily available, and must include the responses received and the action taken.

8. DOCTOR’S LEAVE - TEMPORARY AND PERMANENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLICY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • To ensure appropriate theatre scheduling, doctors are requested to provide as much notice of intended leave as possible (minimum of 6 weeks).
| • A management plan for affected patients should be developed and implemented for all leave.
| • A patient’s clinical priority category and listing date does not change as a result of doctor’s leave. |
A patient’s management plan should ensure affected patients:
- Are assured that their queue order will not be affected.
- Know who the replacement doctor will be.
- Are advised if clinical review is required.
- Are provided with information regarding their expected waiting time.

All contact with patients must be documented and be part of or attached to the patient’s RFA.

Affected patients are those who during the leave period:
- Already had a planned admission date.
- Will exceed their clinical priority timeframe during the leave period (see Clinical Priority Categories Section 2.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Leave</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Annual, Study, Conference Leave| • Doctors are requested to provide as much notice of intended leave as possible (6 weeks).  
• A management plan for affected patients should be developed and implemented for all leave.  
• Consult with relevant personnel - head of unit or specialty, medical administrator, clinical director, divisional manager, operating theatre manager, waiting time coordinator, hospital executive officer and Local Health District Executive or delegate.  
• During the leave period, no further patients should be added to the doctor’s waiting list unless approved by the District/Network Program Director of Surgery. |
| Unplanned leave e.g. sick leave, bereavement leave | • A management plan for affected patients is to be immediately developed and implemented.  
• Consult with relevant personnel - head of unit or specialty, medical administrator, clinical director, divisional manager, operating theatre manager, waiting time coordinator, hospital executive officer and Local Health District Executive or delegate.  
• During the leave period, no further patients should be added to the doctor’s waiting list unless approved by the District/Network Program Director of Surgery. |
| Planned Resignation e.g. resignation from hospital, retirement | • Notify affected patients and relevant GPs of intention to leave (if time permits); provide advice about patient’s management plan ASAP. No addition of patients to the doctor’s waiting list upon notification of planned resignation unless there is capacity or for an urgent case. A management plan for all patients should be developed and implemented.  
• Consult with relevant personnel - head of unit or specialty, medical administrator, clinical director, divisional manager, operating theatre manager, waiting time coordinator, hospital executive officer and Local Health District Executive or delegate.  
• Locate replacement treating doctor in consultation with senior clinicians and management.  
• Clinical review is required for patients remaining on departing doctor’s waiting list.  
• Determine if departing doctor is willing to treat additional patients and has capacity to undertake the procedure/treatment to decrease the waiting list.  
• Transfer patients to nominated treating doctor’s waiting list and ensure existing and transferred patients are treated in queue order, within clinical priority categories.  
• If unable to immediately transfer patients to a replacement doctor’s waiting list, patients are to remain on the treating doctor’s list. |
### Unplanned Resignation or Death

- No addition of patients to the doctor’s waiting list.
- A management plan for all patients should be immediately developed and implemented.
- Consult with relevant personnel - head of unit or specialty, medical administrator, clinical director, divisional manager, operating theatre manager, waiting time coordinator, hospital executive officer and Local Health District Executive or delegate.
- Locate replacement treating doctor in consultation with senior clinicians and management.
- Clinical review is required for patients remaining on departing doctor’s waiting list.
- Need to consider if nominated doctor is willing to take on additional patients and has capacity to undertake the work.
- Transfer patients to nominated treating doctor’s list and ensure existing and transferred patients are treated in queue order, within clinical priority categories.
- If unable to immediately transfer patients to a replacement doctor’s waiting list, patients are to remain on the waiting list under an appropriate clinician or speciality.
- Notify relevant GPs of the resignation/death (Appendix 10).

### 9. DEFINITIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addition to the waiting list</td>
<td>As soon as a decision is made that a patient is in need of admission to the hospital and the admission is not required within 24 hours, the treating doctor should complete a Recommendation for Admission form and forward it to the hospital within 3 working days. The patient will be added to the electronic waiting list within 3 working days of receipt of a complete, accurate and legible Recommendation for Admission form. The date the RFA is received becomes the patient’s listing date. This date is used in the calculation of the waiting time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission</td>
<td>The AIHW defines admission as the process whereby the hospital accepts responsibility for the patient’s care and/or treatment. Admission follows a clinical decision based upon specific criteria that a patient requires same day or overnight care and treatment. There are two types of Admission:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Emergency Admission (Admission within 24 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Elective Admission (Admission &gt;24 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission Date</td>
<td>Date on which an admitted patient commences an episode of care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admitted patient</td>
<td>A patient who undergoes a hospital’s admission process to receive treatment and/or care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated election status</td>
<td>Recorded when the patient is added to the waiting list, it is the anticipated election the patient will make when admitted for the planned procedure/treatment. Classifications are:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Medicare Eligible - Public patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Medicare Eligible - Private patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Medicare Eligible - Department of Veterans Affairs patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Medicare Eligible - Other (compensable, Defence forces etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Medicare Ineligible - Overseas visitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical Audit</td>
<td>A clerical audit is a regular and routine clerical check that the information that the hospital has of patients waiting for admission is correct. It will facilitate the identification of patients who no longer require admission or who have duplicate bookings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Priority Categories</td>
<td>A clinical priority category is allocated to a patient based on the referring doctor’s assessment of the priority with which a patient requires elective admission. Clinical priority categories are:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category 1</strong></td>
<td>Admission within 30 days desirable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category 2</strong></td>
<td>Admission within 90 days desirable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category 3</strong></td>
<td>Admission within 365 days acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category 4</strong></td>
<td>Not Ready for Care clinical reasons (staged)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not Ready for Care personal reasons (deferred)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clinical Review</th>
<th>Review of a patient on the waiting list to ensure that their waiting time is appropriate for their clinical condition.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cosmetic Surgery</th>
<th>Procedure performed to reshape normal structures of the body, or to adorn parts of the body with the aim of improving the consumer’s appearance and self-esteem. These procedures do not attract a Medicare rebate.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day of surgery admission (DOSA)</th>
<th>Day of surgery admission - patients are admitted into hospital on the day of their procedure and remain in hospital for at least one post-operative night.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day Only Surgery (DO)</th>
<th>Day Only Surgery involves the patient being admitted and discharged on the day of surgery. Also referred to as Day Surgery.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Declined Patient</th>
<th>A patient who declines a planned admission date for treatment.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deferred</th>
<th>See Not Ready for Care “deferred”.</th>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delay</th>
<th>See postponement.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discharge Intention</th>
<th>Recorded when the person is added to the waiting list. It identifies whether the referring doctor expects that the person will be admitted and discharged on the same day (i.e. day patient) or will stay at least overnight.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discretionary Surgery</th>
<th>Surgical procedures that should not be undertaken in public hospitals in NSW unless essential for good health.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOSA</th>
<th>DOSA is an acronym for day of surgery admission.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDO</th>
<th>EDO units are specifically designed to accommodate patients - elective and emergency, who meet specific admission criteria including:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• absolute expectation of discharge within 24 hours, preadmission screening (elective patients), agreed clinical guidelines in place and agreement to protocol based nurse initiated discharge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elective Care (National Health Data Dictionary) Including planned/ booked surgery.</th>
<th>Elective surgery comprises elective care where the procedures required by patients are listed in the surgical operations section of the Medicare benefits schedule, with the exclusion of specific procedures frequently done by non-surgical clinicians. Elective care is care that, in the opinion of the treating clinician, is necessary and admission for which can be delayed for at least twenty-four hours.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elective admission</th>
<th>An admission of a patient for care or treatment which, in the opinion of the treating clinician, is necessary and admission for which can be delayed for at least 24 hours (added to the waiting list). An elective admission usually results from a general practitioner consultation, referral to a specialist and a recommendation for admission to hospital by the specialist (or general practitioner, where appropriate). The medical consultation may take place in a hospital outpatient clinic.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electronic waiting list</th>
<th>Patient administration/management system used by the hospital to manage the waiting list, e.g. CERNER, iPM &amp; HOSPAS.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergency admission</th>
<th>An admission of a patient for care or treatment which, in the opinion of the treating clinician, is necessary and admission for which should occur within 24 hours. These patients are not routinely added to the waiting list, however if they are added for organisational reasons, then when the patient is admitted they should be removed from the waiting list as an emergency admission. Where patients are admitted as an emergency (via emergency or as a direct admission) an emergency admission in the Patient Administration System should be generated. If the patient has an existing wait list booking, this should not be used for the emergency admission.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency patients</td>
<td>Emergency patients are those whose clinical conditions indicate that they require admission to hospital within 24 hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceeding Clinical</td>
<td>Patients are considered overdue if they have waited in excess of the time recommended for the assigned ready for care clinical priority category.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority Timeframes</td>
<td>High Volume Short Stay model builds on the success of the Extended Day Only model by concentrating high volume surgical procedures that require a hospital admission up to 72 hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or Overdue</td>
<td>Indicator procedure code: The procedure or treatment the patient is to undergo when admitted. There are currently around 200 possible codes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Volume Short Stay</td>
<td>Inpatient: Patients who are formally admitted to a hospital or health service facility. Formally admitted patients can be Day Only or overnight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listing Date</td>
<td>Listing Date is the date of receipt of the Recommendation for Admission Form. Calculation of waiting time starts from this date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listing Status</td>
<td>Indicates the status of the person on the waiting list that is the extent to which a patient is ready and available for admission. This may change while the patient is on the waiting list, e.g. after a clinical review. The patient may be:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Local Health District/Network Access Coordinator | • Ready for Care (Category 1, 2 or 3)  
• Not Ready for Care (Category 4: Staged or Deferred) |
| Long-wait patients | Provides information regarding elective admissions in public hospitals and investigates options where available. |
| Medicare eligibility | Surgical patients who are Ready for Care and have been waiting for planned admission longer than 12 months are termed long-wait patients. |
| Not Ready for Care (NRFC) | Patients must be identified as being eligible or not eligible for treatment under Medicare for each episode, and a record of the patient’s Medicare number is to be made at the time of listing - see Anticipated Election Status. |
| Not Ready for Care “deferred” | A Not Ready for Care patient can be defined as a patient who is not available to be admitted to hospital until some future date and is either: |
| | • staged - not ready for clinical reasons  
• deferred - not ready for personal reasons |
| | See Clinical Review Section 5.3 for timeframe for NRFC patients. A postponement of admission by the hospital does not render the patient Not Ready for Care. These patients should remain on the waiting list as they are still genuinely waiting, but are delayed. |
| The AIHW defines a deferred patient as a patient who for personal reasons are not yet prepared to be admitted to hospital; for example, patients with work or other commitments which preclude their being admitted to hospital for a time. It is mandatory to indicate a reason for deferring. The reason a patient is deferred may be reported as follows: |
| | • a patient is going on holidays and will be unavailable for admission  
• a patient is unable to obtain home support  
• a patient is unable to accept a date due to work commitments  
• a patient is unable to accept a date for other significant reasons, e.g. personal carer. |
| | Patients may not be added to the waiting list as Not Ready for Care deferred. |
| Not Ready for Care “staged” | A patient is said to be staged if for clinical reasons they will not be ready for admission until some future date. It is mandatory to indicate a reason for staging. The reason a patient is staged may be reported as follows:  
**Unfit**  
- a co-morbidity exists which, until resolved, renders them unfit for the proposed treatment  
**Planned**  
- a patient requiring treatment as part of periodic treatment  
- a patient requiring treatment as part of a staged procedure (includes obstetric patients)  
- a planned re-admission for a patient with a predictable morbid process, requiring periodic treatment of the ongoing disease process  
- a planned re-admission for review of status following previous treatment. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planned admission date</td>
<td>The date on which it is proposed that a patient on the waiting list will be admitted for an episode of care. A patient who has been allocated a definite date for admission by the hospital, has been scheduled (i.e. the admission or listing is scheduled). A patient who has not been given a definite date for admission by the hospital is unscheduled (i.e. the admission is unscheduled).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned length of stay</td>
<td>The number of nights the patient is expected to stay in hospital as an inpatient. This information will be used for discharge planning and bed management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned procedure</td>
<td>The planned procedure is the procedure or treatment the patient is to undergo when admitted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pooled lists</td>
<td>At some hospitals, doctors in particular specialties have agreed to include their public patients on a combined list for that speciality. This means that patients may be treated by any one of the doctors belonging to the group. Patients may therefore be added to a waiting list by one doctor but admitted by another doctor. This does not mean that if a particular doctor is part of a pooled list group that this doctor does not also list and admit patients apart from the pooled list patients. Pooled lists are generally set up for the more common routine procedures. A doctor’s private patients would not be included on a pooled list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postponement</td>
<td>A patient’s elective admission may be postponed by the hospital due to high emergency admissions or other hospital related reasons. See Ready for Care “delayed”. A patient may postpone for personal reasons. See Not Ready for Care “deferred”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-admission</td>
<td>Patients are assessed before admission to the hospital for their suitability to undergo the intended procedure/treatment, associated anaesthetic and discharge plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting Problem</td>
<td>The problem or concern that is the reason for seeking health care or assistance (NHDD).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private/Chargeable patients (including DVA &amp; WC etc)</td>
<td>Persons admitted to a public hospital who elect to choose the treating doctor(s) will be charged for medical services and accommodation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Patient</td>
<td>A Medicare eligible patient admitted to a public hospital who has agreed to be treated by a nominated doctor of the hospital’s choice and to accept shared ward accommodation. This means the patient is not charged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ready for Care (RFC)</td>
<td>A Ready for Care patient is defined as a patient who is available for admission to hospital. Ready for Care patients will be in clinical priority categories 1, 2 or 3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Ready for Care “Delayed” | A patient is regarded as Ready for Care but delayed where the hospital decides to postpone admission and reschedule a person’s planned admission date because of:  
- non-availability of operating theatre (staff, equipment, resources etc.)  
- non-availability of bed;  
- non-availability of bed; pressure of emergency admissions  
- non-availability of doctor  
It is mandatory to indicate the reason for the patient’s admission being delayed. |
## 12. MEDICAL CARE

### 12.100

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Removing patients from the waiting list, other than for admission</th>
<th>Patients can be removed from the waiting list for reasons other than for admission:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• patient declines treatment or requests removal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• patient defers treatment on 2 occasions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• patient defers &amp; exceeds maximum number of Not Ready for Care days, Cat 1 &gt;15 days; Cat 2 &gt;45 days; Cat 3 &gt;180 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• patient fails to arrive on 1 occasion, with no notice or extenuating circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• patient not contactable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• patient deceased</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Recommendation for Admission form (RFA) | Requests for admission to hospital need to be on an approved form and contain a minimum data set as specified in this policy. Forms must have a dedicated section for documentation of relevant details regarding the booking, such as contact with patient, doctors, dates and reasons for changes or delays to planned admission dates. This dedicated section may be either part of the RFA or a particular form attached to the RFA. The documentation needs to provide a clear audit trail for all transactions and must be kept as part of the patient’s medical record. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referring Doctor</th>
<th>Doctor who is referring the patient to the waiting list.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Same day Surgery</td>
<td>See Day Only Surgery (DO).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speciality</th>
<th>Specialist’s area of clinical expertise. Where a specialist undertakes surgical procedures, which can be classified into different specialities, then the specialist will have a different list for each speciality (e.g. Obstetrics/Gynaecology). The broad categories required for reporting to NSW Health Department are:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cardiothoracic</td>
<td>ENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gynaecology</td>
<td>Neurosurgery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthopaedic</td>
<td>Plastic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vascular</td>
<td>Dental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renal Dialysis</td>
<td>Obstetrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Surgery</td>
<td>Ophthalmology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urology</td>
<td>Medical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hospitals may have many more specific clinical areas identified, but these should be categorised under the main speciality headings for central reporting.

| Staged | See Not Ready for Care “staged”. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short Notice/Standy Patient</th>
<th>Patients may agree to be available on the “short notice” list to have their surgery performed if there is a cancelled procedure. The hospital should determine what period of time prior to admission is regarded as short notice and for which procedures are appropriate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Status review date (SRD)</td>
<td>This is the date determined for an assessment (clinical or administrative) as to whether a deferred or staged person (i.e. Not Ready for Care) has become ready for admission to the hospital at the first available opportunity (i.e. Ready for Care).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treating doctor</td>
<td>The medical officer/senior clinician (a visiting practitioner, staff specialist or academic clinician) responsible for the care of the patient, and under whose care the patient is to be admitted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting List</td>
<td>A waiting list is kept by the hospital. This contains the names and details of patients registered as requiring elective admission to that hospital. Admission may be for same day (admission and discharge on the same day) or other acute inpatient services requiring overnight or longer stay. These patients may or may not have a planned admission date and may be proposing to be public or private patients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting Time</td>
<td>Time a patient spends as Ready for Care.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 1 - Incomplete RFA Letter

Dear <insert Dr name>

Incomplete Recommendation for Admission (RFA) Form
An RFA for <insert patient’s name> has been received at the Admission/Booking office on <insert date> with incomplete information. The Department of Health’s Waiting Time and Elective Surgery Policy states that the hospital is unable to accept RFA forms unless all the mandatory information is completed.

Could you please provide the information requested below:

The following information/details are incomplete or missing on the RFA
(please tick)

- Patient’s full name
- Patient’s address
- Patient’s contact information (home, work & mobile)
- Patient’s gender
- Patient’s date of birth
- Patient’s Medicare number
- Clinical priority category
- If classified as staged, the time interval when the patient will be ready for care should be indicated
- Discharge intention (i.e. Day only, or indication of number of nights in hospital)
- Presenting problem
- Planned procedure/treatment
- Significant medical history (including allergies)
- Treating doctor (if different)
- Patient’s signed consent (if available)
- General Practitioner (name and address if available)
- Special requirements (e.g. ICU bed, theatre equipment)
- Interpreter required

Specify

Please complete the requested information on this letter and return it within 2 days by facsimile to…………… This will enable the Admission/Booking Office to complete the patient’s booking.

If you require further information please contact our <insert position name and contact number>.

Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Yours faithfully

<Signature block>
Appendix 2 - Patient Notification Letter

Dear <patient name>

I am writing to confirm that as of <date> you have been placed on the <hospital name> elective surgery waiting under the care of <insert doctor>.

Your doctor has determined the clinical priority of your admission. The approximate waiting time is <insert waiting time> weeks/months from when your name was placed on the waiting list.

Our first priority is to ensure you receive your procedure/treatment within the clinical priority timeframe recommended by your referring doctor. Where possible, we will make every effort to;

1. allocate your referring doctor to perform your procedure
2. ensure your surgery is performed at <insert hospital name>

While every attempt will be made for you to have your procedure under the care of the referring surgeon, the hospital is committed to providing your surgery within the clinically recommended timeframe, which may involve referring you to another doctor or hospital.

Once a planned admission date has been allocated for your procedure, you will be notified of the date and provided with further information to help you prepare for your hospital stay. The name of your doctor and facility will be included in this letter.

Sometimes it is necessary to delay booked surgery to make way for life-threatening cases, which are admitted through the hospital’s emergency department. These emergency cases will always receive priority over elective surgery. However, the hospital will make every effort to avoid such postponements and to reschedule delayed patients as soon as practicable.

Should your clinical condition change you should notify your general practitioner, your specialist or the hospital <insert position name and contact number of clinical staff who can provide advice on management of worsening condition>. Changes in your condition or general health may have implications for the timing of your procedure or lead to your clinical priority category being re-assessed.

As a patient on the waiting list, you have a responsibility to inform the hospital:

• If you decide not to proceed with the procedure for any reason. For example, if the procedure has been conducted at another hospital or you have decided to seek treatment privately or to opt for an alternative treatment
• Of any changes to your contact details
• If you are going to be unavailable for any extended period

The hospital may remove you from the waiting list in consultation with your specialist if:

• The hospital is unable to contact you because you have not informed them of a change in your contact details.
• You fail to present for the procedure without providing the hospital with prior notice.
• You postpone your surgery on two occasions for personal or social reasons.

If you have any queries about the hospital waiting list or booking procedures, please contact our <insert position name and contact number> or if you have access to the web you can access information about specialists’ waiting times at the NSW Health web site: http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/hospitals/waitingtimes/patients.asp

Yours faithfully

<Signature block>
Appendix 3 - GP Notification Letter

Dear <insert GP’s name>

I am writing to advise you that as of <date> your patient:
<Patient name>
<Patient address>

has been placed on the <hospital name> elective surgery waiting list to undergo <procedure> under the care of <insert treating doctor’s name>

As you may be aware, clinicians assign each elective patient with a clinical priority category according to clinical need, ensuring that priority is given to the patients who are most in need. There are four categories: These are:

- **Category 1**: Admission **within 30 days** desirable for a condition that has the potential to deteriorate quickly to the point that it may become an emergency.

- **Category 2**: Admission **within 90 days** desirable for a condition that is not likely to deteriorate quickly or become an emergency.

- **Category 3**: Admission **within 365 days** acceptable for a condition that is unlikely to deteriorate quickly and which has little potential to become an emergency.

- **Category 4**: Patients who are either clinically not ready for admission (**staged**) and those who have deferred admission for personal reasons (**deferred**) after placement on waiting list.

The referring doctor who examined and placed <insert patient name> on the waiting list allocated the patient a category <insert category>, and the approximate waiting time is <insert waiting time> weeks/months from when they were placed on the waiting list.

While every attempt will be made for your patient to have their procedure under the care of the referring surgeon, the hospital is committed to providing their surgery within the clinically recommended timeframe, which may involve referring them to another doctor or hospital.

When the patient is booked for the procedure, the patient will be advised of the proposed admission date and given further information to help prepare.

The patient has been advised to notify their general practitioner, the specialist or the hospital if their condition changes for a clinical review. If you are contacted and require advice on the management of the patient’s condition, you can contact <insert position name and contact number of clinical staff who can provide advice on management of worsening condition>.

If you have any queries about the hospital waiting list or booking procedures, please contact our <insert position name and contact number> or if you have access to the web you can access information about specialists’ waiting times at the NSW Health web site: http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/hospitals/waitingtimes/patients.asp

Yours faithfully

<Signature block>
Appendix 4 - Admission Letter

Dear <insert patient name>

We are please to advise that your Admission to <insert hospital name> has been arranged for <insert planned admission date>.

It is important to let us know your intention as soon as possible so we can make the right arrangements for your care.

If you do wish to have your operation on the above date, please advise the hospital on telephone number <insert number>.

Your confirmation is required within 5 working days of receipt of this letter. Failure to confirm or attend the given date may result in your admission being cancelled.

If you wish to postpone or cancel your booking, please telephone the Admissions/Booking Office on <insert number> as soon as possible so that the hospital can schedule another patient. Please note that your clinical priority category will change if you postpone, and you may wish to discuss this with your treating doctor.

Prior to the procedure you may be required to attend the Pre-Admission clinic. At the clinic you will have any tests necessary and you may be required to complete admission paperwork, which will be processed by the admissions clerk.

All pre-operative instructions and any preparations required prior to the procedure will be given to you at the clinic. You will also have the opportunity to ask questions.

Your appointment at the clinic will be on <insert date> at <insert time>. You may be required to be at the clinic for <insert timeframe e.g. 2 hours).

Please bring any medications you are taking with you to the clinic appointment. You are also required to bring your Medicare Card, Health Fund and other relevant details with you.

If the clinic appointment is not suitable please contact <insert number> as soon as possible. Failure to attend the clinic appointment will mean that your date for the procedure is postponed until another appointment and rescheduled admission date can be arranged.

Please report to <insert location>, <insert directions> for your clinic appointment. (Include map or brochure about parking and public transport options.)

If you have any queries about your admission to hospital, please contact our <insert position name and contact number>.

We look forward to providing your hospital care.

Yours faithfully

<Signature block>
Appendix 5 - Postponement/Delay Letter

Dear <insert patient name>

It is with regret that I must advise you, that due to unforeseen circumstances, it has been necessary to delay your admission to hospital. This delay has been discussed with your treating doctor.

I wish to apologise for any inconvenience this may cause, and to advise you that a new admission date has been scheduled.

Your admission is now rescheduled for <insert date/time>

If you require any additional information please do not hesitate to contact the Admission/Booking Office on <insert telephone number> between 9.00am to 4.00pm Monday to Friday.

Yours faithfully

<Signature block>
Appendix 6 - Patient Notification Letter - Change to Not Ready for Care: Personal Reasons

Dear <insert patient name>

As you are aware you were referred to <hospital> for elective surgery. The clinical priority category allocated to this procedure is <CPC> and your registration date on the waiting list for this procedure is <date>.

I am writing to confirm that as of <date> your status on the elective surgery waiting list has changed to reflect that because of personal reasons, you are not available for surgery.

When scheduling patient for surgery the hospital considers the patient clinical priority category and the length of time the patient has waited for their surgery and have been ready for care. If your circumstances change and you are once again available for surgery you should notify the hospital as soon as possible.

It is important to note that there is a maximum timeframe that a patient can elect to defer their surgery for personal reasons. The timeframes are:

- Category 1 patients (admission required within 30 days) = 15 days cumulative
- Category 2 patients (admission required within 90 days) = 45 days cumulative
- Category 3 patients (admitted required within 365 days) = 180 days cumulative

A representative from the <hospital> will contact you before you have reached these thresholds to confirm whether you are ready for your surgery. If you exceed the thresholds above for personal reasons, you may be removed from the waiting list in consultation with your treating doctor.

If you require any additional information please do not hesitate to contact the Admission/Booking Office on <insert telephone number> between 9.00am to 400 pm Monday to Friday.

Yours faithfully

<Signature block>
Appendix 7 - Change of Clinical Priority Category, Letter Advising Treating Doctor

Dear <insert Dr’s name>

I am writing to advise you as of <insert date> your patient:

<insert patient name>
<insert patient address>

has had their clinical priority category reviewed by <insert name> and changed from <insert clinical priority category> to <insert clinical priority category>.

If you have any concerns or require further information about the change in clinical priority category for your patient, please contact <insert position name and contact number>.

Yours faithfully

<Signature block>
Appendix 8a - Removal from Waiting List, Letter Advising GP

Dear <insert Dr’s name>

I am writing to advise you as of <insert date> your patient:

<insert patient name>
<insert patient address>

has been removed from the waiting list at <insert hospital name>, due to <insert reason>. The patient has been advised to contact you if they have any concerns.

The patient’s specialist <insert Dr’s name> has also been made aware of <insert patient name> removal from the waiting list.

If you have any concerns or require further information about this removal from the waiting list, please contact <insert position name and contact number>.

Yours faithfully

<Signature block>
Appendix 8b - Removal from Waiting List, Letter Advising Treating Doctor

Dear <insert Dr’s name>

I am writing to advise you as of <insert date> your patient:

<insert patient name>
<insert patient address>

(Choose the appropriate option)

has been removed from the waiting list at <insert hospital name>, due to <insert reason>. The patient has been advised to contact you if they have any concerns.

Or

will be removed from the waiting list at <insert hospital name>, due to <insert reason - declines treatment, fails to arrive or requests removal>, if you do not contact this office within 5 working days to advise that the patient is to remain on the waiting list.

If you have any concerns or require further information about the removal of your patient’s name from the waiting list, please contact <insert position name and contact number>.

Yours faithfully

<Signature block>
Appendix 8c - Removal from the Waiting List, Letter Advising Patient

Dear <insert patient’s name>

I am writing to advise you as of <insert date> your name was removed from <insert Dr’s name> waiting list at <insert hospital name> due to <insert reason>.

Your specialist and general practitioner have been advised that your name has been removed from the waiting list. You may wish to discuss any concerns you have with them.

If you require further information about your removal from the waiting list, please contact <insert position name and contact number>.

Yours faithfully

<Signature block>
Appendix 9 - Audit Letter

Dear <patient’s name>

We are continually updating our waiting lists so they remain accurate, complete and ensure your timely access to our services.

To enable us to keep our waiting list accurate we would ask you to complete the section below and return it in the envelope provided within 10 days.

We acknowledge that you may have previously received and replied to this request, and apologise for any inconvenience caused, however it is important that this information is obtained regularly, reviewed and our records updated.

Should your clinical condition change you should notify your general practitioner, your specialist or the hospital <insert position name and contact number of clinical staff who can provide advice on management of worsening condition>. Changes in your condition or general health may have implications for the timing of your procedure or lead to your clinical priority category being re-assessed.

If you do not confirm that you wish to remain on the list within 10 working days of receiving this letter, one other attempt will be made to contact you. If there is still no response your name, in consultation with your doctor may be removed from the Hospital’s waiting list.

Would you please tick one of the boxes below

☐ I still require my surgery and I am ready for surgery at this time

☐ I wish to be taken off the waiting list as I have had my surgery elsewhere

☐ I wish to be taken off the waiting list, as I no longer require the surgery

If you wish to know your current waiting time or discuss an alternative option for your care please contact the Local Health District Patient Access Coordinator on <insert number>.

Should you have any concerns or if we can assist you in any way please contact the Admission Office on <insert number>.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. Could you now sign this form and return it in the envelope provided within 10 working days.

Patient/Carer Signature: __________________________

Date: _______ / _______ / _______

Yours faithfully

<Signature block>
Appendix 10 - Notification to GP of Resignation/Death

Dear <insert gp’s name>

I am writing to inform you that <insert Dr’s name> is no longer admitting patients at this <insert hospital>.

Your patient <insert patient name> is currently on our waiting list and we will attempt to transfer your patient to another specialist’s waiting list, however in the interim your patient may contact you for advice and information, or a referral to another specialist for the management of their condition.

If you have any concerns or require further information about this situation, please contact <insert position name and contact number>.

Yours faithfully

<Signature block>
12. MEDICAL CARE

Appendix 11 - Booking Clerk Form

Booking Clerk Form
(This form is Office Use Only - Administrative Staff)
Patients are not to be entered on the Waiting List until all the Minimum Data requirements are completed.

RFA received with the following incomplete minimum data requirements (please tick boxes below)

- Patient’s full name
- Planned admission date (if available)
- Patient’s address
- Significant medical history
- Patient’s contact information
- Treating doctor (if different)
- Patient’s gender
- Patient’s signed consent
- Patient’s date of birth
- General Practitioner (name and address)
- Medicare number
- Interpreter required
- Clinical priority category
- Anticipated election status
- If classified as staged, time interval when ready for care
- Status review date (staged/deferred patients)
- Discharge intention
- Short Notice/Standby Offers
- Presenting problem
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Status
- Planned procedure/treatment

RFA entered in Patient Administration System: Date:_______ Clerk:_______

Minimum Data Requirements Completed: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Completed RFA received in Admission Office: Date:_______ Clerk:_______

Patient Contacted/Instructions Given: Date:_______ Clerk:_______

This section is to be utilised to document all correspondence with the Referring or Treating Dr, Rooms, Clinics, Ward or patient after the booking has been entered into the Patient Administration System. For Example: Delays, Cancellations and patient requests can be registered on this form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Clerk</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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146(02/02/12)
Appendix 12 - Amendment to Elective Waiting Time Booking Form

AMO: __________________________ Procedure: __________________________
Listing Date: __________________ Original Clinical Priority: __________________

Table 1: CPC Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Changed to</th>
<th>Status Review Date</th>
<th>Reason for Change</th>
<th>Notified by</th>
<th>Initials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Delay (Hospital Based)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Delay Reason</th>
<th>New PAD</th>
<th>Date Patient Notified Verbally</th>
<th>Date Patient Notified in Writing</th>
<th>Initials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

Table 3: Deferral (Patient Based)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Defer Reason</th>
<th>Notified By</th>
<th>Status Review Date</th>
<th>Provisional PAD</th>
<th>Initials</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

Table 4: Staged (Clinically Based)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Staged Reason</th>
<th>Notified By</th>
<th>Status Review Date</th>
<th>Provisional PAD</th>
<th>Initials</th>
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</table>

Table 5: Removal from List (Other than Admission)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Removal Reason</th>
<th>CPC</th>
<th>Notified By</th>
<th>Written/Clinical Authorisation (Cat 30 &gt;Days)</th>
<th>Patient Notified in Writing</th>
<th>Specialist Notified in Writing</th>
<th>Initials</th>
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</table>
### Appendix 13 - RFA Checklist

**RFA Receipt Checklist**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum Data Set (Referring Doctor)</th>
<th>Item for Checking</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patient’s full name</td>
<td>Send Incomplete RFA Form letter to surgeon via fax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patient’s address</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patient’s contact information</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patient’s gender</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patient’s date of birth</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patient’s Medicare number</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Clinical priority category</td>
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<td>If classified as staged, time interval</td>
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<td>when ready for care</td>
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<td>Discharge intention (no of nights in</td>
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<td></td>
<td>hospital)</td>
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<td>Presenting problem</td>
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<td>Planned procedure/treatment</td>
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<td>Significant medical history</td>
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<td>Treating doctor (if different)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Patient Consent (if available)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>General Practitioner</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Status</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpreter Required</td>
<td>Contact Interpreter Service when required (Pre-admission &amp; admission)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Special requirements (ICU bed,</td>
<td>For ICU bed Notify (name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>equipment)</td>
<td>For special equipment notify (name)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Planned admission date (if available)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anticipated election status</td>
<td>For data entry to PAS/Operating Theatre System</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Status review date for staged patients</td>
<td>Election status to be discussed with patient by</td>
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<td>(NRFC)</td>
<td>Admission/clerical staff</td>
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<td>(Admission Staff)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinical Priority Category (CPC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPC 30 day Category Patients</td>
<td>Check that surgeon has allocated a</td>
<td>An RFA that has no date or date is allocated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>planned admission date.</td>
<td>outside 30 days to be referred to Admission Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosmetic &amp; Discretionary Surgery</td>
<td>Check that procedure is not listed</td>
<td>An escalation process should be in place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List Check</td>
<td>under cosmetic or discretionary</td>
<td>according to the management structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>procedures (section 2.3 Waiting Times</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&amp; Elective Patient Surgery Policy)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. REFERENCES

Advice for Referring & Treating Doctors - Managing Elective Patient/Waiting Lists:


Extended Day Only Admission Policy:

High Volume Short Stay Surgical Model Toolkit:

Surgical Activity during Christmas/New Year Period Policy:

Classification of Venous Disease

Venous disease of the legs can be classified according to the severity, cause, site and specific abnormality using the CEAP classification. Use of such a classification improves the accuracy of the diagnosis and improves communication between specialists. The elements of the CEAP classification are:

- Clinical severity
- Etiology or cause
- Anatomy
- Pathophysiology

For the initial assessment of a patient, the clinical severity is the most important and can be made by simple observation and does not need special tests. There are seven grades of increasing clinical severity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C 0</td>
<td>No evidence of venous disease.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 1</td>
<td>Superficial spider veins (reticular veins) <a href="http://www.simondodds.com/Venous/Spider_veins_FAQ.htm">http://www.simondodds.com/Venous/Spider_veins_FAQ.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 3</td>
<td>Ankle oedema of venous origin (not foot oedema)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 4</td>
<td>Skin pigmentation in the gaiter area (<a href="http://www.simondodds.com/Venous/LDS.htm">lipodermatosclerosis</a>) <a href="http://www.simondodds.com/Venous/LDS.htm">http://www.simondodds.com/Venous/LDS.htm</a></td>
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<td>A healed venous ulcer <a href="http://www.simondodds.com/Venous/Venous_ulcer_FAQ.htm">http://www.simondodds.com/Venous/Venous_ulcer_FAQ.htm</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>C 6</td>
<td>An open venous ulcer <a href="http://www.simondodds.com/Venous/Venous_ulcer_FAQ.htm">http://www.simondodds.com/Venous/Venous_ulcer_FAQ.htm</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. MEDICAL CARE

12. ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIHW</td>
<td>Australian Institute of Health and Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMO</td>
<td>Attending Medical Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat</td>
<td>Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEAP</td>
<td>Clinical, Etiology, Anatomy, Pathophysiology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMBS</td>
<td>Commonwealth Medicare Benefits Schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPC</td>
<td>Clinical Priority Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DO</td>
<td>Day Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOSA</td>
<td>Day of Surgery Admission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR</td>
<td>Doctor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVA</td>
<td>Department of Veteran Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDO</td>
<td>Extended Day Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GP</td>
<td>General Practitioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDU</td>
<td>High Dependency Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HVSS</td>
<td>High Volume Short Stay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICU</td>
<td>Intensive Care Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LHD</td>
<td>Local Health District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRFC</td>
<td>Not Ready for Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAD</td>
<td>Planned Admission Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAS</td>
<td>Patient Administration System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFA</td>
<td>Recommendation for Admission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFC</td>
<td>Ready for Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRD</td>
<td>Status Review Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WC</td>
<td>Workers Compensation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ADVICE FOR REFERRING AND TREATING DOCTORS - WAITING TIME AND ELECTIVE SURGERY POLICY (IB2012_004)

IB2012_004 rescinds IB2009_018.

PURPOSE

The aim of this Information Bulletin is to inform referring doctors as to the minor modifications to the Waiting Time and Elective Surgery Policy PD2012_011.

KEY INFORMATION

“Advice for Referring and Treating Doctors” has been developed to provide doctors with information on the changes introduced by the revised Waiting time and Elective Surgery Policy - PD2012_011.

Introduction

The aim of this Information Bulletin is to inform referring doctors as to the minor modifications to the Waiting Time and Elective Surgery Policy that has been approved by the Surgical Services Taskforce (SST). The Waiting Time and Elective Surgery Policy promotes partnerships between clinicians and hospitals to facilitate the optimal management of waiting lists. The policy also promotes improved communication between clinicians and hospitals to facilitate the treatment of patients in a clinically appropriate time frame.


For further information or clarification please contact your District/Network Program Director of Surgery or the State Program Director of Surgery at NSW Health.

Summary of the Key Elements and Issues for Clinicians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHANGE/ISSUE</th>
<th>EXPLANATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A recommended guide of accepted Clinical Priority categories for common procedures with certain clinical indications. (Recommended guide is located in Appendix 2)</td>
<td>A recommended guide of accepted Clinical Priority Categories has been developed with the assistance of specialist craft groups to ensure that patients with similar conditions are prioritised in a similar way. The appropriate categorisation of patients with similar conditions will provide clinicians with more certainty about being able to obtain access for their patients in a clinically appropriate timeframe. Individual patient exceptions to the recommended Clinical Priority Categorisation are facilitated by supporting documentation or following discussions with the District/Network Program Director of Surgery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The minimum information that the referring doctor should provide on the Recommendation for Admission form (RFA). (List of the minimum information required is located in Appendix 3.)</td>
<td>To keep pace with the changing methods for booking patients for a procedure (e.g. fax, post), hospital staff need information to ensure that they are able to register the patient on to the waiting list in a timely manner.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**12. MEDICAL CARE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHANGE/ISSUE</th>
<th>EXPLANATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RFA forms must be forwarded to the hospital within 3 working days</strong> of the patient agreeing to the proposed procedure/treatment (via the most relevant means, e.g. mail, hand delivery, by patient or carer).</td>
<td>To ensure that patients are registered on the waiting list in a timely and equitable manner, RFA forms need to be forwarded to the hospital within 3 working days. Hospitals are required to supply the doctor with a detailed copy of their waiting list for review, at least monthly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>An RFA will only be accepted if the patient’s clinical condition requires surgical intervention within 12 months.</strong></td>
<td>If an RFA is presented with a planned operate date &gt;12 months ahead, discussion with the referring doctor will be required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Responsibilities section is included in the revised policy for Patients, GP, Surgeons, Booking Clerk, Clinical Director of Surgical Services and Program Director of Surgical Services.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Surgeon responsibilities:</strong> Explain proposed procedure/treatment, options for treatment and potential complications. Anticipated length of stay and obtain written informed consent from the patient. Assign a clinical priority category for the procedure/treatment, as it applies to the individual patient as per the “Advice for Treating Doctors”. If patient is classified as staged, the time interval when the patient will be ready for care should be indicated. Ensure that RFA forms are legible and minimum data set is completed. Forward the completed RFA direct to the hospital within 3 working days of the patient agreeing to the proposed procedure/treatment (via the most relevant means e.g. mail, hand delivery, by patient or carer). Initiate prompt and appropriate communication with the referring GP regarding management of the patient. Referring doctors must ensure they are available to perform the procedure within the clinical priority timeframe. Alternatively, the clinician should make arrangements for another clinician to perform the procedure within the appropriate clinical timeframe. Review Waiting List at least monthly and verify with the hospital. Provide as much notice of intended leave as possible (minimum of 6 weeks) for appropriate theatre scheduling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demand Management</strong></td>
<td>Patients added to the elective surgery waiting list should be treated within their clinical priority timeframe. If the surgeon does not have the capacity to undertake the surgery within the clinical priority timeframe then this should be managed in conjunction with the surgeon, patient and referring General Practitioner by considering: • Additional theatre time. • Transfer of patients to another surgeon with a shorter waiting list. Private sector option if the above prove unsuccessful (Local Health District/Network responsible for expenses incurred).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHANGE/ISSUE</td>
<td>EXPLANATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional <strong>Cosmetic and Discretionary</strong> procedures that are no longer available in NSW Public Hospitals are included in the revised Policy. (Appendix4)</td>
<td>Surgery should meet an identified clinical need to improve the physical health of the patient. When a clear clinical need to improve a patient’s physical health has been identified for Cosmetic and Discretionary procedure, approval of the Local Health District/Network Program Director of Surgery, in consultation with senior management should be sought by the referring doctor before cosmetic and discretionary procedures are undertaken in any public hospital facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinicians are now requested to provide at least 6 weeks notice for planned leave such as holiday, study and conference leave.</td>
<td>In order to facilitate better planning for operating theatres and to minimise patient delays, a minimum of 6 weeks notice for planned leave is required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bilateral Procedures</strong></td>
<td>An RFA will only be accepted for one procedure unless the procedure is occurring in the same admission. This is to ensure that the patient has been reviewed to assess that they are clinically ready to undergo the subsequent procedure. The exception is when the surgeon undertakes the bilateral procedure in the same operation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Patient to Choice to wait</strong> has been removed from the policy.</td>
<td>Where the patient declines two genuine offers of treatment with another doctor or at another hospital, then the patient should be advised that they may be removed from the waiting list. The Local Health District Program Director of Surgery should review the patient’s status on the waiting list in consultation with the original treating doctor prior to the patient being removed from the waiting list.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Not Ready for Care - Staged & Deferred**      | **Staged Only**  
- On request for admission the Not Ready for Care timeframe should be identified by the treating doctor and a RFC clinical priority category indicated.  
- Once the identified NRFC staged timeframe is completed the patient then returns to the RFC category as indicated by the treating doctor.  
- A PAD/TCI can be arranged whilst the patient is in the category of Not Ready  

**Deferred Only**  
- The period of time the patient request deferment should be determined and the patient returned to the original CPC at that timeframe.  
- A deferred patient should not exceed the timeframes for their clinical priority category as indicated above. |
Appendix 1

Clinical Priority Categories

Categorisation of Elective patients by clinical priority is required to ensure they receive care in a timely and clinically appropriate manner. The Clinical priority category is allocated by the referring doctor.

Clinical Priorities are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clinical Priority Category</th>
<th>Clinical Priority Category</th>
<th>Clinical Priority Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category 1</td>
<td>Admission <strong>within 30 days</strong> desirable for a condition that has the potential to deteriorate quickly to the point that it may become an emergency.</td>
<td>Ready for Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 2</td>
<td>Admission <strong>within 90 days</strong> desirable for a condition which is not likely to deteriorate quickly or become an emergency.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 3</td>
<td>Admission <strong>within 365 days</strong> acceptable for a condition which is unlikely to deteriorate quickly and which has little potential to become an emergency.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 4</td>
<td>Patients who are either clinically not ready for admission (<strong>staged</strong>) and those who have deferred admission for personal reasons (<strong>deferred</strong>).</td>
<td>Not Ready for Care</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ADVICE FOR REFERRING AND TREATING DOCTORS - ALLOCATION OF CLINICAL PRIORITY CATEGORIES FOR ELECTIVE PATIENTS IN NSW PUBLIC HOSPITALS

Appendix 2

Reference List – Clinical Priority Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IPC</th>
<th>Procedure*</th>
<th>Recommended Clinical Priority Category</th>
<th>IPC List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>124</td>
<td>Acromioplasty</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Acromioplasty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>067</td>
<td>Adenoidectomy</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Adenoidectomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>197</td>
<td>Amputation digit (toe/finger)</td>
<td>2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Amputation digit (toe/finger)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>085</td>
<td>Amputation of limb</td>
<td>1 (within 30 days)</td>
<td>Amputation of limb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>175</td>
<td>Aortic bifurcation graft</td>
<td>1 (within 30 days)</td>
<td>Aortic bifurcation graft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>097</td>
<td>Appendicectomy (non-emergency)</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Appendicectomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122</td>
<td>Arthrodesis</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Arthrodesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>042</td>
<td>Arthroscopy</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Arthroscopy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>178</td>
<td>Biopsy - muscle</td>
<td>1 (within 30 days) or 2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Biopsy - muscle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>027</td>
<td>Biopsy of breast</td>
<td>1 (within 30 days) or 2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Biopsy of breast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>046</td>
<td>Biopsy/conization of cervix/LLETZ</td>
<td>2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Biopsy/conization of cervix/LLETZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137</td>
<td>Bladder neck incision</td>
<td>2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Bladder neck incision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>184</td>
<td>Blepharoplasty</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Blepharoplasty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>019</td>
<td>Bronchoscopy</td>
<td>1 (within 30 days)</td>
<td>Bronchoscopy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>192</td>
<td>Bursa - excision</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Bursa - excision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>016</td>
<td>Cardiac catheterisation</td>
<td>1 (within 30 days)</td>
<td>Cardiac catheterisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>001</td>
<td>Cataract extraction (+/- intra-ocular lens insertion)</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Cataract extraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128</td>
<td>Change of muscle or tendon length</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Change of muscle or tendon length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>Change of plaster (GA)</td>
<td>4 (staged)</td>
<td>Change of plaster (GA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>002</td>
<td>Cholecystectomy (including laparoscopic) - Acute Cholecystitis</td>
<td>1 (within 30 days) or 2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Cholecystectomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>054</td>
<td>Circumcision (clinical conditions only)</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Circumcision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>176</td>
<td>Closure colostomy/ileostomy</td>
<td>4 (Staged)</td>
<td>Closure colostomy/ileostomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>075</td>
<td>Cochlear implant</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Cochlear implant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>025</td>
<td>Colectomy/Anterior Resection/Large Bowel resection</td>
<td>1 (within 30 days) or 2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Colectomy/Anterior Resection/Large Bowel Resection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Generally, malignancy will be considered to require treatment within 30 days.
### Reference List - Clinical Priority Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IPC</th>
<th>Procedure*</th>
<th>Recommended Clinical Priority Category</th>
<th>IPC List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>020</td>
<td>Colonoscopy</td>
<td>1 (within 30 days)</td>
<td>Colonoscopy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Colonoscopy**

- High likelihood of significant organic pathology
- Examples:
  - Clinically significant overt lower gastrointestinal bleeding
  - Active Inflammatory bowel disease or diarrhoea where endoscopy is indicated to progress management
  - Clinically significant iron deficiency anaemia
  - FOBT +ve (including the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IPC</th>
<th>Procedure*</th>
<th>Recommended Clinical Priority Category</th>
<th>IPC List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>020</td>
<td>Colonoscopy</td>
<td>2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Colonoscopy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Colonoscopy**

- Lower likelihood of significant organic pathology
- Examples:
  - Functional bowel symptoms without alarm features
  - Persistent undiagnosed diarrhoea

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IPC</th>
<th>Procedure*</th>
<th>Recommended Clinical Priority Category</th>
<th>IPC List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>020</td>
<td>Colonoscopy</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Colonoscopy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Colonoscopy**

- Surveillance:
  - Family History - (as per NHMRC Clinical Practice Guidelines – see appendix 5)
  - Complete examination of colon (if not done preoperatively) within 1 year of curative surgery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IPC</th>
<th>Procedure*</th>
<th>Recommended Clinical Priority Category</th>
<th>IPC List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>020</td>
<td>Colonoscopy</td>
<td>4 (Not Ready for Care - Staged or Deferred)</td>
<td>Colonoscopy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Colonoscopy**

- Waiting List Bookings for colonoscopy are not accepted for more than 12 months in advance.
- Category 4 used for:

  **Staged Procedures:**
  - Patients who require the procedure after a specific time period up to 12 months in advance. For example post polypectomy follow up of high risk lesions for recurrence or incomplete resection
  - Patients who are temporarily not fit for colonoscopy

  **Deferred Procedures:**
  - Patients who defer colonoscopy for personal reasons

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IPC</th>
<th>Procedure*</th>
<th>Recommended Clinical Priority Category</th>
<th>IPC List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Colposcopy</td>
<td>2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Colposcopy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113</td>
<td>Corneal graft</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Corneal graft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>017</td>
<td>Coronary angioplasty/Stent/Balloon dilatation</td>
<td>1 (within 30 days)</td>
<td>Coronary angioplasty/DSA/PTA/Stent/Balloon Dilation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>003</td>
<td>Coronary artery bypass graft</td>
<td>1 (within 30 days)</td>
<td>Coronary artery bypass graft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>068</td>
<td>Correction of bat ears</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Correction of bat ears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>074</td>
<td>Correction of cleft lip/palate</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Correction of cleft lip/palate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>Correction of ectropian</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Correction of ectropian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151</td>
<td>Correction of uretero-pelvic junction</td>
<td>2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Correction of uretero-pelvic junction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>Craniectomy</td>
<td>2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Craniectomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>Craniotomy</td>
<td>2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Craniotomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143</td>
<td>Cystectomy</td>
<td>1 (within 30 days or 2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Cystectomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>004</td>
<td>Cystoscopy</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days) or 4 (staged)</td>
<td>Cystoscopy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>118</td>
<td>Dacrocystorrhinostomy</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Dacrocystorrhinostomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>043</td>
<td>Diagnostic laparoscopy</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Diagnostic laparoscopy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>093</td>
<td>Diathermy of warts</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Diathermy of warts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Dilatation and curettage</td>
<td>2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Dilatation and curettage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>026</td>
<td>Dilation of oesophagus</td>
<td>2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Dilation of oesophagus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>055</td>
<td>Dilation of urethra</td>
<td>2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Dilation of urethra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>039</td>
<td>Diskectomy</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Diskectomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>Drainage of Bartholin’s cyst</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Drainage of Bartholin’s cyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>Drainage of sub-dural haematoma</td>
<td>2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Drainage of sub-dural haematoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>057</td>
<td>Endarterectomy</td>
<td>1 (within 30 days)</td>
<td>Endarterectomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>049</td>
<td>Endometrial ablation</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Endometrial ablation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>088</td>
<td>Endoscopy - ERCP</td>
<td>1 (within 30 days) or 2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Endoscopy - ERCP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>022</td>
<td>Endoscopy - small intestine</td>
<td>2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Endoscopy - small intestine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>063</td>
<td>Ethmoidectomy</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Ethmoidectomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>116</td>
<td>Examination of eye under anaesthesia</td>
<td>2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Examination of eye under anaesthesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>077</td>
<td>Excision lesion of pharynx</td>
<td>2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Excision lesion of pharynx</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Generally, malignancy will be considered to require treatment within 30 days.
## Reference List - Clinical Priority Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IPC</th>
<th>Procedure*</th>
<th>Recommended Clinical Priority Category</th>
<th>IPC List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>080</td>
<td>Excision of anal fissure</td>
<td>2 (within 90 days) or 3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Excision of anal fissure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>084</td>
<td>Excision of breast lump</td>
<td>1 (within 30 days) or 2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Excision of breast lump</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>Excision of chalazion</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Excision of chalazion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>086</td>
<td>Excision of ganglion</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Excision of ganglion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>208</td>
<td>Excision of Lipoma +/-Grafting</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Excision of Lipoma +/-Grafting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>207</td>
<td>Excision of Melanoma +/- Grafting</td>
<td>1 (within 30 days)</td>
<td>Excision of Melanoma/SCC/BCC/+/- Grafting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>207</td>
<td>Excision of SCC +/- Grafting</td>
<td>1 (within 30 days)</td>
<td>Excision of Melanoma/SCC/BCC/+/- Grafting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>207</td>
<td>Excision of BCC +/- Grafting</td>
<td>1 (within 30 days) or 2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Excision of Melanoma/SCC/BCC/+/- Grafting</td>
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<td>Excision of ovarian cyst</td>
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<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>Excision of pterygium</td>
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<td>045</td>
<td>Female sterilisation</td>
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<td>Femoral herniorrhaphy</td>
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<tr>
<td>154</td>
<td>Femoro-popliteal bypass graft</td>
<td>1 (within 30 days) or 2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Femoro-popliteal bypass graft</td>
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<tr>
<td>179</td>
<td>Foreign body - removal (non-emergency)</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Foreign body - removal</td>
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<tr>
<td>031</td>
<td>Freeing abdominal adhesions</td>
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<td>Freeing abdominal adhesions</td>
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<tr>
<td>185</td>
<td>Functional Endoscopic sinus surgery (FESS)</td>
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<td>Functional endoscopic sinus surgery (FESS)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Fundoplication</td>
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<td>Gastrectomy</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Gastroscopy (Haemorrhage or Upper GI Cancer)</td>
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<td>Gastroscopy (other)</td>
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<td>Haemorrhoidectomy/Banding of Haemorrhoids</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Haemorrhoidectomy/Banding of Haemorrhoids</td>
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<tr>
<td>198</td>
<td>Hammertoe – correction/repair</td>
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<tr>
<td>018</td>
<td>Heart valve replacement</td>
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<tr>
<td>177</td>
<td>Hernia - epigastric, repair</td>
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<td>Hernia - epigastric</td>
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</tbody>
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* Generally, malignancy will be considered to require treatment within 30 days.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IPC</th>
<th>Procedure*</th>
<th>Recommended Clinical Priority Category</th>
<th>IPC List</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>174</td>
<td>Hypospadias repair</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Hysterectomy</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Hysterectomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>044</td>
<td>Hysteroscopy</td>
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<td>Insertion of Levovorgestrel intra uterine system</td>
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<td>Insertion of Levonorgestrel intra uterine system</td>
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<td>096</td>
<td>Insertion of hepatic artery catheter</td>
<td>1 (within 30 days)</td>
<td>Insertion of hepatic artery catheter</td>
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<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>Insertion of ureteric stent</td>
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<td>Insertion of ureteric stent</td>
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<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>Insertion of ventricular shunt</td>
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<td>Insertion P.E. tubes (grommets)</td>
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<td>Insertion P.E. tubes (grommets)</td>
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<td>Insufflation of fallopian tube (Rubin’s test)</td>
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<td>199</td>
<td>Joint replacement eg. shoulder (other than hip &amp; knee)</td>
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<td>Joint replacement eg. shoulder (other than hip &amp; knee)</td>
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<td>Laminectomy/Other Spinal Surgery (excluding fusion and diskectomy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>072</td>
<td>Laryngectomy</td>
<td>1 (within 30 days)</td>
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<tr>
<td>056</td>
<td>Lithotripsy</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>216</td>
<td>Lobectomy any organ/lung</td>
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<td>Lobectomy any organ/ Lung</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Lymph node - excision</td>
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<td>Mandibulectomy/hemi-mandibulectomy</td>
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<td>Mandibulectomy/hemi-mandibulectomy</td>
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<td>195</td>
<td>Manipulation under Anaesthetic</td>
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<td>Manipulation under anaesthetic</td>
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<td>Mastectomy</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Mastoidectomy</td>
<td>2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Mastoidectomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>140</td>
<td>Urethoplasty (urinary)</td>
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<td>Urethoplasty (urinary)</td>
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<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td>Menisectomy (knee)</td>
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<td>Menisectomy (knee)</td>
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</table>

* Generally, malignancy will be considered to require treatment within 30 days.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IPC</th>
<th>Procedure*</th>
<th>Recommended Clinical Priority Category</th>
<th>IPC List</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>064</td>
<td>Microlaryngoscopy</td>
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<tr>
<td>050</td>
<td>Myomectomy</td>
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<td>Myomectomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>008</td>
<td>Myringoplasty/Tympanoplasty</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Myringoplasty/Tympanoplasty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>009</td>
<td>Myringotomy</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Myringotomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>217</td>
<td>Nasendoscopy</td>
<td>2 (within 90 days)</td>
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<tr>
<td>069</td>
<td>Nasal cautery</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Nasal cautery</td>
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<tr>
<td>032</td>
<td>Nasal polypectomy</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Nasal polypectomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>141</td>
<td>Nephrectomy</td>
<td>1 (within 30 days or 2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Nephrectomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>191</td>
<td>Nerve decompression/release</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Nerve decompression/release</td>
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<tr>
<td>139</td>
<td>Orchidectomy</td>
<td>2 (within 90 days) or 3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Orchidectomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>138</td>
<td>Orchidopexy</td>
<td>2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Orchidopexy</td>
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<tr>
<td>193</td>
<td>Osteotomy – ankle/foot/arm/facial</td>
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<td>Osteotomy - ankle/foot/arm/facial</td>
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<tr>
<td>194</td>
<td>Osteotomy – hip/femur/tibia/shoulder</td>
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<td>Osteotomy - hip/femur/tibia/shoulder</td>
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<td>Parotidectomy/Submandibular gland - excision</td>
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<td>Parotidectomy/Submandibular gland - excision</td>
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<td>187</td>
<td>Pharyngoplasty</td>
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<td>Pleurodesis</td>
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<td>Probing of naso-lacrimal duct</td>
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<td>Prostatectomy (TURP or open prostatectomy)</td>
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<td>Prostatectomy/open/TURP</td>
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<td>Prostatic biopsy</td>
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<td>Prostatic biopsy</td>
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<td>183</td>
<td>Ptosis - repair, correction</td>
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<td>Ptosis - repair</td>
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<td>059</td>
<td>Pulmonary artery shunt</td>
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<td>Pulmonary artery shunt</td>
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<td>145</td>
<td>Pyeloplasty</td>
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<td>Pylorotomy</td>
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<td>133</td>
<td>Radical neck dissection</td>
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<td>201</td>
<td>Reconstruction of shoulder</td>
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<td>Reconstruction of shoulder</td>
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<tr>
<td>131</td>
<td>Reduction of fractured orbit</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Reduction of fractured orbit</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Generally, malignancy will be considered to require treatment within 30 days.
# Reference List – Clinical Priority Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IPC</th>
<th>Procedure*</th>
<th>Recommended Clinical Priority Category</th>
<th>IPC List</th>
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<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>Reduction of fractured zygoma</td>
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<tr>
<td>149</td>
<td>Reimplantation of ureters</td>
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<td>Reimplantation of ureters</td>
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<td>Release of carpal tunnel</td>
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<tr>
<td>127</td>
<td>Release of clubfoot</td>
<td>2 (within 90 days) or 4 (staged)</td>
<td>Release of clubfoot</td>
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<tr>
<td>076</td>
<td>Release of tongue tie</td>
<td>3 (within 365 days)</td>
<td>Release of tongue tie</td>
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<td>132</td>
<td>Removal of breast implants</td>
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<td>Removal of breast implants</td>
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<td>041</td>
<td>Removal of bunion (hallux valgus; hallux abducto valgus)</td>
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<td>Removal of bunion Hallux valgus; hallux abducto valgus</td>
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<td>Removal of skin lesions</td>
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<td>Removal of skin lesions (other)</td>
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<td>Removal of stone from urinary tract</td>
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<td>Repair atrial-septal defect</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Repair of cystocele, rectocele</td>
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<td>Repair of Dupuytren’s contracture/ faciectomy/Palmar fasciectomy</td>
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<td>Repair of exostosis</td>
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<td>Repair of rotator cuff</td>
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<td>Repair of squint</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Repair patent ductus arteriosi</td>
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</table>

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### Reference List - Clinical Priority Categories

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<th>IPC</th>
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<th>IPC List</th>
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<td>Replacement/removal of ventricular shunt</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Salpingo-opherectomy/Oopherectomy</td>
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<td>Septoplasty</td>
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<td>Skin Grafts, including Split Skin Graft</td>
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<td>Sub-mucosal resection/ Nasal</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Trial of voiding</td>
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<td>Trial of voiding</td>
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<td>Trigger finger/thumb - repair</td>
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<td>Vitrectomy (including buckling/cryotherapy)</td>
<td>2 (within 90 days)</td>
<td>Vitrectomy (inc buckling/cryotherapy)</td>
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</table>

* Generally, malignancy will be considered to require treatment within 30 days.
Appendix 3

Completion of Recommendation for Admission Form (RFA)

The following minimum data set on the Recommendation for Admission Form (RFA) is to be obtained by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referring Doctor</th>
<th>Admission/Booking Staff</th>
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<td>• Patient’s full name</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Patient’s address</td>
<td>• Anticipated election status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Patient’s contact information (home, work &amp; mobile telephone)</td>
<td>• Status review date (staged patients)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Patient’s gender</td>
<td>• Short notice/Standy offers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Patient’s date of birth</td>
<td>• Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander Status (NSW Health Data Dictionary)</td>
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<td>• Medicare number</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clinical Priority Category</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If classified as staged, the time interval when the patient will be ready for care should be indicated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discharge intention (i.e. day only, or indication of number of nights in hospital)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Presenting problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Planned procedure/treatment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Significant medical history (including allergies)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Treating Doctor (if different)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Patient’s signed consent (if available)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• General Practitioner’s name and address (if available)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interpreter required</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any other relevant information should be included on the RFA e.g.
  • Estimated operating time (especially if expected that the procedure will be outside benchmark timeframes)
  • Specific preadmission requirements
  • Special operating theatre equipment
  • Requirement for an ICU/HDU bed post procedure

The referring doctor must:
  • Forward the completed RFA direct to the hospital within 3 working days of the patient agreeing to the proposed procedure/treatment (via the most relevant means e.g. mail, hand delivery, by patient or carer)
  • Facsimiles (fax) RFA’s should not be routinely used and only be accepted for urgent admissions where there is limited time to send a hard copy. An RFA (hardcopy) is to follow as soon as possible.
  • Where patients require additional time to consider their options, the referring doctor must organise for the completed RFA to be forwarded within 3 working days of the patient’s acceptance of the surgical option
  • Expedite the transmission of RFA’s for any urgent admissions e.g. patients in Category 1 (admission within 30 days)
  • Where an urgent admission is requested, a facsimile can be used to communicate the information required and expedite receipt of the required information from the referring doctor’s rooms or clinic

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Appendix 4

Cosmetic & Discretionary Surgery - Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

Surgery should meet an identified clinical need to improve the physical health of the patient.

- The approval of the Local Health District/Network Program Director of Surgery, in consultation with senior management should be sought by the referring doctor before cosmetic and discretionary procedures are undertaken in any public hospital facility.
- The referring doctor should document on the Request for Admission form, at the time a patient is referred, objective medical criteria supporting the decision for surgery for all procedures that may be considered cosmetic or discretionary. This requirement supports appropriate documentation of clinical decision-making and the review process.
- For procedures not appearing on the list below or where there is doubt about the nature of the proposed surgery, the request should be referred to the Local Health District/Network Program Director of Surgery for review prior to the patient being added to the waiting list.
- The patient should be advised when the Recommendation for Admission is going through the approval process.

The following list of surgical procedures should not routinely be performed in public hospitals in NSW unless there is a clear clinical need to improve a patient’s physical health.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cosmetic Procedure</th>
<th>Exception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bilateral breast reduction</td>
<td>Severe Disability due to breast size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilateral breast augmentation</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replacement breast prosthesis</td>
<td>Replacement for post cancer patients only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair transplant</td>
<td>Disfiguring Hair loss due to Severe Burn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blepharoplasty/Reduction of upper or lower eyelid</td>
<td>Severe Visual Impairment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total rhinoplasty</td>
<td>Major Facial Trauma - Congenital abnormality – paediatrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liposuction</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdominal lipectomy (Abdominoplasty)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meloplasty/Facelifts</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correction of bat ear (&gt;16 years old)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tattoo removal procedure</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal of benign moles</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candela Laser</td>
<td>Congenital abnormality – paediatrics &lt;17 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varicose Veins</td>
<td>CEAPGrade &gt; C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laser photocoagulation</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discretionary Procedure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender reassignment surgery</th>
<th>Exception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lengthening of penis procedure</td>
<td>Congenital abnormalities in children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insertion of artificial erection devices</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reversal of sterilization</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social circumcision</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TMJ Arthrocentesis</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labioplasty</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5

NHMRC Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Prevention, Early Detection and Management of Colorectal Cancer (2005)

Post Adenoma Resection Colonoscopy Surveillance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding at index colonoscopy</th>
<th>Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 or less tubular adenomas &lt;10mms.</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large adenomas ≥ 10 mms.</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced adenoma - high grade dysplasia/villous component.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 or more adenomas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malignant polyps.</td>
<td>Clinician discretion for 1st surveillance (recommend within 3 months), then standard follow up as per guideline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piecemeal resection of large sessile polyps (&gt;2 cms) with possible incomplete excision.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Family History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding</th>
<th>Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st degree relative affected with colorectal cancer (CRC) Age &lt;55.</td>
<td>Every 5 years from age 50.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two 1st degree relatives or 2nd degree relatives on same side of family with CRC.</td>
<td>10 years younger than youngest affected relative and then 5 yearly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more 1st degree relatives on same side of the family with CRC (suspect hereditary nonpolyposis colorectal cancer (HNPCC)).</td>
<td>Yearly or 2nd yearly from age 25 or 5 years younger than earliest CRC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more 1st or 2nd degree relatives on the same side of the family with CRC and high risk features.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Multiple CRC in one person.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o CRC diagnosed age &lt;50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o At least one relative with endometrial or ovarian cancer (suspect HNPCC).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Post Curative Resection for Colorectal Cancer

- Complete examination of the colon either pre-operatively or within 1 year of curative surgery.
- Subsequent colonoscopy at 3 years and if normal 5 yearly.

Hereditary Non Polyposis Colorectal Cancer (HNPCC)

- Positive mismatch repair (MMR) gene mutation Yearly from age 25 or 5 years younger than earliest CRC
VERIFICATION OF DEATH AND MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF CAUSE OF DEATH (PD2020_011)

PD2020_011 rescinds PD2015_040

POLICY STATEMENT

NSW Health organisations must ensure that staff are aware of, and comply with these procedures when assessing and documenting Verification of Death and when issuing a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death.

SUMMARY OF POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Verification of Death

Verification of Death is a clinical assessment to establish that a person has died. This is done by demonstrating all of the following:

- No palpable carotid pulse, and
- No heart sounds heard for a minimum of 3 minutes, and
- No breath sounds heard for 3 minutes, and
- Fixed and dilated pupils, and
- No response to centralised stimulus, and
- No motor (withdrawal) response or facial grimace in response to painful stimulus.

A medical practitioner must conduct the verification of death assessment. In cases where there is no medical practitioner available to verify death, registered nurses, registered midwives and qualified paramedics can do so. The Verification of Death form attached to this Policy Directive must be used.

Qualified paramedics must only verify death as outlined in NSW Ambulance Protocol A13 Verification of Death.

Where a body is transported to a NSW Health facility for Verification of Death assessment, a medical practitioner, registered nurse or registered midwife can assess death and complete the Verification of Death form. The Coroner will issue a death certificate in such cases.

In situations where the person has injuries incompatible with life or has been deceased for some time, the death is considered obvious and no clinical assessment is required.

Medical Certificate of Cause of Death

The medical practitioner who was responsible for a person’s medical care immediately before death, or who examines the body of a deceased person after death must, within 48 hours of the death, notify the Registrar of the Registry of Births, Death & Marriages using the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death Form. The contact details of the medical practitioner who will complete the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death Form must be included in the Verification of Death form to ensure this occurs.

In situations where it is necessary for a funeral director or government contractor to transport the body of a deceased person to a NSW Health facility for completion of the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death and the name of the medical practitioner who will complete the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death form is not known, the registered nurse/registered midwife may write “transfer to <name of NSW Health facility>” in the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death section on the Verification of Death form.

A medical practitioner is to only certify the cause of death if a diagnosis of cause of death can be made. If the medical practitioner is unable to ascertain the cause of death, the matter must be referred to the Coroner.

Training must be provided to relevant staff regarding assessment and documentation of death (available via MyHealth Learning).
Verification of Death and Medical Certificate of Cause of Death: Procedures

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 About this document

This Policy Directive outlines the process for the assessment and documentation to verify death (previously referred as extinction of life), and the medical certification of death of patients within the NSW Health system. It describes the roles of medical practitioners, registered nurses / registered midwives and qualified paramedics employed by NSW Health in relation to assessment and documentation when patients die within the NSW Health system.

Medical practitioners must comply with the death certificate requirements outlined in *Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995*.

This Policy Directive does not apply to the Justice and Forensic Mental Health Network.

NSW Ambulance staff may only verify death in accordance with NSW Ambulance Protocol A13 *Verification of Death*.

This Policy supports registered nurses and registered midwives to verify death across practice settings. The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) advises that “the extent of a nurse or midwife’s scope of practice is determined by the individual’s education, training and competence. The extent of an individual’s scope of practice is then authorised in the practice setting by the employer’s organisational policies and requirements.” [1]

All staff must comply with the legislative requirements in the *Coroner’s Act 2009* regarding the certification of death.

1.2 Key definitions

**Verification of Death**
A clinical assessment process undertaken to establish that a person has died.

**Medical Certificate of Cause of Death**
The Medical Certificate of Cause of Death is the form issued by the Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages in which a medical practitioner notifies the Registrar, Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages of a death and the cause of that death, pursuant to legislative requirements in Section 39 of the *Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995*.

**Notification of deaths by medical practitioners to the Registrar at the Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages**: a requirement of the medical practitioner who was responsible for a person’s medical care immediately before death, or who examines the body of a deceased person after death under the *Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995*. For further details please see Section 2.2.

Intention to complete and sign a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death: In circumstances where there may be a delay in completion of the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death by a medical practitioner, it may be appropriate following verification of death by a registered nurse.

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[1] Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia Fact Sheet, Context of practice for registered nurses and midwives 2015
12. MEDICAL CARE

**Intention to complete and sign a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death:** In circumstances where there may be a delay in completion of the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death by a medical practitioner, it may be appropriate following verification of death by a registered nurse/registered midwife or qualified paramedic, for a medical practitioner to provide a notice of intention to complete a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death which will allow a funeral director to remove the body. The certification as to the cause of death must take place within 48 hours of the death.

**Public health organisation**
A public health organisation is defined in Section 7 of the Health Services Act 1997 as:
- A local health district and specialty health network, or
- A statutory health corporation, or
- An affiliated health organisation in respect of its recognised establishments and recognised services.

1.3 Legal and legislative framework
NSW legislation relevant to this Policy Directive:
- *Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995*
- *Coroners Act 2009*
- *Human Tissue Act 1983*
- *Health Services Act 1997.*

1.4 Policy framework
NSW Health policy documents relevant to this Policy Directive:
- *Coroners Cases and the Coroners Act 2009* (PD2010_054)
- *Deceased Organ and Tissue Donation - Consent and Other Procedural Requirements* (PD2020_012)
- *Conduct of Anatomical Examinations and Anatomy Licensing in NSW* (PD2011_052)

1.5 NSW State Forms
NSW Health State Forms relevant to this Policy Directive:
- Attending Practitioners Cremation Certificate (*Public Health Regulation, 2012, Clause 81*)
- Medical Certificate of Cause of Death
- IB2010_058 Coronial Checklist
- Verification of Death
- Death Certification Arrangements for Expected Home Death (SMR010531)

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2 DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS WHEN A PATIENT DIES

2.1 Reporting a death to the Coroner

To determine if a death should be reported to the coroner refer to the Coronal Checklist in IB2010_058. The Coronal Checklist includes details of how to seek advice where there is uncertainty.

Nursing, midwifery and medical staff managing cases reportable to the Coroner should follow the steps outlined in the NSW Health Policy Coroner’s Cases and the Coroners Act (PD2010_054). For deaths reportable to the Coroner, verification of death (extinction of life) is documented within Report of a Death of a Patient to the Coroner (Form A). No additional documentation relating to death is required.

It is advisable to seek advice from the Coroner regarding the mandatory reporting of deaths which fall within the requirements of Section 24 of the Coroners Act 2009 which covers jurisdiction concerning deaths of children and disabled persons.

2.2 Medical certification of death

2.2.1 Legal responsibilities of medical practitioners

Death certificates certify the facts and circumstances of the death of a person. Under the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995 the medical practitioner who was responsible for a person’s medical care immediately before death, or who examines the body of a deceased person after death, must, within 48 hours of the death:

a) “Give the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, notice of the death and cause of death, and

b) If the medical practitioner is of the opinion that it is impracticable or undesirable to give notice of the cause of death of the person within that time, give the Registrar notice of the death, and of the medical practitioner’s intention to sign a death certificate with the cause of death notified as soon as possible after that.”

In NSW public health organisations, the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death Form must be used to give notice of death. This form asks for the date of death or range of dates where the exact date is not known.

A medical practitioner cannot give notice based on review of medical records only. The body must be viewed, or, the medical practitioner must have been treating the person prior to death.

If another medical practitioner has given notice, or the death has been reported to the Coroner under the Coroners Act 2009, a medical practitioner is not required to give repeat notice of death to the Registrar. A medical practitioner should only certify the cause of death if a diagnosis of cause of death can be made. If the cause of death is uncertain, reasonable steps should be taken to obtain sufficient information to enable the medical practitioner to determine the cause of death. Reasonable steps would include reviewing the medical record or contacting other health professionals involved in the recent care of the deceased person.

If the medical practitioner is unable to ascertain the cause of death the matter should be referred to the Coroner.

If the medical practitioner is a relative of the deceased, they should not complete the certificate unless they are the only medical practitioner in a remote area. Medical practitioners should also disclose any property, pecuniary or other benefit(s) that they anticipate acquiring from the death.

Notification of death certificates may be requested from the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages phone 1300 655 236.
2.2.2 Responsibilities for certification of death in NSW Health facilities
When a patient dies in a public health facility where there are medical practitioners on site, it is preferable that a medical practitioner conducts the verification of death assessment. If verification of death is completed by another health professional, a medical practitioner is to certify the death as soon as practicable. In the case of facilities where there is not 24-hour medical coverage, the medical practitioner should certify death at the commencement of duties. Only a medical practitioner can complete the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death.

2.3 Verification of Death
2.3.1 Roles of medical practitioners, registered nurses, registered midwives and qualified paramedics
A medical practitioner must conduct the verification of death assessment in situations where medical tests are required to declare death (for example, prior to organ donation).

In all other cases, where there is no medical practitioner available to verify death, registered nurses, registered midwives and qualified paramedics can do so. Qualified paramedics must only verify death as outlined in NSW Ambulance Protocol A13 Verification of Death.

2.3.2 Clinical procedure for verifying death
This is done by demonstrating all of the following:
- No palpable carotid pulse, and
- No heart sounds heard for a minimum of 3 minutes, and
- No breath sounds heard for 3 minutes, and
- Fixed and dilated pupils, and
- No response to centralised stimulus, and
- No motor (withdrawal) response or facial grimace in response to painful stimulus.

No response to centralised stimulus may be assessed by trapezius muscle squeeze, supraorbital pressure or sternal rub. No motor (withdrawal) response or facial grimace in response to painful stimulus would be assessed by pinching the inner aspect of the elbow. In cases of expected deaths at home, it may be reasonable not to complete these two tests if the person has been deceased for some time and there is the potential to distress relatives who are present. In such cases, all other criteria for the verification of death assessment must be undertaken. Any decision not to assess response to painful stimulus should be briefly documented on the form.

Where a verification of death assessment has been undertaken and the practitioner is not certain if the person is deceased, they should seek the opinion of a second health professional. In a hospital setting, a medical practitioner should be called, if available. In the case of a registered nurse attending an expected death in a community setting, it is reasonable for the attending nurse to wait and repeat the verification of death assessment after a clinically appropriate time period has elapsed. A second opinion may be sought from a qualified paramedic by calling an ambulance if necessary.

Note that a different clinical procedure is conducted when a patient is certified dead for the purpose of organ donation. Such an assessment is conducted according to the NSW Health Guideline Organ Donation After Circulatory Death: NSW Guidelines (GL2020_007).

In situations where the person has injuries incompatible with life (e.g. decapitation, severe incineration or extensive trauma), or has been deceased for some time (as evidenced by rigor mortis, dependent lividity or tissue decomposition), the death is considered obvious and no clinical assessment is required. This situation is most likely to occur when a body is brought to a hospital by a government contractor (see Section 2.4).
2.3.3 Documentation

Registered nurses / registered midwives who are assessing and documenting death must use the Statewide Verification of Death form available at https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/patients/ACP/Pages/policy-and-guidelines.aspx. The original form is provided to the funeral director and the copy is kept in the health care record.

In remote sites, in situations where it is necessary for a funeral director or government contractor to transport the body of a deceased person to a NSW Health facility for completion of the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death and the name of the medical practitioner who will complete the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death is not known at the time the Verification of Death form is being completed, the registered nurse or registered midwife may write “transfer to <name of NSW Health facility>” in the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death section on the Verification of Death form. Local procedures must be in place to ensure that the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death is completed within 48 hours of the death.

Qualified paramedics should provide the funeral director with the Verification of Death form and record details of the clinical procedure to verify death in the NSW Ambulance clinical record.

2.3.4 Tissue or body donation for deaths outside a health facility

Tissue and body donation may be relevant for some deaths outside of a health facility.

**Tissue Donation**

A potential donor of tissue for corneal, musculoskeletal and cardiac tissue (heart valve) transplantation is a deceased person for whom retrieval is possible within 24 hours after death. In order to provide opportunities for families / carers to support the donation of tissues for transplantation, the staff member who verifies the death should sensitively inquire whether the deceased had indicated their wish to be a tissue donor. If so, they should prompt the family / carer to contact the NSW Tissue Bank via the Lions NSW Eye Bank on (02) 9382 7288 (24 hours a day) to notify them of the death. For more information see the NSW Health Policy Deceased Organ and Tissue Donation- Consent and Other Procedural Requirements (PD2020_012).

**Donation of Bodies to a School of Anatomy / Medical Science**

The deceased person may have decided in their lifetime to donate their body after death to a School of Anatomy for the purposes of anatomical examination and medical research and will usually have completed a consent form during their lifetime to document this decision. Again, the family / carer should be prompted to contact the relevant School of Anatomy body donation program to notify them of the potential donor’s death and to make arrangements for the transfer of the body. Further information is available in the NSW Health Policy Conduct of Anatomical Examinations and Anatomy Licensing in NSW: Procedures and Guidelines (PD2011_052).

2.3.5 Medical certification following Verification of Death

A medical practitioner must complete the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death within 48 hours of death. The contact details of the medical practitioner who will complete the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death should be included in the Verification of Death form to ensure this occurs.

For patients cared for at home where death is anticipated (e.g. patients known to NSW Health palliative care and affiliated or contracted palliative care services or hospital in the home patients with a resuscitation plan in place), it is recommended that there is agreement in advance on who will complete the medical certification of death. In such cases, the patient’s general practitioner may agree to this responsibility (see Section 2.5).
2.4 Bodies transported for Verification of Death assessment by government contractors (individuals not under the care of NSW Health at the time of death)

In some circumstances, a body may be transported by a government contractor, Ambulance or the Police to a hospital for Verification of Death. If a qualified paramedic is involved in the case prior to a decision to transport the body, it is recommended that they complete the *Verification of Death* form as outlined in Section 2.3. This will assist with transfer of the body to a more suitable location.

Where a qualified paramedic is not involved and the body is transported to a hospital for Verification of Death, a medical practitioner, registered nurse or registered midwife can assess death and complete the *Verification of Death* form. The Coroner will issue a death certificate in such cases. A copy of the signed *Verification of Death* form does not need to be provided to the Police.

2.5 Optional considerations for expected home deaths in regional and rural settings

Within regional and rural settings, there may be specific challenges in organising a medical practitioner to complete the *Medical Certificate of Cause of Death* due to greater distances involved and limited medical workforce. Local Health Districts may elect to put in place local policy and / or procedures to designate the medical practitioner responsible for completing the *Medical Certificate of Cause of Death* in advance of an expected death. This approach is encouraged by the State Coroner. Local procedure or policy development should involve consultation with primary care providers, funeral directors and potentially the Police and Coroner.

In many cases the patient’s general practitioner will be a key part of the healthcare team for patients approaching and reaching the end of their lives who choose to be cared for and die at home. It is recommended that general practitioners are involved in discussions about planning for completion of the *Medical Certificate of Cause of Death* as part of care planning. In many cases these discussions will be recorded in the patient’s health record, however some Local Health Districts and Specialty Health Networks may elect to formalise the agreement. To assist with formalising this process, a model *Death Certification Arrangements for Expected Home Death* form (Attachment 2) has been developed and endorsed by the NSW Health State Forms Management Committee. Use of this form is encouraged, but not mandated where Local Health Districts and Specialty Health Networks have elected to develop a process for managing expected deaths in this way.

3 LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

1. Flowchart: Roles and responsibilities for documentation when a patient dies within the NSW Health system
2. Statewide Death Certification Arrangements for Expected Home Death form - (optional)
3.1 Roles and responsibilities for documentation when a patient dies within the NSW Health system

- **Patient dies within the NSW Health system**

  - **Is there uncertainty that the patient has died? Are medical tests required to determine death?**
    - **No**
    - **Yes**

  - **Does the death require reporting to the Coroner?**
    - **Yes**
    - **No**

    - **A medical practitioner** should clinically verify death and determine appropriate next steps.

  - **Did the death occur in a public health facility where there are medical practitioners on site?**
    - **Yes**
    - **No**

    - **Report death to the Coroner as per PD2010_054.**
      - Verification of Death (Extinction of life) is completed within Report of a Death of a Patient to the Coroner (Form A). This form is preferably completed by a **medical practitioner**, but can be completed by a **registered nurse** using the clinical standard described in this PD. **Medical Certificate of Cause of Death** is not immediately issued in this case.

    - **Registered nurses/midwives** can assess patients and complete the Verification of Death form.
      - **Qualified paramedics** can assess patients and complete the Verification of Death form as per NSW Ambulance Protocol A13 Verification of Death.
      - In both cases, a **medical practitioner** must complete the **Medical Certificate of Cause of Death** within 48 hours of death.

    - **Medical practitioner** to assess patient and complete **Medical Certificate of Cause of Death**.
      - If no medical practitioner is available, a **registered nurse/midwife** can assess the patient and complete the Verification of Death form. In this case, a **medical practitioner** must complete the **Medical Certificate of Cause of Death** within 48 hours of death.
3.2 Death Certification Arrangements for Expected Home Death

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAMILY NAME</th>
<th>MRN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GIVEN NAME</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Facility: ____________________________

D.O.B. _____ / _____ / _____

M.O. ____________________________

DEATH CERTIFICATION ARRANGEMENTS FOR EXPECTED HOME DEATH

LOCATION / YARD ____________________________

COMPLETE ALL DETAILS OR AFFIX PATIENT LABEL HERE

PURPOSE:

This form is recommended for use where Local Health Districts / Specialty Health Networks have put in place local policy and/or procedures to designate the medical practitioner responsible for completing the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) in advance of an expected home death. This form will assist with timely removal of the body from the patient’s home and give certainty about who will complete the MCCD.

- The first section of the form is for completion by Local Health District / Specialty Health Network staff.
- The second section of the form is for completion by the GP or medical practitioner who agrees to complete the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death within 48 hours of the patient death. The GP or medical practitioner should return this form to the requesting service as soon as possible.

FOR COMPLETION BY REQUESTING SERVICE

Patient details

Family name: ____________________________

Given name(s): ____________________________

DOB: ______ / ______ / ______

Phone: ____________________________

Address: ____________________________

Patient Contact Person: ____________________________

Relationship: ____________________________

Palliative or Life-limiting Diagnosis: ____________________________

Palliative Care Phase: □ Deteriorating □ Terminal

Details of requesting service:

□ Specialised Palliative Care Service □ Community Health □ Aged Care □ Multiservice (MPS)

Staff member requesting form: Print Full Name: ____________________________

Signature: ____________________________

Designation: ____________________________

Date: ____________________________

Organisation: ____________________________

Phone: ____________________________

FOR COMPLETION BY GP OR MEDICAL PRACTITIONER WHO ACCEPTS RESPONSIBILITY TO COMPLETE MCCD FOR EXPECTED HOME DEATH

Will you make yourself available at the time of the patient’s death to view the body and complete MCCD?

□ Yes □ No

Comment: ____________________________

Can you be contacted after hours? □ Yes □ No

If No, are you prepared to provide a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) to the Funeral Director within 48 hours if the death is not a reportable death under the Coroners Act 2009?

□ Yes □ No

GP/Medical Practitioner’s details:

A/H or Mobile No (if available): ____________________________

Surgery Ph: ____________________________

Print Full Name: ____________________________

Signature: ____________________________

Date: ____________________________

ON COMPLETION, RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO:

Contact person/service: ____________________________

FAX: ____________________________ or EMAIL: ____________________________
WILL MAKING IN PUBLIC HEALTH FACILITIES (IB2018_002)

IB2018_002 rescinds IB2014_022

PURPOSE

This Information Bulletin provides information to NSW Health staff in health facilities where patients wish to make a last Will and Testimony.

KEY INFORMATION

Generally, the issue of the making of a Will may be raised by a patient or relative, particularly where the patient is elderly, has been hospitalised for a long period of time, or is facing death.

Staff should not generally canvass the issue of Wills except in extreme circumstances.

Under no circumstances should a staff member be involved in the preparation of a patient’s Will or attempt to exert influence in regard to the terms of a patient’s Will.

If nominated as the executor of a Will, a staff member should decline the appointment.

Staff involvement in this process overall is to be minimal as in accordance with the following requirements:

1. Where a patient in a public health facility wishes to make a Will, determine if the patient’s affairs are managed by the NSW Trustee & Guardian.
2. If the patient’s affairs are managed by the NSW Trustee & Guardian, further inquiries and actions should be handled by the responsible estate manager/guardian via the NSW Trustee and Guardian, with the appropriate consent of the patient and/or their guardian or “authorised representative”, as defined in the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (and documented in the health record).
3. Where the patient’s affairs are not managed by the NSW Trustee & Guardian, staff should make inquiries as to whether there is a Will already in existence. This may be done by asking the patient, checking the patient health record and/or contacting family members with the patient’s consent, as appropriate.
4. If a Will exists then contact should be made with the solicitor holding the Will and the matter handed over to that person with the patient’s consent as appropriate.
5. Where a patient’s affairs are not managed by the NSW Trustee & Guardian and there is no knowledge of an existing Will, the patient should be advised or assisted to contact his/her family solicitor or a solicitor of their choice.
6. If there is no solicitor known to the patient, the staff member can assist the patient in contacting the NSW Trustee & Guardian. The NSW Trustee and Guardian provides professional and independent trustee services writing Wills, acting as Executor in deceased estates, administering trusts and Powers of Attorney and delivering financial management services; or
7. The Law Society of NSW can provide a list of local solicitors for the particular geographical area, experienced in the field of the making of Wills and for providing legal advice, from which the patient may then choose a solicitor. It is not the role of staff to recommend a specific solicitor to the patient.
8. Once a solicitor has been nominated or chosen by the patient further inquiries and procedures relating to the making of the Will are to be handled by the nominated solicitor.

9. All staff contact with the NSW Trustee and Guardian, the patient’s guardian, solicitors or family members regarding a patient’s Will, should be documented in the patient’s health record.

10. It is not the role of staff to establish testamentary capacity. However, where there is a reasonable likelihood that a patient’s treatment or condition may impact on their testamentary capacity and where the patient (or where necessary, the patient’s authorised representative) provides written consent, staff may provide relevant health information to the patient’s nominated solicitor.

11. In circumstances where a staff member is aware that a patient has a Will being managed by the NSW Trustee and Guardian and the patient wants to make another Will without consulting the NSW Trustee and Guardian, the staff member should consider contacting the patient’s manager/guardian at the Office of the NSW Trustee and Guardian. If a decision is made to contact the Office of the NSW Trustee and Guardian, this should be done in consultation with the patient and the Nursing Unit Manager and/or treating clinician and appropriately documented in the patient’s health record.

**CONTACT DETAILS**

NSW Trustee & Guardian  
Phone: 1300 364 103 – Trustee Services  
1300 360 466 – Managed Clients

The Law Society of NSW  
Phone: (02) 9926 0300 or 1800 422 713 – Outside Sydney.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO:**

1. NSW Trustee & Guardian - Trustee and Managed Client Services  

2. The Law Society of NSW – Finding a solicitor:  
ADVERTISING LEGAL SERVICES (IB2015_066)

IB2015_066 rescinds IB2013_060

PURPOSE

This Information Bulletin sets out changes in legislation relating to the advertising of personal injury legal services.

KEY INFORMATION

The prohibition on the advertising of personal injury legal services in NSW that was referred to in Information Bulletin IB2013_060 has been repealed.

Lawyers may advertise legal services in the circumstances described in Rule 36 of the Legal Profession Uniform Law Australian Solicitors’ Conduct Rules 2015:

- a solicitor or principal of a law practice must ensure that any advertising, marketing, or promotion in connection with the solicitor or law practice is not false, misleading or deceptive or likely to mislead or deceive, offensive or prohibited by law; and
- a solicitor must not convey a false, misleading or deceptive impression of specialist expertise and must advertise or authorise advertising in a manner that uses the words “accredited specialist” or a derivative of those words unless the solicitor is a specialist accredited by the relevant professional association.

The practical effect of these changes is that agencies should treat the advertising of legal services, including personal injury legal services, in a similar way to the advertising of any other services.
CARE COORDINATION: PLANNING FROM ADMISSION TO TRANSFER OF CARE IN NSW PUBLIC HOSPITALS (PD2011_015)


PURPOSE

The term ‘discharge’ is referred to as ‘transfer of care’ throughout this policy. This is because a patient’s health care does not end when they leave hospital. ‘Transfer of care’ demonstrates that a patient’s care continues beyond hospital as they receive care from another service/facility/or in the community. This could be by a patient’s General Practitioner (GP), community health providers, other organisation or by the patient and/or their carers.

Care Coordination is the process where patient care needs are identified and managed. The patient/carers must be involved in care planning from admission through to transfer of care. This policy directive applies to clinical staff involved in the care of inpatients. It outlines a five stage process to guide staff and patients through their hospital stay. Implementation of this approach will enhance patient outcomes, safety and experience.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Each Health Service is required to meet the standards outlined in this policy. Admitted patients will transition through five stages of care coordination:

1. Pre Admission/Admission
2. Multidisciplinary Team Review
3. Estimated Date of Discharge (EDD)
4. Referrals & Liaison for patient transfer of care
5. Transfer of care out of the hospital

While the five stages will apply to most patients having an inpatient stay, the stages will be adapted for some patient groups. Patients having scheduled admissions for a course of treatment (eg chemotherapy, dialysis or a multi-staged procedure) may not require a review for each admission in the absence of a change in personal/social circumstances or clinical condition. Planned day only or extended day only patients should have an assessment of their transfer of care needs and arrangements put in place prior to their admission.

IMPLEMENTATION

Health Service Chief Executives are responsible for:

Establishing mechanisms to ensure that the essential stages of care coordination are applied in each facility and are sustained as part of the normal care coordination and transfer of care planning.

All new clinical staff must be educated in and supplied with the staff Reference Manual: ‘Care Coordination: Planning from Admission to Transfer of Care in NSW Public Hospitals Reference Manual’, and the principles detailed in this document will be a fundamental part of each facility’s clinical staff orientation program.

The five stages of care coordination should be implemented through:
• Development and use of an admitted patient ‘Transfer of Care Risk Assessment (TCRA) Tool’.
• All departments (including emergency) must have guidelines in place for care transfer of ‘at risk’ patients especially between the hours of 10pm and 8am. Where guidelines and checklists already exist (including in paediatrics) it should be confirmed that they comply with the requirements of this policy.
• Structured (set time and duration) multidisciplinary team reviews in each ward/unit with an allocated responsible person for the administration/coordination of the meetings.
• That an Estimated Date of Discharge (EDD) is allocated, documented, displayed near the bedside and on electronic patient management tools, and reviewed for each patient. The patient or carer must be informed of the EDD during their stay.
• Ensuring the Transfer of Care Checklist or equivalent is completed for all appropriate admitted patients before they return to the community.
• All referrals, appointments, and follow-up information including medication advice is discussed and provided to the patient, carer or appropriate service prior to transfer of care, in plain language.

Pre-Admission/Admission

Definition

At the time of first contact with the patient, a ‘Transfer of Care Risk Assessment’ (TCRA) or equivalent should be completed by the clinician. A TCRA is used to identify those patients who may have needs that require further assessment and follow-up before they are transferred home or to ongoing care from the acute hospital service. Health Services are responsible for ensuring that a TCRA is completed for all appropriate admitted patients. The results from this TCRA tool should be used to inform the overall management of the patient. Each Health Service, Hospital, and clinical units will need to develop a process for flagging those patients who have been identified as having a transfer of care risk with the multidisciplinary team and to implement procedures for contacting the appropriate health professionals.

The TCRA tool (Appendix 3) should be used to gather information on all appropriate patients at admission or pre-admission. The key areas to be addressed are:
1. Is the patient likely to have self-care problems?
2. Does the patient live alone?
3. Does the patient have responsibilities to care for others?
4. Has the patient used community services before admission?
5. Does the patient usually take three or more medications and have their medications changed in the last two weeks?

A TCRA should be completed on initial presentation and whenever the patient’s clinical or social status changes.

Pre-admission

For planned admissions, transfer of care planning should begin before the patient is admitted. The TCRA should be conducted at this time. Patients with an identified risk should be referred early to the appropriate community teams so planning for transfer can begin.

Planned Day-only admission

Transfer of care planning must occur for patients having day-only procedures. Facilities may nominate their own processes to ensure the TCRA is completed. For example:
• utilising a pre-admission preparation toolkit;
• nominating staff responsible for assessment of day-only patients

Ideally, this should occur prior to the day of their procedure.

Transfer of Care Risk Assessment Tool (TCRA)

The person conducting the TCRA has the responsibility to communicate any risk identified to the relevant members of the multidisciplinary team. When a transfer of care risk is identified, it must be documented and managed.

A YES response in the TCRA to question two (Does the patient live alone?) and question five (Does the patient usually take three or more medications and have their medications changed in the last two weeks?), will not always indicate that the patient is at risk. Staff should use their clinical judgement as to the requirements for follow up if these two questions are the only yes answers. The patient should be referred to the relevant health professionals for further assessment if required.

Planned Patients

All patients with a planned admission must have their TCRA completed at presentation or before admission to hospital, such as at a pre-admission clinic. Completion of this assessment will allow the identification of transfer of care risks. Necessary referrals should be made before admission, where possible, and confirmed during the acute phase of care.

Non-Planned Patients

For non-planned patients who are admitted to hospital through the ED or through direct admission, the TCRA must be completed within the first 24 hours of admission.

Multidisciplinary Team Review

Definition of the Multidisciplinary Team

There must be defined roles and responsibilities for the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) members assisting in the care coordination process. All members of the MDT are expected to work collaboratively across disciplines to ensure improved patient outcomes. Health Services, Hospitals and Departments will need to ensure local procedures are in place to support a designated time for the MDT in inpatient wards/units to meet.

Multidisciplinary Team Review:

Based on the recommendations made in the Special Commission of Inquiry into Acute Care Services in NSW Public Hospitals; multidisciplinary rounds should take place twice weekly, while ensuring short stay patients needs are also met. MDT members should agree on the treatment plan, incorporate the transfer of care risks into the patient care plan, and set the Estimated Date of Discharge (EDD).

• It is important to conduct these meetings or a component of these meetings at the bed side so the patient and carers can be involved and be aware of the treatment plan.
• More frequent MDT reviews may be necessary for some patients to meet their needs.

In some rural settings, local medical practitioners and allied health professionals are not always available. Local processes need to be in place to ensure appropriate input into decision making regarding the transfer of care.
Estimated Date of Discharge

Definition

The Estimated Date of Discharge (EDD) predicts the likely date that a patient will be transferred from hospital back into the community. It provides everyone involved in the patient’s care, including the patient and their family/carer/s, with a projected date to coordinate the patient’s requirements. While for some patients, the EDD may change due to clinical issues; review of best practice confirms that an accurate EDD can be set for most patients. Discussions with the patient and their family/carer/s, GP, community health and service providers should occur early, for effective care planning.

Any changes to the EDD for clinical reasons or delays in transfer beyond the EDD are to be recorded and relevant staff informed. In this situation it is necessary to contact any relevant community service providers to advise them of the altered EDD. A regular review process will keep staff as well as the patient and their family/carer/s informed of their patient’s progress.

- A patient’s EDD should be visible near their bed, reminding staff of the date they are working towards and informing the patient and their family or carer.
- The multidisciplinary team should use the EDD to synchronise referrals to other teams and/or disciplines that are not involved in regular multidisciplinary team reviews.
- If the patient’s condition deteriorates it is appropriate to revise the EDD.
- If a patient does not leave when indicated by the EDD due to system delays it is not appropriate to change the EDD. The delay reason must be recorded and a system to review those delays put in place.

Local processes need to be in place to escalate system delays through patient flow and bed management meetings. IT tools for example, should be used to track these delays and identify the main constraints within the hospital. This data should be used to drive necessary system change to reduce delays in future.

Planning transfer of care from specialty areas

Specialised areas such as Intensive Care Units (ICU), High Dependency Units (HDU), Medical Assessment Units (MAU) and Critical Care Units (CCU) should use the EDD to indicate when patients are able to be transferred to inpatient wards. This will assist patient flow managers to plan the transfer into appropriate wards and prevent ICU/HDU delays in returning patients to non-critical care beds and reduce patients receiving care outside their home ward.

REFERRALS AND LIAISON

Referring to Service Providers

Service providers should be involved in planning for the patient’s transfer from the acute setting. Liaison will need to occur with all appropriate providers including the patient’s GP and any additional health providers the patient currently receives services from. It is desirable that the name of the patient’s GP and their contact details are displayed at the bedside with the patient’s EDD.

Once a patient’s requirements are identified, discussions with the appropriate providers should occur using the Estimated Date of Discharge as the start date. Discussions with providers should occur early to provide enough time to make the appropriate arrangements.
It is important to identify what services the patient will require during the acute episode of care. **Each facility is required to develop referral structures to enable staff to easily contact the relevant service providers.** Referral details should be recorded in one place in the patient’s medical record, and on any relevant individual referrals (eg. GP and Community Health).

It may not be possible to complete a patient assessment in hospital prior to the transfer of care. If a need for services has been identified, a referral to the appropriate community service provider or General Practitioner should be made. Follow-up by the organisation with the patient will then take place on their return to the community. This follow up may include the need for a more complete assessment in the home environment.

**TRANSFERRING HOME**

**Transfer of Care Checklist**

Staff must use the Transfer of Care Checklist to meet the needs of patients before leaving the hospital. **The Nurse Unit Manager is responsible for ensuring that these details are checked, completed and agreed to by the patient before leaving the hospital.**

The Transfer of Care Checklist must cover the following information:

- Estimated Date of Transfer
- Destination of Transfer
- Notification/Transport Booked
- Personal Items Returned
- Referral Services Booked
- Care Plan
- Transfer of Care Summary provided to patient that includes medication information, community and GP referral information and follow up appointments. This should be provided in plain language and explained to the patient.

A template Transfer of Care Checklist is included in the Reference Material. Staff are strongly encouraged to use an electronic checklist if available. Each individual Health Service, Hospital and Clinical Unit should build on these fundamentals in the checklist to address specific local circumstances.

Patients with an identified medication risk as per the TCRA or advice from the MDT should be prioritised for the pharmacist’s review over non-urgent cases. Each Pharmacy department will need to establish a system to effectively prioritise patients to facilitate safe transfer of care and meeting the EDD.

Patient transport needs are to be considered in the transfer of care planning processes. This is particularly important in the case of regional or remote patients as some patients may be eligible for subsidies for the cost of long distance travel.

NSW Ambulance Service manages non-emergency patient transport through the Electronic Booking System. Bookings on the day of transfer are only to be made in exceptional circumstances and bookings after midday will not be taken. Early booking for the next available ambulance will prevent patients waiting long periods for PTS transport to arrive by improving resource management, and ensure appropriate transport is available for patients when required.
Implementation Checklist

For further information and detail on the five steps of Care Coordination, please refer to the ‘Care Coordination: From Admission to Transfer of Care in NSW Public Hospitals Reference Manual’. This document will provide additional detail in managing a patient’s care from admission. The Reference Manual also contains a Transfer of Risk Assessment template and a Transfer of Care Checklist. This document will be available through the NSW Health website.

### Implementation checklist

<table>
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<tr>
<th>IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS</th>
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<th>Partial compliance</th>
<th>Full compliance</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Establishment of a Transfer of Care Risk screen that addresses the five risk areas</td>
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<td>2. Structured (set time and duration) multidisciplinary team reviews in each ward/unit with an allocated responsible person for the administration/coordination of the meetings.</td>
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<td>3. All patients have Estimated Date of Discharge (EDD) documented and a review process in place</td>
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<td>4. Ensuring the Transfer of Care Checklist or equivalent is completed for all appropriate admitted patients before they return to the community.</td>
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<tr>
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Assessed by:  
Date of Assessment: 120(10/03/11)
INTRAVASCULAR ACCESS DEVICES INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL INSERTION AND POST INSERTION CARE (PD2019_040)

PD2019_040 rescinds GL2013_013

PURPOSE

The purpose of the NSW Health Intravascular Access Device (IVAD) Infection Prevention and Control Insertion and Post Insertion Care Policy is to provide guidance to NSW Health Organisations (HO’s) including Affiliated Health Organisations on the minimum standards for insertion, management and removal of IVADs, in order to minimise the adverse health impacts on patients and reduce burden of healthcare associated Infections (HAIs). This Policy is to be read in conjunction with NSW Health Infection Prevention and Control Policy.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

All clinical staff who insert IVADs or care for a patient with an IVAD must comply with this Policy Directive. For each insertion a record of insertion must be completed.

Every IVAD insertion, management and removal must be documented at the time of care or as soon as possible afterwards.

HO’s must have local guidelines or procedures in place to support the technical and procedural aspects for using and managing these devices for clinicians.

HO’s must support clinicians to ensure adherence with this Policy Directive.

Aseptic technique must be adhered to during each IVAD insertion, management and removal to reduce the risk of local or systemic infection.

IMPLEMENTATION

NSW Health Organisations (HOs) and the governance structure for the implementation of this Policy Directive to reduce the risk of healthcare associated infections (HAIs).

Clinical Excellence Commission

- Provides tools to support the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy.

Health Education and Training Institute (HETI)

- Compliance with the existing mandatory education components (Aseptic technique, Hand Hygiene and Infection prevention and Control Practices from HETI online) applies.

Chief Executive of Local Health District and Specialty Health Network

- Assigns leadership responsibility, personnel and resources to implement and comply with this Policy.

- Ensure that this Policy is communicated to all managers and health workers.

- Ensure local infection prevention and control programs and systems are in place to implement and monitor this Policy.

- Monitor and provide regular reports on the progress and outcomes of infections related to IVADs.

- Monitor, evaluate and address issues with compliance with this Policy.

Clinical leaders and senior managers

- Provide resources and equipment necessary for compliance with this Policy.

- Implement and evaluate local infection prevention and control systems.

Infection prevention and control professionals

- Provide leadership in infection prevention and control surveillance and reporting.

- Provide advice on compliance with the insertion, management and removal of IVADs policy within their health organisation.

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12. MEDICAL CARE

- Provide leadership in the management of HAIs or other transmission risks and in the communication of these risks to health workers, patients, volunteers, carers and visitors.

**Clinical Staff Inserting, Caring for, Managing and Removing IVAD Devices**

- Comply with IVAD Infection Prevention and Control, Insertion and Post Insertion Care policy this Policy.
- Are trained, competent and assessed in the insertion, management and removal of an IVAD device in accordance with this Policy Directive.
- Ensure IVAD insertion and care is documented in the patient’s health record.
- Assess and document daily the ongoing need for an IVAD device.

**Intravascular Access Devices (IVAD) – Infection Prevention and Control Procedures**

**BACKGROUND**

Background

Intravascular access devices (IVADs) are commonly used in a variety of settings. They are used to provide a route for administering intravenous medications, fluids, blood products and nutrients and may be used for haemodynamic monitoring, short to long term intravascular access, renal therapies and blood specimen collection.

Intravascular access devices provide direct access to the patient’s bloodstream and therefore pose a serious risk for infection of microorganisms to be introduced either at the time of insertion or while the device is in situ. Device-related infections are associated with increased morbidity and mortality, prolonged hospital stay and additional healthcare costs.

Central Venous Access Devices (CVAD) pose a risk of air embolism in patients during insertion and removal (1).

Correct use and management of IVADs minimises the risks of device related infection to patients (2). The health service organisation must have a process for the appropriate use and management of invasive medical devices (3).

About This Document

This Policy outlines the minimum infection prevention and control requirements for IVADs for NSW Health Organisations (HOs). It has been developed for clinicians who insert, use/manage and remove devices and for persons responsible for surveillance and control of infections in hospital, outpatient, and home healthcare settings. It is recognised that in a clinical emergency, the principles of insertion outlined in this Policy may be difficult to meet. In these situations a risk assessment should be undertaken and the intravascular device replaced as soon as clinically appropriate.

This Policy integrates evidenced-based knowledge with clinical expertise to:
- Support appropriate device management within NSW HOs
- Prevent device related infections
- Prevent adverse events
- Assist NSW HOs to meet the requirements for Standard 3 of the National Standards for Quality Healthcare Services

315(16/08/19)
Scope

This Policy focuses on infection prevention and control (IP&C) for IVADs. Some aspects outside of IP&C are also included to assist in guiding the overall management of IVADs. This Policy sets out the minimum standards to ensure the safe use of devices and should be used in conjunction with the manufacturer’s instructions relating to individual catheters, connections, administration set dwell time, and compatibility with antiseptics, medications and other fluids. HO’s who use these devices must have local guidelines or procedures in place to support the technical and procedural aspects for using and managing these devices. The Policy is applicable to all patient care settings in which devices are inserted, managed or removed. This Policy is applicable across all patient populations (e.g. adults, ambulance, pre-hospital, hospital in the home, paediatrics and neonatology).

The following devices have been included in this Policy:
- Peripheral intravenous cannula (PIVC)
- Midline catheters
- Central venous access devices (CVAD)
  - Peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC)
  - Tunnelled cuffed and non-cuffed central venous catheter
  - Non-tunnelled central venous catheter
  - Implantable Venous Ports (Port)
- Umbilical catheters
- Peripheral artery catheters
- Pulmonary artery catheters
- Haemodialysis catheters

The following items are out of scope for this Policy:
- Technical or procedural aspects related to the above devices
- Sub-cutaneous devices
- Arteriovenous (AV) fistulas
- Anticoagulants
- Intraosseous devices
### Central Venous Access Device (CVAD)

- A catheter inserted through an upper or lower peripheral or central vein where the catheter tip terminates in:
  - For upper body access: superior vena cava/right atrial (SVC/RA) cavo-atrial junction.
  - For lower body access: the common iliac vein or abdominal vena cava

- These catheters are used for the administration of parenteral fluids and medications that are typically not suitable via a short peripheral catheter. They are also used for the measurement of central venous pressure in critical care setting.
  - Centrally- inserted central venous catheters have a skin entry point in the neck or trunk.
  - Peripherally- inserted central catheters have a skin entry point on a limb or the scalp.
  - Non-Tunnelled- the catheter insertion and exit points are the same

- **Tunneled** - the catheter is inserted through one point and then “tunneled” under the skin to a remote exit point.

### Implantable Venous Port (port):

- Long term CVAD, which is surgically placed under the skin from the insertion site to a separate exit site. The exit site is typically located in the chest, but can be located elsewhere for comfort and aesthetic reasons (e.g. inner bicep, abdomen and thigh). They can be multi lumen. Ports consist of two main parts: the portal reservoir and a catheter. The tip of the catheter resides in the cavo-atrial junction. Also known as a port-a-cath or a venous port.

### Intravascular access device (device)

- Catheters, tubes, or devices inserted into the vascular system, including veins, arteries, and bone marrow.

### Midline Catheter

- A long peripheral catheter inserted into the upper arm via the basilic, cephalic, or brachial vein, with the internal tip located at or near the level of the axilla and distal to the shoulder.

### Non-tunnelled CVAD- Also known as Percutaneous CVAD

- A device that enters the venous system. Non-tunnelled catheters are generally used for short term therapy and in emergency situations.

### Peripheral Artery Catheter

- An arterial line (also art-line or a-line) is a thin catheter inserted into an artery.

### Peripheral intravenous cannula (PIVC)

- A catheter (small, flexible tube) placed into a peripheral vein for intravenous access.

### Peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC)

- A catheter inserted through the veins of the upper extremities in adults and children; upper or lower extremities in neonates, catheter tip is located in the superior or inferior vena cava, preferably in the cavo-atrial junction

### Health Organisation (HO)

- For the purpose of this Policy a Health Organisation is: Local Health District, Speciality Health Networks, Statutory health corporation that provides inpatient services, or Affiliated health organisation in respect of its recognised establishments that provide inpatient services.

### Pulmonary Artery Catheter

- Also known as a Swan-ganz catheter, is a catheter inserted into a large central vein, with the tip residing in a pulmonary artery. Its purpose is diagnostic and therapeutic; it is used to detect heart failure or sepsis, monitor therapy, evaluate the effects of drugs, frequent blood sampling and to infuse medication.

### Tunneled CVAD

- A central vascular access device (CVAD) with a segment of the catheter lying in a subcutaneous tunnel with the presence of a cuff into which the subcutaneous tissue grows to offer security for the catheter; indicates that the skin exit site and vein entry site are separated by the subcutaneous tunnel.

### Umbilical Catheter

- Catheter that is inserted into one of the two arteries or vein of the umbilical cord.
7.1 Staff Education and Training

- All staff involved in the insertion, management and removal of IVADs must complete an educational program that is appropriate for the care being provided as determined by their HO.
- Clinicians are responsible and accountable for attaining and maintaining currency of skills for device insertion, management and removal within their scope of practice (4).
- HOs should have systems in place to recognise prior competence/skills assessment of the clinician from other HOs.
- The role, responsibilities and accountability for each type of clinician involved with these devices must be clearly defined in organisational policy or procedure (4).

7.1.1 Competency Assessment for Intravascular Access Devices (IVADs)

- Clinicians who insert, manage and remove IVADs must undergo training and formal competency assessment, as determined by the HO and is consistent with best practice.
  - Competency assessment must be conducted to establish proficiency to perform these skills independently and may be undertaken on an ongoing basis as necessary.
  - Competency validation must be documented in accordance with organisational policy.
- Clinicians working towards formal competency must be supervised by an experienced and competent clinician.

7.2 Patient Education

- The level of the education program provided to the patient and/or caregiver should be determined by the:
  - criticality of the patient
  - cognition of the patient
  - ability to manage the IVAD
  - type and duration of the IVAD
- The clinician should educate the patient and/or caregiver while in hospital or hospital in the home and before discharge on:
  - the procedure and need for the device
  - signs and symptoms of infection
  - signs of air embolism
  - what to do if it becomes disconnected or accidentally removed
  - practice and principles of caring for the device
  - infection prevention strategies for their device

- Patients and/or carers in the community must be provided with appropriate material that includes who to contact for advice or in the case of an emergency
12. MEDICAL CARE

7.3 Documentation

- Documentation in health care records must provide an accurate description of each patient/client’s episodes of care or contact with health care personnel NSW Policy Directive Health Care Records - Documentation and Management (5).

- Each HO must determine where clinical information relating to devices is to be documented in the patient’s health record and that this is applied consistently so that clinical information can be readily accessed as needed. This is particularly important for devices with a longer dwell time.

- All clinical incidents must be reported and documented as per the NSW Health, PD2014_004 Incident Management Policy (6).

- Follow Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQH) guidelines for labelling requirements. NSW Health Policy Directive User-applied Labelling of Injectable Medicines, Fluids and Lines (7)

7.3.1 Insertion

- Minimum documentation requirements at insertion by the proceduralist/procedure assistant are: A Central Venous Line Insertion Record or equivalent must be completed by the proceduralist inserting the device or their assistant for all CVADs which should include the below information:
  
  o Patient education and consent, refer to Consent to Medical Treatment (8).
  
  o Date and time of insertion, number of attempts, reason for insertion, local anaesthetic (if used), and the technique used, including visualisation and guidance technologies.
  
  o Site preparation, infection prevention and safety precautions taken.
  
  o The type, length, and gauge/size of the device (for PIVC); including the lot number for all CVADs and implanted devices.
  
  o Identification of the insertion site by anatomical descriptors and landmarks.
  
  o Confirmation of the location of the catheter tip for all CVADs prior to initial use.
  
  o Confirmation of patency and ready for use.

- This Record must be placed in the patient’s health care record.

7.3.2 Post-Insertion

While the patient is admitted to hospital the condition of every IVAD must be documented at least once per nursing shift. The documentation must detail (4):

- Condition of the site, dressing, catheter securement, dressing change details, site care, and any changes related to the device or site.

- Length of CVAD catheter from skin to hub (to assess potential migration).

- Patient reported symptoms.

- Device function (e.g. patency, lack of resistance when flushing, presence of a blood return upon aspiration).

- Equipment/infusion type used for administration of Intravenous (IV) therapy.

- The Visual Infusion Phlebitis (VIP) score if used or any signs of infection
7.3.3 Administration Sets
All labelling of administrations sets used in continuous infusion must be documented in accordance with NSW Health Policy Directive User-applied labelling of injectable medicines, fluids and lines [7]. If the lumen has an indwelling lock solution, the lumen must be clearly labelled so that it is not inadvertently flushed into the patient [7].

7.3.4 Removal
Minimum documentation requirements on removal of devices is:

- Date and time of device removal, reason for removal, condition of the site, and whether the catheter length and/or tip were complete and intact.
- Dressing applied.

Any continuing management of complications including site observation and documentation post removal.

2.3.5 Infection
Incidents of infection/phlebitis at the insertion site must be reported to Incident Information Management System (IIMS) or as per other local reporting requirements [6].

If a catheter related site infection or Blood Stream Infection (BSI) is suspected or confirmed this must be documented clearly in the patient medical record, if cultures are obtained, document the source of culture(s). The documentation should include a management plan and actions taken.

If IVAD site infections are suspected to have progressed to a systemic infection (bacteraemia) then notify as a Safety Assessment Code (SAC 2; all staphylococcus aureus bacteraemia must be recorded as a SAC 2).

Compliance with reporting mandatory Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) including routine reports on IVAD associated infections should be communicated to relevant stakeholders, peak organisational, governing and executive committees [6, 9].

8 PRE-INSERTION

8.1 Considerations when Choosing a Device

The risk of infection can be dependent on device site and selection. The following should be considered [10] as contributing to this risk: (see Section 4.2 for more information).

- Comorbidities, prolonged use and sites with frequent movement.
- History of mastectomy, arteriovenous (AV) fistula or graft, haematological disorders, history of device complications, obesity, coagulopathy, previous surgery, failed or difficult device access or immunocompromised.
- Therapeutic purpose: the infusate characteristics, complexity of infusion regime, availability of peripheral access sites.
- Estimated length of time: long-term intermittent therapy, treatment anticipated for more than 3 weeks.
- Vein status: veins may be difficult to access, torturous, fragile, hidden or deep.
3.1.2 Bundles
Infection prevention and control bundles reduce the risk of healthcare associated infections (11, 12). Facilities should develop bundles that are both evidence based and include local clinical risks. The principles for developing a bundle include:

- A manageable list of interventions that are descriptive and meet local requirements.
- Processes for documentation and assessment that considers clinical judgment in decision making.
- Input from the multidisciplinary team in developing the bundle.
- Monitoring and communication to clinical teams.

9 INSERTION

9.1 Prophylaxis, antimicrobial impregnation, coating or bonding

- The following should not routinely be used for the prevention of infection when inserting an intravascular device:
  - Systemic antibiotic prophylaxis (13-17).
  - Antibiotic or antiseptic ointment (13, 18).
  - Antimicrobial-impregnated catheters may be considered for specific population based on patients’ risk factors and clinical presentation (19-21).
- The use of bonded connections and valves are beneficial in reducing the risk of air embolism and infection (22).

1. Device Selection, Site Selection, and Device Securement

9.1.1 Peripheral Intravenous Cannula (PIVC)

**Device Selection**

- Clinicians should use the smallest gauge and shortest length PIVC that will accommodate the anticipated therapy to reduce the risk of phlebitis.
- See Attachment 1 PIVC Device Selection Guide for more information.

**Site Selection**

- Optimal site selection for PIVC is the distal areas of the upper extremities (e.g. Forearms) (3, 13).
- Basilic or cephalic veins on the posterior (dorsal) forearm are the preferred site for catheterisation (3).
- The site selected should be accessible and functional during surgery and procedures.
- Veins should be selected on the non-dominant forearm if practical (especially if the catheter is to remain in position for any length of time) (3).
  - Avoid veins of the lower extremities unless necessary, due to risk of tissue damage, thrombophlebitis, and ulceration.
  - Rotate PIVC site and arm where possible for repeated cannulations.
  - Replace a catheter inserted in a lower extremity, to an upper extremity as soon as possible.
  - Avoid compromised areas, areas of flexion e.g. antecubital fossa and areas of pain on palpation.
For paediatrics, preference should be given to sites that are long lasting for duration of therapy (e.g. hands, forearm and upper arm).

- Upper or lower extremities or the scalp (last option) can be used as the catheter insertion site (13).
- Avoid hand or fingers, or the thumb/finger used for sucking in infants.
- Avoid the right arm of infants and children after procedures treating congenital cardiac defects that may have decreased blood flow to the subclavian artery.

**Securement**

- The catheter should be stabilised with a transparent dressing and sterile adhesive tape or sterile adhesive/wound closure strips, to prevent catheter dislodgement (13, 23).
- For paediatrics use of IV board/splints are recommended to secure PIVC placed in or adjacent to areas of flexion. Follow local policy or guidelines for strapping and securement of PIVCs.

### 9.1.2 Midline Catheters

**Device Selection**

- Use the smallest gauge of midline catheters that will accommodate the prescribed therapy to reduce the risk of phlebitis and thrombosis (24, 25).

**Site Selection**

- Vein selection should be based on the biggest and most superficial vein above or directly below the antecubital fossa to allow normal arm movement and function. The catheter should not be placed at the antecubital fossa crease/fold or pass the axillary crease/fold.

**Securement**

- A sutureless securement device is preferred to reduce the risk of infection (26).

### 9.1.3 Central Venous Access Device (CVAD)

**Device Selection**

- Use the smallest gauge of CVAD that will accommodate the anticipated therapy to reduce the risk of phlebitis (27).
- The minimum necessary number of lumens and add-ons (manifolds, stopcocks and multi-extension sets) should be used.
- Heparin-coated catheters are not recommended (28).

**Site Selection**

- For PICCs select the basilic (preferred), cephalic, and brachial veins (with sufficient size) of the antecubital space or brachial veins (29, 30).
- In neonates the upper and lower extremities have similar complication rates.
- Use a subclavian or internal jugular site rather than a femoral site where possible, in adult patients to minimise infection risk for non-tunneled CVC placement (31).
  - If the patient has chronic kidney disease, consider the internal jugular vein or, secondarily, the external jugular vein, weighing benefits and risks for each access site due to the risk of central vein stenosis (32).
  - Subclavian vein should be avoided for temporary access in patients with chronic renal failure due to the risk of central vein stenosis (33).
  - In patients with chronic renal failure be aware if a limb is being preserved for future haemodialysis access.
For internal jugular sites, the right side of the patient is favoured as vessel anatomy allows direct access to the superior vena cava/inferior vena cava and provides a shorter and easier route for the practitioner inserting the device (34).

**Securement**
The CVAD must be secured (26) at the skin insertion point and anchor point (if present) by:
- A sutureless securement device (preferred to reduce the risk of infection) OR
- Direct suturing at the hub and three-way bifurcation anchor point.

### 9.1.4 Implanted Venous Port (port/IVP)

**Device Selection**
- Catheters made of radiopaque silicone rubber or polyurethane are preferred.
- Ports made of various materials including plastic, titanium, silicone rubber, polyurethane, and a combination of these substances can be used.
- The life of the septum is dependent on the gauge of needles used to access the port and the type of needle used i.e. if a larger needle is used, the septum will wear out after fewer punctures than when a smaller gauge needle is used (35).

**Site Selection**
- Port pocket site selection should allow for placement in an area that provides good port stability, does not interfere with patient mobility, does not create pressure points or interfere with clothing (36).

**Securement**
- The suture line closing the port should not be located over the septum of the port (36).
- Umbilical catheters are commonly secured using the goalpost method, refer to local guideline or procedures for more information.

### 9.1.5 Peripheral Artery Catheter

**Device Selection**
The catheter must be flexible, resistant, as radiopaque as possible, thin walled with a high internal to external diameter ratio (37).

**Site selection**
- The radial artery is preferred due to its accessibility and good collateral flow, however the femoral, brachial or pedal artery may also be used (1).
- The brachial site should not be used in paediatrics (13).

**Securement**
- A sutureless securement device (preferred to reduce the risk of infection) OR
- Direct suturing at the hub and three-way bifurcation anchor point.

### 9.1.6 Pulmonary Artery Catheter

**Device Selection**
The catheter must be flexible, resistant, as radiopaque as possible, thin walled with a high internal to external diameter ratio (37).

**Site selection**
- The preferred site is the right internal jugular vein followed by the left subclavian vein.
- The femoral and antecubital veins should be avoided if possible.
12. MEDICAL CARE

Securement

- A sutureless securement device (preferred to reduce the risk of infection) OR
- Direct suturing at the hub and three-way bifurcation anchor point.

9.2 Confirmation of Tip Position for Central Catheters

The catheter tip position must be confirmed when a device is inserted, by any of the following techniques prior to use (38, 39):

- ECG CVAD tip confirmation
- Chest x-ray or image intensifier
- Fluoroscopy imaging and Digital Subtraction Angiography (DSA)
- Computed Tomography (CT)
- Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)
- Pressure monitoring of the central venous waveform in operating theatre until formal confirmation post-surgery

Once the CVAD distal tip position is confirmed via any of the above, the “final Tip position” of the catheter must be documented (the total catheter length and external/inserted length (skin to hub) in the patients’ medical record. This then becomes the clinician’s primary referral source for written confirmation of tip position.

- This must be completed by the clinician inserting the device, their assistant or delegate for all insertions.

9.3 Standard Precautions (At Insertion)

Standard precautions are the minimum precautions required and must always be applied when caring for patients (4).

- During an emergency situation (e.g. rapid deterioration and ambulance) time does not always permit use of aseptic technique or full maximal barrier precautions, the clinician should make every effort within their environment to maintain asepsis and adhere to standard precautions. If inserted in an emergency, the IVAD must be replaced as soon as the patient is stable (within 24 hours).

The precautions outlined in sections 4.4.1 to 4.4.4 are the minimum requirements when inserting a device.

9.3.1 Hand Hygiene

- Perform hand hygiene before insertion procedures, refer to table 2 below.
- Hand hygiene should be performed before and after palpating catheter insertion sites as well as before and after inserting, replacing, accessing, repairing, or dressing.
- Palpation of the PIVC insertion site should not be performed after the application of antiseptic, unless non-touch technique is maintained or sterile gloves are used. If you need to palpate the planned insertion site after skin antisepsis to confirm anatomy, repeat the application of antiseptic.

The use of gloves does not eliminate the need for hand hygiene (before putting on gloves and after removal).
### Table 2: Hand Hygiene for Device Insertion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Hand Cleansing Product*</th>
<th>Duration of Hand wash*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insertion of PIVC</td>
<td>ABHR*</td>
<td>30-60 seconds</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liquid antimicrobial soap and running water</td>
<td>40-60 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peripheral Arterial Catheter</td>
<td>ABHR*</td>
<td>60 seconds minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liquid antimicrobial soap and running water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insertion of CVAD, Midline and Umbilical Catheters</td>
<td>Liquid antimicrobial soap and running water</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alcohol Based Surgical Hand Rub (ABSHR*)</td>
<td>Refer to manufacturer’s instructions. Note: Prior to surgical rub, wash hands, forearms and nails using a non-medicated soap and running water.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Manufacturers recommendations should be followed for the amount of solution and duration

### 9.3.2 Aseptic Technique

- All clinicians involved in the insertion of devices must have appropriate training and assessment of aseptic technique, refer to section 2.1 Staff Education and Training.
- Aseptic technique must be maintained for the duration of the procedure, this includes:
  - Hand hygiene.
  - Maintaining aseptic fields.
  - Once insertion site has been prepped aseptic technique must be maintained and the site must not be touched (unless sterile gloves are worn).
  - Procedures must be performed using non-touch technique protecting key sites and key parts. The cap/cover must remain on the device to maintain asepsis.
  - Personal protective equipment (PPE) must be worn as per standard precautions.
  - Ensure a logic, efficient and safe order of the procedure.
  - Equipment or items dropped on the floor must be discarded (even if there is a cap/cover on) and replaced.
  - Ultrasound transducers used for imaging the vascular system for insertion of venous access devices should be used with a sterile probe cover and sterile gel. The transducer probe must be cleaned and disinfected adequately in between use. Follow manufacturers’ instructions for use.
  - A clean environment must be maintained throughout the procedure. Environmental controls to achieve this include; IVAD insertion trolley or procedure tray is to be cleaned, no room cleaning (buffing or polishing) immediately prior to, or during the procedure. The procedure should take place in a closed room or with curtains drawn around the patient zone to minimise air currents.
9.3.3 Personal Protective Equipment

Clinicians should wear appropriate personal protective equipment based on risk assessment and likelihood of exposure to bodily fluids.

**Glove Use**

- The use of non-sterile examination or sterile gloves will depend on the procedure being undertaken, contact with susceptible sites or clinical devices, the risks involved and the HO guidelines or procedures that are in place.

- For PIVC insertion gloves should be worn immediately after performing hand hygiene.
  - HOs should have in place local guidelines or procedures determining the type of gloves for PIVC insertion based on local needs and clinical risk.
  - Gloves considered in local guidelines or procedures may include; sterile procedural gloves, sterile gloves, non-sterile gloves.

- See below 4.4.4 Maximal Barrier Precautions for more information (4).

9.3.4 Maximal Barrier Precautions

- Use maximum sterile barrier precautions. This involves:
  - Except for PIVC and arterial line insertions, mask, hair covering including beard if necessary, sterile gown and sterile gloves are required to be worn by all personnel involved in the procedure.
  - PIVC and arterial lines insertion require compliance with asepsis.
  - The insertion site is to be covered with a large sterile drape during catheter insertion.

9.4 Skin Preparation

- Hair at the insertion site should be removed using clippers to improve adherence of the dressing.

- The skin should be physically cleaned with soap and water (if necessary) prior to applying the antiseptic solution before inserting the catheter.

- The same antimicrobial agent must be used for all phases of the patient’s skin preparation, to ensure full residual benefit and consistent action (17).

- Palpation of the insertion site should not be performed after the application of antiseptics, unless aseptic technique is maintained.
  - If the health worker needs to re-establish the identification of the vein, the site should be re-prepped with the antiseptic solution and allowed to thoroughly dry (17).

Table 3: Skin Preparation for Adults and Children ≥ 2 months (40, 41)

| Skin cleansing prior to **PIVC** insertion | 0.5-2% chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG) and 70% isopropyl alcohol |
| Skin cleansing prior to all other device insertions | 2% chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG) in 70% isopropyl alcohol |
| If there is a contraindication to chlorhexidine, povidone iodine 10% in 70% alcohol can be used as an alternative. |
• The application of antiseptic should be a measured quantity and avoid over application. If the site is accessed prior to full evaporation of the product, this can lead to reduced efficacy.
• All solutions must be allowed to dry before beginning insertion, do not wipe or blot.
• Some of the alcoholic chlorhexidine solutions now contain colour to allow easier identification.
• Sterile saline or water solutions alone are not acceptable antiseptic solutions and should only be used to clean the skin of gross contaminants prior to applying antiseptic solution.
• Take care when applying liquid solutions to minimise the risk of eye injury to the patient due to splashes.
• Care should be taken during internal jugular approaches that solutions containing chlorhexidine are not introduced to the ear canal as this can lead to deafness.

4.5.1 Skin preparation in neonates
NSW public health organisations who care for neonates must have a local policy or guideline in place for skin preparation and/or antisepsis for pre-term infants. This should consider:
• Using topical antiseptics with extreme caution, particularly alcohol based preparations.
• The risk of chemical burns in premature babies.
• Avoiding Povidone Iodine for skin antisepsis.

10 POST INSERTION MANAGEMENT
10.1 General Information
• If Total Parenteral Nutrition (TPN) is being administered, where possible, health workers should utilise one lumen exclusively for that use (42, 43).
• Consider use of an extension set between an IVAD and needleless connector to reduce catheter manipulation (4).
• Refer to section 2.3 Documentation for minimum documentation requirements.

10.2 Daily Review for In-patients
• All intravascular devices must be checked (table 4) at each shift for ongoing need and promptly removed when no longer required.
• The insertion site must be visually inspected by the clinician at least hourly with continuous infusion, at least every eight hours if no infusion (15). For further information refer to Intentional Patient Rounding - Information for Clinicians and Health Professionals (44). For high-risk medicine clinicians should refer to the local protocols or Australian Injectable Drugs Handbook (AIDH) - 7th Edition (45).
• Ensure medical staff review the need for IV therapy including antimicrobials on a daily basis and switch to oral administration as clinically appropriate.
Table 4: Daily Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily Assessment</th>
<th>Systemic Infection</th>
<th>Infiltration/extravasation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phlebitis</td>
<td>- Erythema</td>
<td>- Rigor</td>
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<td>- Tenderness</td>
<td>- Fever</td>
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<td>- Swelling</td>
<td>- Tachycardia</td>
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<td>- Pain</td>
<td>- Hypotension</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Palpable venous</td>
<td>- Malaise</td>
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<td>cord</td>
<td>- Nausea/vomiting</td>
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</table>
| For PICCs & Midlines, if limb swelling is suspected, compare the mid-upper limb circumference with the initial value recorded on the CVAD Insertion Record to quantify this. If a significant increase in circumference is confirmed, venous thrombosis should be considered and investigated appropriately.

(Source: I-care QLD (15, 17, 28, 36, 46-48)

5.3 Patients in the Community

- All intravascular devices should be checked (refer to table 4) at every clinical visit and removed when no longer required.

- Patients should be educated to visually inspect the insertion site when continuous infusions are running. This must include signs and symptoms of complications and who to contact if needed.

5.4 Transferring and transporting patients with CVADS

- There is an increased risk of CVAD dislodgment and falling out during transfer or transportation of patients.

- Devices should be visually inspected and secured before transfers occur.

- Consideration should be given to the weight of lumen sets and lines must be supported with additional fixation to reduce the risk of unplanned dislodgement.

- If catheter is not in use, check that the catheter is clamped prior to commencing transport.

5.5 Accessing Devices

- To reduce the risk of infection, manipulations of an intravascular device should be kept to a minimum and use a continuous flow system wherever possible.

- Where continuous flow is not possible, then the device should be flushed and locked as per local guidelines and procedures.

- The catheter lumen should be kept sterile and should never be left open to the air.

- Aseptic technique must be maintained at all times.

- Ensure line clamps are used when accessing a CVAD to reduce the risk of air embolism (22).
Table 5: Accessing Devices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PIVC, Midline, PICC, CVC (tunnelled &amp; non-tunnelled), Umbilical Catheters, Pulmonary Artery &amp; Peripheral Artery Catheters, Port</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aseptic Technique Principles (49), relevant to the procedure.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sequencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hand Hygiene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Environmental control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Maintain asepsis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• PPE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Antiseptic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 70% isopropyl alcohol swab OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 0.5-2% chlorhexidine gluconate &amp; 70% isopropyl alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PORT/IVP with needle insertion</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 2% chlorhexidine gluconate &amp; 70% alcohol</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Accessing a Catheter**
- All intravenous access ports should be meticulously cleaned with a large wipe (scrub the hub) for at least 15 seconds generating friction by scrubbing in a twisting motion with a single-use 70% alcohol-impregnated swab or alcoholic chlorhexidine or if allergic 10% povidone-iodine and allowed to air dry prior to accessing the system (50, 51).
- The catheter should be accessed with a sterile single-use device.

**Accessing a Port**
- Only a non-coring (e.g. Huber) needle should be used to access implanted ports. Safety needle is preferred.
- Use a new needle for each access attempt.
- Needles should be changed every seven days or more frequently for continuous infusions if necessary.
- Reinsertion through the immediately preceding needle site should be avoided.

(Source: I-care QLD (15, 17, 28, 36, 46, 47))

10.3 Blood Collection
- Blood sampling via a CVAD is appropriate for some patient populations based on individual patient risk assessment prior to collection.
- Risks of venepuncture can include anxiety, pain, damage to skin and nearby nerves, and hematoma in patients receiving anticoagulants or with bleeding disorders (4).
- Limit drawing blood from IVADs as it increases hub manipulation and the potential for contamination (4).
- Blood samples from PIVC should not be drawn due to the risk of haemolysis, unless it is directly after insertion.
- Blood cultures should never be collected through a PIVC due to the increased rate of contamination at the time of collection.
- PICC in newborns should not be used for blood sampling or infusing blood products.
12. MEDICAL CARE

12.167

10.4 Dressings

- Use a sterile, transparent semi-permeable dressing to protect the insertion site from contamination. Allow continuous observation of the site and to stabilise and secure the device.
- For patients aged ≥18 years with a CVAD (CVC and PICC), chlorhexidine-impregnated dressings may be used to protect the insertion site from contamination (51, 52).
- Use of chlorhexidine impregnated dressings in infants and children may require individual risk assessment and prescription, should be considered in local guidelines (53-55).
- When the patient is diaphoretic or has excessive bleeding or oozing from the site, use sterile gauze secured with a sterile transparent, semi-permeable dressing until this is resolved (51, 56).
- Umbilical catheters do not routinely use an occlusive dressing over the insertion site, refer to local guideline or procedure for more information.
- When the patient has multiple devices, each should be dressed separately unless the puncture sites are too close together.
- All equipment used for the dressing of the insertion site must be sterile.
- Dressing must be placed so the insertion site is visible for regular inspection, therefore do not place non-sterile or opaque tape directly over the insertion site.
- All dressings must be replaced if it becomes damp, loosened, no longer adherent, soiled, there is evidence of inflammation and/or there is an accumulation of fluid.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dressing Type</th>
<th>Replacement Intervals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transparent, semi-permeable, self-adhesive polyurethane</td>
<td>Every 7 days or sooner if the dressing is no longer intact, evidence of inflammation or moist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauze</td>
<td>Every 24 - 48 hours or whenever loose, soiled or moist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chlorhexidine-impregnated</td>
<td>Every 7 days or at each dressing change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source (13, 47, 57)

10.5 Needleless Injection Ports

- Removal of a needleless injection port must be performed using aseptic technique.
- Anytime a needleless injection port is removed from the catheter, this is to be discarded and a new sterile injection port should be attached, using appropriate aseptic technique.
- Needleless injection ports that are not bonded to the central line should be changed(17, 42):
  - At least every 7 days (coinciding with administration set changes) OR
  - At the frequency recommended by the manufacturer OR
  - If the integrity of the needleless injection port is compromised (e.g. residual blood remains within the port).

*Needleless Injection Ports can also be known as: needleless IV catheter systems, swabable capless valves, swabable capless access device, needleless access ports, needle-free injection port, needleless connector and needle-free connector.*
12. MEDICAL CARE

10.6 Arterial Catheters

- Replace disposable or reusable transducers at 96-hour intervals or when clinically indicated. Replace other components of the system (including the tubing, continuous-flush device, and flush solution) at the time the transducer is replaced (13).
- Keep all components of the pressure monitoring system (including calibration devices and flush solution) as a closed system (13).

10.7 Administration Sets

- IV administration sets include both the IV lines and any additional attachments such as needleless injection ports, sideline syringe infusion pumps, three-way stopcocks, multi-flow adaptors and extension tubing that may be added.
- IV administration sets must be attached to the patient so that no tension is applied to the catheter to reduce the risk of dislodgement.
- Ensure all components of the administration system are compatible (including sideline syringe infusion pump or burettes and needleless injection ports) to the devices to minimise leaks and breaks in the system.
  - All connections must be luer-lock.
- Refer to section 2.3 Documentation for labelling requirements.

**Disconnection of Administration Sets**

- A continuous circuit should be maintained as intermittent disconnections of administration sets increases the risk of infection.
- All administration sets must be replaced;
  - After being disconnected.
  - If the catheter is changed or
  - After blood has refluxed into the administration set and the blood is unable to be cleared by flushing.
- When an administration set is changed, the IV fluid bag must also be changed.

NB: infusions with blood and blood products and high value medicines, consideration may require on the continuation of the product and a risk assessment should be conducted to assess if product should be discarded and replaced with new lines or continue with existing set. Where an obvious contamination has occurred all lines must be changed.

- Disconnection of administrations sets must be avoided for routine care, such as showering, changing nightwear/gowns. If disconnected, IV lines must be replaced.
- Controlled disconnections where reconnection of the set is immediate may be appropriate in certain situations based on clinical requirements (e.g. changing IV access or infusions in operating theatres, administration of blood products or medical imaging departments).
  - For transient controlled disconnections, aseptic technique must be maintained to prevent contamination of the set.
  - If disconnection becomes more than transient or if the ends become contaminated in any way they must be discarded and replaced.

**In-line Filters**

In-line filters are not recommended for prevention of BSI, however certain agents such as chemotherapeutic, immunological drugs etc. require filtering for other reasons (15, 17, 46, 58).
Table 7: Frequency of Line Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administration Set Use</th>
<th>Frequency of Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuous use (NOT containing lipids, blood or blood products)</td>
<td>Do not need to be replaced more frequently than every 96 hours unless device-specific recommendations from the manufacturer indicate otherwise (51). Change intermittent infusion sets without a primary infusion every 24 hours or whenever their sterility is in question (59).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood and blood products</td>
<td>Must be changed when the transfusion is complete, or every 12 hours if the transfusion is not complete (60). The maximum number of blood products as per the manufacturer’s recommendations has been reached. Any number of red cell units may be transfused during a 12-hour period, provided the flow rate remains adequate (60). Platelets must be transfused via a new blood administration set. Note: Manufacturer’s recommendations defining the maximum number of units per blood administration set must not be exceeded.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lipid containing solutions and parenteral nutrition</td>
<td>Changed every 24 hours or as recommended by the manufacturer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lipid containing medications (e.g. Propofol, Clevidipine)</td>
<td>Changed at minimum every 12 hours or as per the manufacturers’ instruction (61).</td>
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<td>Chemotherapeutic agents</td>
<td>Remove immediately after use. On completion of infusion including the line flush. The chemotherapy infusion episode may include more than one agent, it is common practice to utilise the same administration set, with line flush in between in order to ensure the full dose has been administered.</td>
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12. MEDICAL CARE

10.8 Flushing

- Flushing is recommended to promote and maintain patency and prevent the mixing of incompatible medical solutions. Sterile 0.9% sodium chloride for injection must be used by clinicians, unless the manufacturer recommends flushing with an alternate solution (15-17, 46, 47, 62).

- Clinicians must flush catheters immediately:
  - After placement
  - Before and after each fluid infusion or injection
  - Prior to and after drawing blood

- PIVCs must be flushed at least every 8hrs, for hospital patients or every 24 hours for patients in the community, if not on a continuous infusion.

- CVADs not being accessed must be flushed and locked every 7 days.

- Ports/IVP not being accessed must be flushed and locked every four to six weeks.

10.9 Locking

- Sterile 0.9% sodium chloride for injection should be routinely used to lock a catheter no longer required for continuous infusions, unless the manufacturer recommends catheter lumens be locked with an alternate solution (17).
  - HO’s who determine a need to use alternative locking solutions (e.g. heparin, antibiotic, antimicrobial and antiseptic), must have local policy or guidelines to support the appropriate use of these solutions.

- Locks containing medication must be prescribed by a Medical Officer or Nurse Practitioner.

- Refer to NSW Health Policy, Medication Handling in NSW Public Hospitals (63).

- Catheters with a medicine ‘in situ’ to lock the catheter must be labelled as per NSW Health Policy, User-applied labelling of Injectable Medicines, Fluids and Lines (7).

10.10 Catheter Migration

- A catheter that has migrated externally must not be re-advanced (64). The treating medical team must be notified immediately if this has occurred.

- If a CVAD is noted to have migrated inwards from the documented marking point, the CVAD must be retracted to the original insertion measurement as documented on the insertion form (65).
  - The medical team must be notified and a risk assessment for infection/contamination should be conducted.
  - This procedure can only be done by a clinician who has achieved CVAD competency. Refer 2.1 Staff Education and Training for more information.

11 REPLACEMENT AND REMOVAL

11.1 Device Duration

- All devices must be checked at each shift and removed when no longer required or if mechanical complications occur (42).

- Assess any devices in patients transferring from other healthcare facilities who may have a documented or non-documentated device in situ. The clinician should inspect for infection, mechanical complications and correct distal tip position. Correct position can be determined through previous documentation and correct external lengths comparison, or via radiological confirmation.
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- When adherence to aseptic technique is compromised (i.e. catheters inserted during a medical emergency, ambulance), replace the catheter as soon as possible (e.g. when the patient is stable or within 24 hours) (66-68).

- Devices should be removed based on the following clinical indications:
  - The catheter is no longer required
  - Evidence of systemic infection
  - Damaged catheter
  - Evidence of local infection (redness, swelling, oozing or pain at catheter exit site)
  - Persistent catheter occlusion
  - Confirmation of thrombosis

11.1.1 PIVC

The routine replacement of PIVC may not prevent infection or phlebitis (69, 70). Current research supports replacing a PIVC on clinical indication but the device should not be left in indefinitely and in most cases PIVC dwell time should not exceed 72-96 hours (71). A PIVC should not be used for an extended period. The need for a PIVC beyond short term vascular access should defer to a suitable long term device (refer to section 4.2). The decision to implement PIVC replacement on clinical indication must be based on a formal risk assessment.

Criteria for clinical indication based PIVC replacement

- There is good availability of staff appropriately trained in the insertion and maintenance of devices on each shift.
- There is an assurance that PIVC surveillance in the healthcare facility is adequate, including regular inspection of the site and device, and of PIVC-related Staphylococcus aureus bacteremia (SAB).
- There is consistent documentation regarding device insertion (site ease and date), site appearance and complications experienced with devices.
- Remove PIVC if patient develops signs of local infection, pain or tenderness and follow local reporting guidelines (e.g. IIMS)

Criteria for routine replacement of PIVC

- Replacement is likely to be uncomplicated and the risk is judged to be less than retention.
- May be appropriate in the context of high rates of PIVC related complications
- The PIVC is likely to be needed for another 24 hours.
- The decision should be document in the patient’s health record.
- PIVC replacement in neonates and children should be based on clinical indication and ongoing need for the device.

11.1.2 Midline Catheters

- Midline catheters that are inserted at the bedside using sterile technique may stay in place for 2 to 4 weeks (72).

11.1.3 Umbilical Catheters

- This will be determined by the clinical condition of the baby and availability of alternative access (73).
12. MEDICAL CARE

- Remove and do not replace the umbilical catheter if there are any signs of catheter-related BSI, vascular insufficiency in the lower extremities, or thrombosis are present.
- An umbilical catheter may be replaced if it is malfunctioning, breaks or splits, and there is no other indication for catheter removal.
- Refer to local policy or guideline for further information.

11.1.4 Peripheral Arterial and Pulmonary Artery Catheters

- Do not routinely replace arterial catheters to prevent infections. Replace only when there is a clinical indication (74).

11.1.5 CVADS

- Do not routinely replace CVADs or hemodialysis catheters. Replacement should be based on clinical indication and need (51, 75).
- Do not remove CVADs on the basis of fever alone. Use clinical assessment to determine whether infection is evident elsewhere or if there is another non-infectious cause of the fever, refer 7. Diagnosis of Infection & Surveillance.

11.1.6 PORTS

- Ports are a long-term vascular access solution.
- The life of a port is limited to the number of needle punctures. The number of punctures varies depending on the gauge of the needle used but is approximately 1000-2000 (follow manufacturers instruction) (76).
- Replace ports based on clinical indications.

11.2 CVAD Guidewire Exchange

- Guide-wire exchanges to replace catheters is not recommended. A small number of patients may benefit from this in exceptional circumstances based on patient assessment, risk and suitable environment. Not advised for hemodialysis and tunneled catheters.
- Guidewire exchanges must not be performed in the presence of BSI (77).

11.3 Catheter Removal

- Processes must be in place to ensure appropriate authority or order/instruction and written documentation to remove devices. HOs should develop standing orders or local protocols/processes for the routine removal of PIVCs (e.g. nurse initiated PIVC removal).
- Standard precautions and aseptic technique must be used to prevent catheter site infections (4).
- Following device removal, the site must be sealed with a sterile airtight dressing until the site is healed.
  - Umbilical catheters are not routinely dressed on catheter removal, but must be clean and dry.
  - If the patient is being discharged the patient or carer should be educated on the signs and symptoms of infection and complications and advised what to do if symptoms present.
- On removal the clinician should visually check the integrity of the line.
- Routine collection of the tip is not required except in circumstances where infection is suspected. Refer section 7. Diagnosis of Infection and Surveillance.
12. MEDICAL CARE

- PORT/IVP and tunnelled cuffed CVADs are only to be removed by a Medical Officer or Nurse Practitioner/Clinical Nurse Consultant who has been deemed competent in this skill.
  - Ports require surgical removal in theatre or interventional radiology.

Table 8 Requirements for Removal of CVADs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements for Removal of CVADs: To prevent air embolism during CVAD removal HOs must have CVAD removal detailed in their local guideline or procedure.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Refer to Clinical Focus Report- Central Venous Access Devices and Air Embolism (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Removal of CVAD must only be undertaken by trained or supervised clinicians. Refer to 2.2.1 Competency Assessment for CVAD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Removal of the CVAD must be undertaken using an aseptic technique that will minimise the risk of infection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The patient is to be positioned supine with head slightly down (if tolerated) during CVAD removal. This is to increase the pressure in the large veins to above that of atmospheric pressure, which reduces the risk of aspirating air into the venous circulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Following CVAD removal, the site must be sealed with an airtight dressing which remains insitu for at least 24 hours to reduce the risk of late air embolism. Refer to Safety Notice 004/14 Removal of Central Venous Access Devices (CVAD). The patient must remain in the supine position (or Semi-Fowlers if supine not tolerated) for between 30 and 60 minutes following CVAD removal (78). At least one set of observations should be done during this period, as well as immediately prior to retrieving the patient to the upright position. Observe for sign of respiratory distress, assess site for bleeding or haematoma and report any changes in status immediately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The removal of the CVAD and the presence of an intact tip must be noted in the patient’s health record.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Following removal, the CVAD site will require daily review and dressing until healed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Routine observations are to be conducted after the removal of the IVAD.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11.3.1 Removal of Catheter in Suspecting Line Infection

- Do NOT remove a functioning device based solely on temperature elevation (4).
- Remove PIVC if patient develops signs of local infection, pain or tenderness(4).
- If an infection is suspected the treating medical team must be notified and an assessment made for the ongoing need of device, persisting relapse of catheter related BSI, patient deterioration and alternative IV access.
- Patients transferring from other healthcare facilities with a documented device insitu should have the device reviewed upon arrival by a clinician for infection, mechanical complications and correct distal tip position, either through previous documentation and correct external lengths comparison, or via radiological confirmation. Without documentation, consider removal.

12 DIAGNOSIS OF INFECTION AND SURVEILLANCE

12.1 Diagnosis of Infection

- For a suspected catheter related BSI (79), obtain blood cultures (see 7.1.1).
- If pus, exudate or erythema is present at the insertion site, swab the site prior to removal of the device and send for culture.
12. MEDICAL CARE

- Catheter tip cultures are not a substitute for blood cultures for the determination of a bacteraemia, a negative tip culture does not exclude infection (79, 80).

12.1.1 Blood Cultures

- Two sets (4 bottles) of blood cultures should be collected in suspected infection for each new episode. This should occur prior to commencement of antimicrobials treatment. If patient is hemodynamically unstable, take 1 set prior to commencement of antimicrobials. Do not delay the administration of antimicrobials in patients with severe sepsis or septic shock.
- Collect one set from the pre-existing device and one set from a peripheral site.
  - If a peripheral set is not possible, a blood culture set from each of 2 or more lumens is required.
- The bottle should be well filled with a minimum 10mL per bottle (for adult patients only)
  - If volume of blood to be collected is an issue, preference should be given to aerobic bottles.
  - In neonates, collect an aerobic blood culture with 0.5-1mL, refer to local policy or guideline for additional information.
- Note the collection site on the request form at the time of collection.
- For further information, refer to local policy or guideline and Sepsis Kills Adult Blood Culture Guideline, Sepsis Kills Paediatrics Blood Culture Guidelines and Sepsis Kills Neonatal Blood Culture Guidelines.

12.1.2 Culturing of Tips

- Do not send catheter tips for culture on routine line removal, unless infection is suspected.
- Catheter tips should be cut using an aseptic technique.
- Ensure the site and type of catheter are noted on the request form as well as the appropriate clinical information.

12.1.3 Reporting of Catheter-related BSI

- HOs must have procedures in place for the timely reporting of all positive cultures to the treating medical and infection prevention and control teams.
- Open disclosure should be performed for all suspected or actual catheter related infections, as per the NSW Health Open Disclosure Policy.
- For healthcare associated BSIs (Staphylococcus aureus and Vancomycin resistant enterococcus) HO should follow internal reporting and escalation processes and key performance indicator requirements (e.g. IIMS). The NSW health incident management process must be followed for identification, investigation and management of these incidents as SAC 2 (6).

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

1. PIVC Size & Use Guide
2. Related Documents
3. Additional Resources
4. Implementation Checklist
Attachment 1: PIVC Device Selection Guide
This is a guide for PIVC device selection and should be used whenever practical. However clinical risks and patient characteristics may require a different size to be used (e.g. paediatrics and neonates).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PIVC Size</th>
<th>Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14G</td>
<td>Trauma patients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rapid, large-volume replacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16G</td>
<td>Trauma patients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Major surgery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intra-partum or post-partum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GIT Bleeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple line access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple blood transfers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High volume of fluids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18G</td>
<td>Blood products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple line access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Large volume of fluids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Major surgery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imaging requiring power injection of CT contrast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20G</td>
<td>General use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IV maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IV antimicrobials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IV analgesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Power Injection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22G</td>
<td>Small or Fragile veins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cytotoxic therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24G</td>
<td>Small or Fragile veins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cancer services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Day only infusion services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paediatrics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Delivery of Irritant medications: Use the most appropriate cannula size for the vein as use of a peripheral intravenous cannula that is too large for the vein increases the risk of phlebitis.

Refer Safety Notice 009/16 Avoiding thrombophlebitis with intravenous amiodarone (revised 10 Feb 2017).
12. MEDICAL CARE

Attachment 2: Related Documents

- NHMRC, Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infections in Healthcare (3)
- NSW Health Policy Directive, Infection Prevention and Control Policy (81)
- Clinical Excellence Commission, Infection Prevention and Control Practice Handbook (49)
- Clinical Excellence Commission, Healthcare Associated Infection: Clinical Indicator Manual version 2.0 (9)
- NSW Health Policy Directive, Medication Handling in NSW Public Health Facilities (63)
- NSW Health Policy Directive, Clinical Procedure Safety (82)
- ACSQHC, National Safety and Quality Healthcare Service Standards (second edition) (83)
- NSW Health Policy Directive, User-applied labelling of injectable medicines, fluids and lines (7)
- ACSQHCs, National standard for user-applied labelling of injectable medicines, fluids and lines (84)
- Clinical Excellence Commission, Clinical Focus Report- Central Venous Access Devices and Air Embolism (1)
- NSW Health, Health Care Records-Documentation and Management (5)

Attachment 3: Additional Resources

- Cancer Institute NSW, eviQ Cancer Education Online- Central Venous Access Devices
- Cancer Institute NSW, eviQ Cancer Education Online- Clinical Resources, Central Venous Access Devices
- Clinical Excellence Commission- Training framework for clinicians new to inserting central lines in NSW
- My Health learning - Central Venous Access Devices
- My Health Learning - Invasive Device Protocols
- Intensive Care NSW- Central venous Access Device Post Insertion Management Guideline
- NSW Health Multicultural Service- Patient Information Sheets
- Sepsis Kills Paediatrics Blood Culture Guidelines
- Sepsis Kills Neonatal Blood Culture Guidelines
- Safety Notice 004/14 Removal of Central Venous Access Devices (CVAD)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention- Central Line-associated Bloodstream Infections
- Health Protection Surveillance Centre- Central Vascular Catheters
- Health Protection Surveillance Centre- Peripheral Vascular Care Bundles
- Health Protection Scotland- Preventing infections when inserting and maintaining a peripheral vascular catheter (PVC)
- The Joint Commission- CLABSI Toolkit
- Association for Professionals in Infection Control- CLABSIs

315(16/08/19)
Attachment 4: Implementation Checklist

Note: This implementation planner is NOT mandatory – it is a tool for HOs to use to monitor implementation of this policy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation Requirements</th>
<th>Action Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local guideline or procedures in place for Peripheral Intravenous Catheters (PIVC)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local guideline or procedure in place for Midline Catheters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local guideline or procedure in place for Central Venous Access Devices (CVADs), including implanted venous ports (ports).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local guideline or procedure in place for Umbilical Catheters.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local guideline or procedure in place for Peripheral Artery Catheters.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local guideline or procedure in place for Pulmonary Artery Catheters.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles and responsibilities for each type of clinician involved with these devices is clearly defined in the guideline or procedure.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinicians who insert, manage and remove CVADs have undergone training and formal competency assessment. Assessments are documented and accessible for review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility wide monitoring of clinician CVAD insertion practices to ensure only trained/experienced clinicians undertake or supervise CVAD insertion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All staff involved in the insertion, management and removal of devices have completed periodic educational program and assessment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing education is provided to HWs on preventing and controlling infection risks in relation to intravascular devices.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients are provided with infection prevention and control education on their device and this education is documented.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has been determined where devices are to be documented in the patient health record.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The CVAD Insertion Record or equivalent is completed for every CVAD insertion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is an evaluation method to ensure that insertion sites are assessed and documented daily in the patient health record.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Processes are in place to support and evaluate the appropriate use of alternative locking solutions (e.g. heparin or antimicrobial).

Locks containing medication are prescribed by a medical officer or nurse practitioner.

Confirmation of tip position is documented on the central venous line insertion record or equivalent for all central device insertions.

HOs who care for neonates have a local policy or guideline in place for skin preparation and/or antisepsis for pre-term infants.

Criteria for PIVC replacement based on clinical indication has been met by the HO.

Processes are in place to ensure appropriate authority to remove devices.

Procedures in place to investigate positive cultures that are attributed to devices.

All reportable device related BSI events are reviewed at the HO on a case by case basis to identify potential opportunity for clinical practice improvement.

Surveillance systems are in place to monitor adverse events and incidents related to devices.

Compliance with this Policy Directive and Procedures is monitored and reported to the nominated peak committee.

### GLOSSARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration Set</td>
<td>A tubing set composed of components that is used to deliver infusions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Embolism</td>
<td>The presence of air in the vascular system that obstructs venous blood flow primarily to the lungs and brain (85).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Based Hand Rub (ABHR)</td>
<td>An alcohol-containing preparation (gel, foam or liquid) designed for reducing the number of viable microorganisms on dry, unsoiled hands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Based Surgical Hand Rub (ABSHR)</td>
<td>Hand rub performed preoperatively by the surgical team to eliminate transient flora and reduce resident skin flora.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antimicrobial</td>
<td>A chemical substance , usually a medicine, that inhibits or destroys bacteria, viruses fungi or protozoa (81).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antiseptics</td>
<td>Antimicrobial substances that are applied to the skin to reduce the number of micro flora (e.g. topical alcohols, chlorhexidine and iodine).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asepsis</td>
<td>Free from infection or infectious (pathogenic) material.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aseptic technique consists of a set of practices aimed at minimising contamination and is particularly used to protect the patient from infection during clinical procedures. The five essential principles of aseptic technique are sequencing, environmental control, hand hygiene, maintenance of aseptic fields and personal protective equipment (PPE). While the principles of aseptic technique remain constant for all procedures, the level of practice will change depending upon a standard risk assessment (81).

Assistant
A trained or experienced clinician who supports or aids a clinician inserting a CVAD.

Arteriovenous Fistula (AV)
Vascular access used to access the blood for haemodialysis treatment.

Blood stream infections (BSIs)
The presence of live pathogen(s) in the blood, causing an infection.

Catheter Exchange
Replacement of existing central venous access device (CVAD) with a new CVAD using the same catheter tract (4).

Central Related Blood Stream Infection (CR-BSI)
A laboratory-confirmed, primary blood stream infection in a patient with a intravascular access device in place, and the BSI is not related to an infection at another site (4).

Central Venous Access Device (CVAD)
Also called a central venous line or central venous catheter (CVC).
- Centrally- inserted central venous catheters have a skin entry point in the neck or trunk.
- Peripherally- inserted central catheters have a skin entry point on a limb or the scalp.
- Non-Tunnelled- the catheter insertion and exit points are the same
- Tunnelled - the catheter is inserted through one point and then “tunneled” under the skin to a remote exit point.

Clinician
For the purpose of this policy, a clinician is defined as a medical practitioner (including Locum Medical Officers), nurse or midwife.

Experienced Clinician- A clinician with a high level of competence in CVAD insertion and a comprehensive understanding of the management of potential complications.

Trained Clinician- Clinician who has completed a training program consistent with best practice for the insertion of CVADs.

Untrained Clinician- Clinician who has commenced, but not completed, a training program consistent with best practice for the insertion of CVADs.

Competency
Compete- Capability of the individual to apply knowledge, critical thinking, interpersonal, decision making, and psychomotor skills to intravascular access devices (4).

Competence is the combination of skills, knowledge, attitudes, values and abilities that underpin effective performance (86).

For the purpose of the guideline, a competent clinician is one who has completed a training program in the insertion of PIVCs or who is in, or has completed, a specialist medical training program

Competency- An integration of behaviours in the varied circumstances of the work environment demonstrating the individual’s ability to perform the desired job related activities and tasks (4).

Competency Assessment- The process of reviewing and documenting the individual’s demonstrated ability to perform a job, role, specific tasks, or other patient care activities (4).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electrocardiogram ECG</td>
<td>Is a test that measures and records the electrical activity of the heartbeat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erythema</td>
<td>Redness of skin along a vein track that results from vascular irritation or capillary congestion in response to irritation, may be a precursor to or indication of phlebitis (4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extravasation</td>
<td>Inadvertent infiltration of vesicant solution or medication into surrounding tissue; rated by a standard tool (4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flushing</td>
<td>The act of moving fluids, medications, blood, and blood products out of the vascular access device into the bloodstream; used to assess and maintain patency and prevent precipitation due to solution/medication incompatibility (4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidewire</td>
<td>A long, flexible metal structure, composed of tightly wound coiled wire in a variety of designs; contains safety mechanisms that allow it to be inserted into the vein or artery (4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand Hygiene</td>
<td>A general term applying to processes aiming to reduce the number of microorganisms on hands. This includes application of a waterless antimicrobial agent (e.g. ABHR) to the surface of dry unsoiled hands; or use of soap / solution (plain or antimicrobial) and running water (if hands are visibly soiled), followed by patting dry with single-use towels (81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare Associated Infection (HAI)</td>
<td>Refers to infections acquired in healthcare facilities and infections that occur as a result of healthcare interventions and which may manifest after people leave the healthcare facility (81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Organisation</td>
<td>For the purpose of this Policy a Health Organisation is: Local Health District, Speciality Health Networks, Statutory health corporation that provides inpatient services, or Affiliated health organisation in respect of its recognised establishments that provide inpatient service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIMS</td>
<td>The NSW Health Incident Information Management System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implantable Venous Port (port/IVP):</td>
<td>Long term CVAD, which is surgically placed under the skin from the insertion site to a separate exit site. The exit site is typically located in the chest, but can be also located elsewhere for comfort and aesthetic reasons (e.g. inner bicep, abdomen and thigh). They can be multi lumen. TIVPs consist of two main parts: the portal reservoir and a catheter. The tip of the catheter resides in either the superior or inferior vena cava. Also known as a port-a-cath or a venous port.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infection</td>
<td>The presence and growth of a pathogenic microorganism(s) having a local or systematic effect (49).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infiltration</td>
<td>Inadvertent administration of a non-vesicant solution or medication into surrounding tissue (4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intravascular device (device):</td>
<td>Catheters, tubes, or devices inserted into the vascular system, including veins, arteries, and bone marrow (4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Parts</td>
<td>Key parts are those parts of equipment / instruments / consumables that if contaminated by infectious material increases the risk of infection. Contamination may occur by direct or indirect contact with the key site(s), other key-parts, or liquid infusions (81).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Sites</td>
<td>The area on the patient that must be protected from pathogenic microorganisms. Key Sites are medical device access sites, surgical sites or open wounds (81).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12. MEDICAL CARE</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.181</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Locking</strong></td>
<td>The instillation of a solution into an intravascular access device (device) used to maintain patency in between device use and/or reduce risk of catheter related BSI.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maximum Barrier Precautions</strong></td>
<td>Surgical mask, hat (head and facial hair cover), eye protection, sterile gown and sterile gloves. Equipment and clothing used to avoid exposure to pathogens, including sterile coverings for the clinicians and patient: mask, gown, protective eyewear, cap, gloves, large or full body drapes, and towels (4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Midline Catheter</strong></td>
<td>Catheter used in a vascular access procedure that is inserted inside a major vein for a period of weeks so that blood can be repeatedly drawn or medication and nutrients can be injected into the patient's bloodstream on regular basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monitor</strong></td>
<td>To check, supervise, observe critically, or record the progress of an activity, action or system on a regular basis in order to identify change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Must:</strong></td>
<td>Indicates a mandatory action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Needleless Injection Port</strong></td>
<td>A device that allows intermittent access to a device with an administration set or syringe without the use of needles (4). Also known as: Needleless IV catheter systems, Swabable capless valve, swabable capless access device, needleless access ports, needle-free injection port, needleless connector and needle-free connector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neonate</strong></td>
<td>Pertaining to the first 4 weeks of life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-tunnelled CVAD</strong></td>
<td>Enter the venous system at the point of insertion and are fixed in place at this site, with the catheter and attachments protruding. Non-tunnelled CVADs are also known as percutaneous CVADs. Non-tunnelled catheters are generally used for short term therapy and in emergency situations. A vascular or nonvascular access device inserted by puncture directly through the skin and the intended location without a portion of the device allowed to remain in a subcutaneous tract (4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Osmolality</strong></td>
<td>The number of osmotically active particles in a solution (4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Palpation</strong></td>
<td>Examination by application of the hands or fingers to the surface of the body in order to detect evidence of disease or abnormalities in the various organs; also used to determine location of peripheral superficial veins and their condition (4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peripheral Arterial Catheter</strong></td>
<td>An arterial line inserted in radial artery; can be placed in femoral, axillary, brachial, posterior tibial arteries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter (PICC)</strong></td>
<td>A medium to long term CVAD inserted in a large peripheral vein, preferably the basilic vein, and then advanced until the tip rests in the superior vena cava or cavo-atrial junction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peripheral Intravenous Cannula (PIVC):</strong></td>
<td>A catheter (small, flexible tube) placed into a peripheral vein for intravenous access.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):</strong></td>
<td>Refers to a variety of infection prevention barriers and respirators used alone, or in combination, to protect mucous membranes, skin, and clothing from contact with recognised and unrecognised sources of infectious agents in healthcare settings. The equipment worn to minimize exposure to a variety of hazards, including blood-borne pathogens; examples of PPE include items such as gloves, eye protection, gown, and face mask (81).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phlebitis</strong></td>
<td>Inflammation of a vein; may be accompanied by pain, erythema, oedema, streak formation, and/or palpable cord (48).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Pulmonary Artery Catheter (PA)
Also known as a Swan-ganz catheter, is a CVAD inserted into a large central vein, with the tip residing in a pulmonary artery. Its purpose is diagnostic and therapeutic; it is used to detect heart failure or sepsis, monitor therapy, evaluate the effects of drugs, and infuse medication.

### Should
Indicates an action that ought to be followed unless there are justifiable reasons for taking a different course of action.

### Sterile Technique
Is a set of specific practices and procedures performed to make equipment and areas free from all microorganisms and to maintain that sterility.

### Supervisor
An experienced clinician (also refer to definition of experienced clinician).

### Surveillance
Active, systematic, ongoing observation of the occurrence and distribution of disease within a population and of the events or conditions that increase or decrease the risk of such disease occurrence.

### Total Parenteral Nutrition (TPN)
The intravenous provision of total nutritional needs for a patient who is unable to take appropriate amounts of food enterally; typical components include carbohydrates, proteins, and/or fats, as well as additives such as electrolytes, vitamins, and trace elements (4).

### Tunnelled CVAD
A central vascular access device (CVAD) with a segment of the catheter lying in a subcutaneous tunnel with the presence of a cuff into which the subcutaneous tissue grows to offer security for the catheter; indicates that the skin exit site and vein entry site are separated by the subcutaneous tunnel (4).

### Vesicant
An agent capable of causing tissue damage when it escapes from the intended vascular pathway into surrounding tissue.

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NATIONAL POLICY – ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT FUNDED IMMUNOGLOBULIN PRODUCTS IN AUSTRALIA (IB2014_068)

IB2014_068 rescinds PD2012_041.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Information Bulletin is to (1) rescind NSW Ministry of Health Policy Directive PD2012_041: Immunoglobulins, use in NSW and (2) to advise all staff who prescribe, order, dispense or treat patients with immunoglobulin products that from 5 November 2014 access to government-funded immunoglobulin is governed by a new national policy “Access to Government Funded immunoglobulin Products in Australia”.

KEY INFORMATION

Polyclonal immunoglobulins (intravenous immunoglobulin [IVIg], subcutaneous immunoglobulin [SC Ig] and normal human immunoglobulin) are used to treat a variety of neurological, haematological, immunological and a smaller number of miscellaneous conditions. Access to these products under the national blood arrangements is tightly controlled through the application of the Australian Health Ministers’ Conference “Criteria for the Clinical Use of Intravenous Immunoglobulin” as well as certain policy requirements. The new national policy is one of a number of government-endorsed measures that have been developed and managed by the National Blood Authority at the request of the Jurisdictional Blood Committee to ensure good governance of these expensive products. The policy does not apply to specific immunoglobulins such as Rh D immunoglobulin and Tetanus immunoglobulin.

The new policy sets out the access requirements for each preparation of immunoglobulin and it clarifies the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in the management of immunoglobulin products.

The key changes that the policy provides for are:

1. **New Authorisation Request forms.** Forms that are currently used by prescribers will not be accepted by the “Authoriser” i.e. the Australian Red Cross Blood Service (the Blood Service) after 4 November 2014. The new Authorisation forms can be downloaded from the NBA website at: [www.blood.gov.au/immunoglobulin-ig-governance-program](http://www.blood.gov.au/immunoglobulin-ig-governance-program).

   It should be noted that the process of seeking Authorisation will no longer directly trigger an order (this must be placed separately through the health facility).

2. **The requirement for the prescriber to obtain explicit patient consent to:**

   - Treatment with immunoglobulin products, in compliance with the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standard 7, and the NSW Health PD2005_406 Consent to Medical Treatment – Patient Information.

   - The collection, retention and use of their personal sensitive data, in accordance with both the Australian Privacy Principles and the NSW Privacy legislation. In NSW data is already collected to facilitate access to the products. Obtaining explicit patient consent ensures that patients are aware that their data is being collected and provided to the Blood Service.
3. **A standardised national patient treatment review process with a revised Patient Treatment Review Outcome Notification form.** Currently, patients in NSW are not supplied with immunoglobulin if they have not had specified reviews on given dates. This approach is now being standardised nationally. The Blood Service will send the form to the patient’s treating medical specialist at least eight weeks prior to the patient’s treatment review date. The outcomes of the review must be recorded on the form with any request for an increased dosage for the patient being supported by information about the patient’s weight. The completed form should be returned to the Blood Service within a month of the patient review date. Failure to comply with this requirement will, except in extenuating circumstances, result in the patient no longer being able to access government funded immunoglobulin.

4. **Coordinated ordering and management of immunoglobulin products** to (1) improve transparency of product inventory; (2) ensure that product is provided to approved patients only; and (3) to reduce product expiry-related wastage. Further information about the new national policy can be obtained from the NBA web site at: [www.blood.gov.au/immunoglobulin-ig-governance-program](http://www.blood.gov.au/immunoglobulin-ig-governance-program)

Clinicians wishing to treat a medical condition with IVIg or SCIg that is not funded under “the Criteria” can order imported product from any commercial supplier of these products or access product under the Jurisdictional Direct Order Arrangement established by the National Blood Authority. In either case, the order must be placed directly with the relevant supplier and the cost of the product will have to be paid for by either the clinician’s hospital or the patient. There is no licensed intramuscular product commercially available outside the National Blood Agreement.
This document articulates the NSW Health policy in relation to the treatment of patients with Haemophilia and related bleeding disorders.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Compliance with NSW Ministry of Health’s policy in relation to the treatment of patients with Haemophilia and related bleeding disorders is mandatory in public facilities.

It is recommended that licensed private facilities also comply with requirements of the Policy Directive.

IMPLEMENTATION

Chief Executives of Local Health Districts must ensure:
- the principles and requirements of this policy are applied, achieved and sustained;
- local protocols are in place in the relevant facilities to support implementation;
- all relevant staff are made aware of their obligations regarding this Policy Directive.

BACKGROUND

This Policy Directive embodies the recommendations of the NSW/ACT Haemophilia Advisory Council Clinical Committee, members of which provide expert clinical advice to the NSW Ministry of Health in relation to the treatment of patients with haemophilia and related bleeding disorders. The recommendations of this Committee reflect best practice in the field; they encompass recommendations of the World Federation of Haemophilia and they align clinical practice in NSW with that in the rest of Australia the USA and Europe.

INTRODUCTION

The information provided in this Policy Directive is intended for clinicians (medical practitioners, nurses and midwives) and surgeons who treat patients with haemophilia and related bleeding disorders.

All patients in NSW or the ACT with haemophilia or a related bleeding disorder that may or may not require treatment must be registered with a Haemophilia Treatment Centre (HTC; see Appendix 1 for details) and their details should be entered on the Australian Bleeding Disorders Registry.

7. Treatment

7.1 On demand treatment

Factor concentrates may be given on demand for bleeding episodes.

7.2 Prophylaxis

The following information is based on Guidelines developed by the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council\(^\text{11}\).

\(^\text{11}\) The Australian Health Minister’s Advisory Council Evidence-based Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Use of Recombinant and Plasma-derived Factor VIII and Factor IX Products (2006)
12. MEDICAL CARE

The goal of prophylaxis is to improve the quality of life for patients with severe bleeding disorders (Haemophilia A or B and Von Willebrand Disorders) by maintaining sufficient coagulation factor levels to prevent spontaneous joint bleeding and the morbidity associated with complications of joint bleeds.

Factor prophylaxis is recommended for all patients with severe Haemophilia and Von Willebrand Disorders who are at risk of, or who have experienced, joint and other serious bleeding.

For the purposes of this policy children have a severe bleeding disorder when their factor level is <5% and they have significant bleeding, for example, intracranial haemorrhage.

The age at which prophylaxis therapy is introduced will vary depending on the patient’s bleeding phenotype and whether the patient and their family are willing to comply with the prophylactic treatment regimen. Most children with severe haemophilia (A or B) start prophylaxis between the ages of 1 and 5 years.

The recommended dose range for prophylaxis in children depends on the underlying factor deficiency and is influenced by the recovery and the expected half-life of the factor. The usual dose range recommended for:

- Factor VIII deficiency is 25 – 40 International Units (IU)/Kg three times a week; and
- Factor IX is 40 – 75 IU/Kg two times a week.

These doses may need to be increased or given more frequently in some patients in order to prevent spontaneous bleeding.

Factor VIII/IX usage and selected clinical and laboratory outcome indicators should be routinely monitored and evaluated for all patients on prophylaxis.

It is mandatory that all patients receiving prophylaxis have their treatment co-ordinated and monitored by a designated NSW/ACT HTC.

It is expected that people with severe bleeding disorders will exercise reasonable precautions in managing their voluntary exposure to high risk of injury. Prophylactic treatment should be accompanied by patient/parent education about such risks.

7.3 Patients with inhibitors

Patients with inhibitors should be treated at an HTC.

1. SURGERY

Surgical intervention maybe elective or occasionally emergency in nature.

2.1 Emergency surgery

Where emergency surgery is conducted at a facility that is not an HTC the hospital should contact the Director of the HTC at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital if the patient is an adult or the Director of the Sydney Children’s Hospital Network - Westmead Campus if the patient is a child (see Attachment 1 for contact details of the relevant HTCs). It is likely that urgent transfer of the patient would be required.
Elective surgery

General matters

Elective surgery on patients with bleeding disorders must take place in consultation with a NSW/ACT HTC.

Applications for supply of coagulation factor for surgery must be approved by the Haemophilia Advisory Council Clinical Committee. Once approval has been given, factor concentrates will be made available by the Australian Red Cross Blood Service.

Application for coagulation factors for surgery should be made on the form at Attachment 2 of this Policy Directive.

Principles relating to elective surgery

The following Guidelines govern the management of elective surgery in patients with haemophilia and other bleeding disorders:

- the Australian Health Minister’s Advisory Council Evidence-based Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Use of Recombinant and Plasma-derived Factor VIII and Factor IX Products (2006);
- the Australian Haemophilia Centre Directors’ Organisation Guideline for the Management of Patients with Haemophilia undergoing surgical procedures (2005); and

In this Policy Directive the principles outlined in the Guidelines have been adapted to balance patient safety with patient preference and equity of access.

In the interests of patient safety, patients with:
- Factor VIII < 30%
- Factor IX < 30%
- Factor XI < 30%
- Von Willebrand Factor activity < 30%; and
- other rare bleeding disorders

should have elective surgery performed in a designated NSW/ACT Haemophilia Treatment Centre since they are “high risk patients” with an increased tendency to bleed, both early and late, and they require management by clinicians experienced in managing haemophilia and related bleeding disorders.

If a patient has a factor level that is over 30% and there is a specific reason for a procedure to be conducted at a hospital that is not a designated NSW/ACT HTC, the patient/parent(s) or carer MUST be made aware of the potential risks attached to having surgery in a hospital that is not a designated or affiliated NSW/ACT HTC and the NSW/ACT Haemophilia Advisory Council Clinical Committee MUST be advised.

The NSW/ACT Haemophilia Advisory Council Clinical Committee will review such requests on a case by case basis to ensure that the following requirements are met:
12. MEDICAL CARE

(1) **The hospital where it is proposed the operation is to be conducted MUST have:**
   - Blood Bank/Pathology capable of providing appropriate support, even in emergency circumstances;
   - Intensive Care Unit (ICU) (where relevant) – staffed 24 hours by qualified ICU specialists to supervise treatment; and
   - Pathology – with ability to provide same day factor levels.

(2) **The hospital must have access to a:**
   Clinical Haematologist who is available to supervise and review treatment daily and is on-call at all times.

(3) **The treating Clinical Haematologist must:**
   - liaise with the Director of the relevant NSW/ACT HTC and must provide a written account of:
     - treatment plan – including dosages and target levels; and
     - monitoring plan – the protocol must be approved by an HTC Director, and it must be followed and carried out in close liaison with the Director of the relevant NSW/ACT HTC.
   - liaise daily (or as required clinically) during the treatment period with the Director of the NSW/ACT HTC; and
   - provide the Director of the relevant NSW/ACT HTC with a summary of factor usage and outcomes of the patient under their management.

(4) **The HTC Director must be:**
   - prepared to review and, if appropriate, approve the treatment and monitoring plan;
   - liaise with the treating Clinical Haematologist if the patient’s treatment and monitoring plan are approved; and
   - be available to the treating Clinical Haematologist during the treatment period.

2. **LIST OF ATTACHMENTS**

1. List of Haemophilia Treatment Centres.
2. Application Form for the Supply of Coagulation Factors for Elective Surgery
The locations and contact details of the NSW/ACT Haemophilia Treatment Centres are as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
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| Royal Prince Alfred Hospital | The Director  
Haemophilia Centre  
Building 77, Level 5  
Royal Prince Alfred Hospital  
Missenden Road Camperdown NSW 2050 | Telephone 02 9515 7013  
Emergency 02 9515 6111  
Fax 02 9515 8946 |
| Westmead Hospital | The Director  
Department of Haematology  
Westmead Hospital | Telephone: (02) 9845 6274  
After hours & weekends: Haematology Registrar 0409392151 |
| The Sydney Children’s Hospital Network -  
Westmead Campus | The Director  
The Kids’ Factor Zone  
The Children’s Hospital at Westmead  
Cnr Hawkesbury Rd & Hainsworth St  
Westmead NSW 2145 | Telephone 02 9845 0839  
After hours & weekends: (02) 9845 0000 and ask for the Haematologist on call  
Fax 02 9845 3332 |
| Sydney Children’s Hospital Network –  
Randwick Campus | Head of Paediatric Haematology  
Centre for Children’s Cancer and Blood Disorders  
Sydney Children’s Hospital  
High Street  
Randwick NSW 2031 | (02) 9382 1690  
After hours & weekends: (02) 9382 1111 and ask for the Haematologist on call  
Fax (02) 9382 1789 |
| Prince of Wales Hospital | Senior Staff Haematologist  
Department of Haematology  
SEALS Level 4  
Prince of Wales Hospital  
Barker Street  
Randwick NSW 2031 | (02) 9382 9013  
After hours & weekends: (02) 9382 2222 & ask for the Haematologist on call  
Fax: (02) 9382 9116 |
| Calvary Mater Newcastle | The Director  
Haemophilia Centre  
Edith Street Waratah NSW 2298 | Telephone 02 4921 1240  
After hours & weekends: (02) 4921 1211 and ask for Haematologist on call  
Fax 02 4960 2136 |
| **ACT**  |         |                 |
| The Canberra Hospital | The Director  
Haemophilia Clinic  
The Canberra Hospital  
Yamba Drive  
Garran ACT 2605 | Telephone (02) 6244 4048  
After hours & weekends: (02) 6244 2222 and ask for Haematologist on call  
Fax: (02) 6244 2271 |
12. MEDICAL CARE

APPLICATION FOR THE SUPPLY OF COAGULATION FACTORS FOR ELECTIVE SURGERY

NSW/ACT HAEMOPHILIA ADVISORY COUNCIL CLINICAL COMMITTEE

This application for the supply of the clotting factor required for elective surgery should be submitted in the first instance to the address below. Consideration will be then given to the request by the NSW/ACT Haemophilia Advisory Council Clinical Committee at its next available meeting.

If there is a shortage of the relevant coagulation factor, elective surgery may have to be deferred and be subject to the haemophilia elective surgery priority list.

Please tick the relevant box where indicated.

Patient details

Family name: ___________________________ Given Name: ___________________________ Date of birth: / / (dd / mm / yyyy)

Sex: □ Male □ Female

Weight: ________ kg

Haemophilia Treatment Centre

Haemophilia Treatment Physician

Type of Bleeding Disorder

□ Haemophilia A □ Mild □ Moderate □ Severe Factor VIII level: ________ %

□ Haemophilia B □ Mild □ Moderate □ Severe Factor IX level: ________ %

□ von Willebrand's disease Type 1 □ 2A □ 2B □ 2M □ 2N □ 3

□ Factor XI deficiency □ Factor XIII deficiency □ Factor VII deficiency

□ Other Bleeding Disorder

Inhibitor status: □ Negative □ Positive

Title: ________ BU

Proposed Surgery

Indications for surgery:

Surgery proposed:

Proposed Hospital / location of surgery:

Proposed date of surgery: / / ________ Degree of urgency:

Coagulation Factor Requirements (Tick relevant box and provide product name)

□ Plasma-derived Factor VIII

□ Recombinant Factor VIII

□ Plasma-derived Factor IX

□ Recombinant Factor IX

□ Factor IX □ Factor XI □ Factor VIIIa □ Factor VII □ FEIBA

□ Other

Estimated requirements: ________ units or ________ IU's

For □ Bolus or □ Continuous infusion

Nature of any concomitant conditions:

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Signed: ___________________________ Print Name: ___________________________

Designation: ___________________________ Date: ________

(Designee)
## 12. MEDICAL CARE

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**APPLICATION FOR THE SUPPLY OF COAGULATION FACTORS FOR ELECTIVE SURGERY**

Please place this application in an envelope marked Confidential and address it to:

NSW/ACT Transfusion Medicine Specialist  
Medical Services  
Australian Red Cross Blood Service  
17, O'Kordan Street  
Alexandria NSW 2015

**Office use only**

NSW/ACT HAEMOPHILIA ADVISORY COUNCIL CLINICAL COMMITTEE  
Approved for the supply of coagulation factors for elective surgery

1. Further Information to be sought:

2. Details of further information obtained:

3. Decision of the Clinical Committee:

4. Approval

☐ Approved - ARCBS to supply product  
Or  
☐ Deferred - to Haemophilia Elective Surgery / Coagulation Factor Waiting list  
Or  
☐ Not approved - for following reason(s)

Signed: ____________________ Print Name: ____________________

Designation: ________________ Date: ________________

183(22/08/13)
CLINICAL PLACEMENTS IN NSW HEALTH POLICY (PD2016_057)

PD2016_057 rescinds PD2013_015

PURPOSE

Student clinical placements are a requirement for courses in a number of health-related disciplines in NSW including medicine, dentistry and oral health, nursing and midwifery, allied health and all other discipline areas aligned to clinical services.

The Clinical Placements in NSW Health Policy outlines the process that Health Services and Education Providers must follow to facilitate clinical placements for students in NSW public health facilities and affiliated organisations. This includes the establishment of a Student Placement Agreement between each Health Service and Education Provider, compliance and verification requirements and the use of ClinConnect to book and manage all clinical placements.

The Guidelines for Clinical Placements in NSW Health form part of the Clinical Placements in NSW Health Policy. The Guideline establishes best practice in relation to the implementation of the policy to provide additional support to Health Services and Education Providers responsible for clinical placements. These are available on the NSW Health Policy Distribution System.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

For students to attend clinical placements in NSW public health facilities the following must be met:

1. A NSW Health Student Placement Agreement (SPA) for Entry into a Health Occupation (Attachment 1) must be in place between a Health Service and Education Provider. Local SPAs are to be in accordance with the NSW Health SPA template, accessible at:

2. Students must be compliant with the relevant mandatory requirements of NSW Health Policy directives and training, prior to the commencement of a clinical placement. This includes:
   - Occupational assessment, screening and vaccination against specified infectious diseases (PD2011_005)
   - Employment checks – criminal record checks and working with children checks (PD2016_047)
   - NSW Health Code of Conduct (PD2015_049)
   Note, these policy directives may be amended from time to time.

3. ClinConnect, a web-based system, must be used to book and manage all clinical placements that take place in NSW public health facilities and affiliated organisations in all discipline areas aligned to clinical services, and used to record clinical placement activity and student details for medicine. Access to ClinConnect will be determined in the SPA.

   Those with access to ClinConnect must ensure confidentiality and privacy of sensitive information in accordance with the NSW Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (HRIP Act). All staff working in the NSW public health system, including clinical staff is bound by law, the NSW Health Privacy Manual and a strict code of conduct to maintain confidentiality of patient information. The NSW Health Privacy Manual is accessible at:
   Further information on NSW Health legal resources are accessible at:
Clinical placements are managed between Health Services and Education Providers, based on the available capacity of placements in NSW Health facilities. Examples of the role and responsibilities of each participant involved in clinical placements are listed below. For further information, please see *Attachment 1: Roles and Responsibilities of Participants in NSW Health’s Clinical Placement System.*

**The Health Education and Training Institute (HETI)** provides a point of leadership, governance and management of clinical placements and verification processes. HETI is also responsible for the management and operational performance of ClinConnect and its users.

**Health Services** establish a governance structure for clinical placements and ClinConnect to ensure a single point of governance, communication and leadership across all disciplines and facilities within their organisation. Additionally, they are responsible for verifying Students’ and Facilitators’ compliance to NSW Health policies.

**Education Providers** establish a governance structure for clinical placements by appointing a single point of contact across all disciplines within their organisation. They further provide Students and Facilitators with information about compliance and verification requirements.

**Students** have to comply with relevant policy directives, guidelines and procedures and provide evidence thereof to Health Services prior to commencing a clinical placement.

**Facilitators** have to comply with discipline specific requirements, in addition to relevant policy directives, guidelines and procedures. Evidence of compliance has to be provided prior to commencing work as a Facilitator in a NSW Health facility.

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Roles and Responsibilities of Participants in NSW Health’s Clinical Placements System.
2. NSW Health Student Placement Agreement (SPA) for Entry into a Health Occupation.

**ATTACHMENT 1**

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTICIPANTS IN NSW HEALTH’S CLINICAL PLACEMENTS SYSTEM**

The role and responsibilities of each participant involved in clinical placements for NSW public health facilities and affiliated organisations is listed below. Further information on implementation of the Clinical Placements Policy is available in the *Guidelines for Clinical Placements in NSW Health.*

**The Health Education and Training Institute (HETI)**

- Provide a point of leadership, governance and management of clinical placements and verification processes, and be a point of information and communication for relevant stakeholders.

- Manage ClinConnect and the associated state-wide business rules, as well as the ongoing operational effectiveness and performance of the system.

- Manage and approve ClinConnect user access for Health Service and Education Provider Coordinators and other users as required.

- Provide relevant clinical placement data as required to meet planning and reporting requirements of the NSW Ministry of Health, and others authorised to receive this information.

- Provide relevant clinical placement data to inform Local Health Districts, Specialty Networks and Education Providers as appropriate.

**Health Services**

- Establish a governance structure for clinical placements, including the role of a:
  - Liaison officer as outlined in the SPA (this role may be held by the Health Service ClinConnect Coordinator)
  - Discipline representatives as outlined in the SPA.
12. **MEDICAL CARE**

- Establish a governance structure for ClinConnect which includes the role of a:
  - Health Service ClinConnect Coordinator and delegate who can provide a single point of governance, communication and leadership across all disciplines and facilities within their organisation. This role may be held by the Liaison officer.
- Liaise with Education Providers regarding clinical placements for students.
- Enter into NSW Health SPAs with Education Providers.
- Verify and record the compliance of Students in ClinConnect prior to the commencement of the first clinical placement.
- Check Student identification for those commencing a clinical placement.
- Record commencement of all clinical placements in ClinConnect.
- Manage access to ClinConnect for users within their organisation.
- Provide Education Providers with the *NSW Health Code of Conduct* as per clause 5.18 of the SPA.
- Verify Facilitators’ compliance and AHPRA professional registration details (or other registration or accreditation requirement as determined by the discipline) and record this in ClinConnect prior to commencement of work as a Facilitator in a NSW Health facility.
- Responsible for maintaining copies of compliance documentation for Students and Facilitators for seven years.

**Education Providers**
- Liaise with Health Services regarding clinical placements for Students, including their verification compliance and attendance.
- Enter into NSW Health SPAs with NSW Health Services.
- Provide Students with information about the compliance and verification requirements for clinical placements in NSW Health, including social media policy and relevant NSW Health policies including the *NSW Health Code of Conduct*.
- Nominate:
  - An Education Provider ClinConnect Coordinator and delegate as the main clinical placement contact across all disciplines within their organisation
  - A Liaison Officer (this role may be held by the Education Provider ClinConnect Coordinator) as required by the SPA
  - Discipline representatives as required by the SPA.
- Manage access to the ClinConnect system for users within their organisation.
- Provide Facilitators with information about the compliance and verification requirements for working as a Facilitator in NSW Health.
- Send all compliance information for Students and Facilitators to the relevant Health Service for verification within the allocated timeframes.

**Students**
- Access clinical placements through their Education Provider.
- Complete all compliance requirements and provide evidence of compliance to Health Services for verification before commencing a clinical placement in a NSW Health Facility.
- Provide updated evidence for verification prior to expiry (for example, temporary to full compliance or a new National Criminal Record Check) when required.
- Comply with the *NSW Health Code of Conduct*, relevant policy directives, guidelines and procedures whilst undertaking clinical placements within NSW Health.

315(09/12/16)
• Complete NSW Health mandatory training, including eLearning courses as required.

**Facilitators**
• Complete all compliance requirements and provide evidence of compliance including any discipline specific professional registration / accreditation to Health Services for verification prior to commencing work as a Facilitator in a NSW Health facility.
• Comply with discipline specific professional registration / accreditation and remain compliant with this and the *NSW Health Code of Conduct*, relevant policy directives, guidelines and procedures whilst working in the role of Facilitator in NSW Health facilities.
• Provide updated evidence to the Health Service for verification prior to expiry of National Criminal Record Check, Working With Children Check or professional registration (or accreditation) if still working in the role of Facilitator in NSW Health facilities.
• Complete NSW Health mandatory training, including eLearning courses as required.
• Carry their Education Provider Identification card at all times whilst working in the role of a Facilitator in a NSW Health facility.

**ATTACHMENT 2**

**STUDENT PLACEMENT AGREEMENT FOR ENTRY INTO A HEALTH OCCUPATION**

**CURRENT AS OF JUNE 2016**

THIS AGREEMENT is made on the day of 2

BE TWEEN

THE (name) , a statutory corporation established pursuant to the Health Services Act 1997,

ABN of (address) , (“the Public Health Organisation”)

AND

THE (name) , ABN of (address) , (“the Institution”)

**RECITALS**

A The Institution delivers education and training for any or all of the health-related occupations that are employed within the NSW public health system.

B The Public Health Organisation provides Students of the Institution with placements in the NSW public health system, wherever possible, for the purpose of supervised practical experience for their education and learning.

C.1 The parties enter into this Agreement for the purposes of:

(a) Specifying the terms and conditions under which Students of the Institution may be placed in the NSW public health system for the purpose of supervised practical experience for their education and learning;
12. MEDICAL CARE

(b) Working collaboratively for mutual benefit;

c) Specifying areas of engagement between them; and

d) Providing a mechanism for resolving any disputes which may arise concerning the matters dealt with in this Agreement.

C.2 The parties subscribe to the philosophy of educating Students in health-related occupation qualifications and recognise the importance of practical experience in this area, and in particular note that:

(a) A primary role of the Public Health Organisation is to provide health services in a safe and appropriate manner;

(b) A primary role of the Institution is to provide education and research; and

(c) All parties have responsibility for education and research to support the development of a sustainable health workforce.

C.3 The parties recognise the benefits that Students can bring to the NSW public health system, including the identification of opportunities to improve the quality of patient care and service delivery.

C.4 The parties further acknowledge the contribution made by the Public Health Organisation through the supervision of Students during placements and the provision of access to facilities in which such Students are placed.

1 SCOPE OF THIS AGREEMENT

1.1 This Agreement applies to Student Placements for:

(a) Students enrolled at the Institution in undergraduate and graduate qualifications leading to entry into a health-related occupation;

(b) Post-secondary school Vocational Education Training qualifications under Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Training Packages required for health-related occupations and leading to entry into a health related occupation; and

(c) International or domestic Students who are not enrolled in a qualification referred to in 1.1(a) and 1.1(b), but who are undertaking an elective unit or units of study which requires a Student Placement with a Public Health Organisation and where the Institution has agreed to facilitate such Student Placement.

1.2 Notwithstanding clause 1.1, this Agreement does not apply to:

(a) A person on Student Placement while undertaking a course as part of their employment by the Public Health Organisation;

(b) Trainees who are employed by the Public Health Organisation;

(c) Students undertaking research which is not part of an entry into a health-related occupation training course.
2 DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

2.1 For the purpose of this Agreement:

**Agreement** means this agreement and includes any Schedules annexed to it.

**Authorised Officer** means, for the:

(a) Public Health Organisation, the Chief Executive or delegate,
(b) Institution, when it is a university, the Vice-Chancellor or delegate,
(c) Institution, when it is an Institute of Technical and Further Education (TAFE), the Institute Director or delegate,
(d) Institution, when it is a Registered Training Organisation other than an Institute of Technical and Further Education, the Chief Executive/Managing Director or delegate.

**Clinical Education** means the delivery of education or training to Students in a NSW Public Health Organisation Facility in a clinical environment. It includes supervised research being undertaken in a public health system laboratory.

**Code of Conduct** means the policy concerning the standard of conduct expected of Public Health Organisation and Institution Staff and Students during employment and Student Placement, respectively, issued from time to time by the NSW Ministry of Health which as at the date of this Agreement is embodied in NSW Health Policy Directive PD2015_049 NSW Health Code of Conduct as amended from time to time.

**Confidential Information** means information of a Party whether verbal, written or in electronic form or some other form that:

(a) is confidential to either Party by its nature, including Patient Data;
(b) is designated by either Party as confidential; or
(c) the recipient of the information knows or ought to know is confidential to either Party, its agents or its advisers;

but does not include information that:

(d) is or becomes public knowledge, other than by breach of this Agreement or by any unlawful means; or
(e) is ascertainable through independent enquiries;
(f) may be or is required to be disclosed pursuant to Memorandum No. 2007-01 Public Disclosure of Information arising from NSW Government Tenders and Contracts dated 8 January 2007 and the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW), as amended or updated from time to time; or
(g) is required to be disclosed pursuant to law, regulation, legal process or a regulatory authority.

**Course** means a course of study leading to a qualification required for a health-related occupation offered by the Institution as set out in Part A of Schedule 1, of which education in a clinical setting or non-clinical setting forms a part.

**Discipline Representative** means the Staff members nominated by the Institution and the Public Health Organisation to administer each Student Placement for a Course pursuant to clause 9.5.

**Facilitator** (or student supervisor) means a person nominated, engaged by and reporting to the Institution and approved by the Public Health Organisation pursuant to clause 5.1 to provide education, supervision and assessment of Students on Student Placement.
Facility means each hospital facility site or service of the Public Health Organisation specified in Schedule 1 Part A and any amendments to the Schedule made in accordance with clause 10.4.

Facility Manager means the manager of a Facility or authorised delegate.

Institution means the individual university, registered training organisation or TAFE College responsible for the delivery of education or training.

Institution Staff means a person employed or contracted by the Institution who fulfils the role of Student Supervisor or who provides support and consultation to Students or the Student Supervisor and whose details have been notified to the Public Health Organisation in accordance with Schedule 1 Part B.

Intellectual Property Rights means all present and future registered and unregistered rights in relation to patents, copyright, designs, trademarks, inventions, trade secrets, Confidential Information and all other intellectual property.

Joint Committee means the committee established by the Parties pursuant to clause 28.1 to discuss a dispute with the view to achieving a resolution of a dispute.

Liaison Officer means the person nominated as such by a Party pursuant to clause 9.1.

Orientation means any document or process intended to familiarise the Student with the various aspects of the workplace in which the Student Placement is being undertaken, including work health and safety requirements.

Patient (or client) means a person or persons who receive(s) a health care service provided by a Facility, including persons receiving health care services at a location other than the Facility, including without limitation, at a person’s home.

Patient Data means personal information about a current or former Patient of the Public Health Organisation that is information or an opinion about the physical or mental health or a disability (at any time) of an individual or genetic information of an individual and includes all information collected to provide, or in providing a health service and any other Personal Information about an individual collected in connection with the donation, or intended donation of an individual’s body parts, organs or substances.

Personal Information means information or an opinion (including information or an opinion forming part of a database), whether true or not, and whether recorded in material form or not, about a natural person whose identity is apparent, or can reasonably be ascertained, from the information or opinion.

Program means education in a health context forming part of a formal health-related occupation education or training Course.

Public Health Organisation means the organisation responsible for the operation of a hospital Facility site or service where a Student Placement might occur as defined in section 7 of the Health Services Act 1997.

Public Health Organisation Staff means persons employed or contracted by the Public Health Organisation.

Registered Training Organisation (RTO) means an organisation that is registered to provide vocational education and training.
Student means any student identified in clause 1.1 of this Agreement.

Student Supervisor (or Facilitator) means a person nominated, engaged by and reporting to the Institution and approved by the Public Health Organisation pursuant to clause 5.1 to provide education, supervision and assessment of Students on Student Placement.

Student Workplace Supervisor (also referred to as a Facilitator) means a person nominated and employed or engaged by the Public Health Organisation pursuant to clause 5.1 to provide work based supervision to Students on Student Placement. In practice and as agreed between the parties, the Student Supervisor and Student Workplace Supervisor may be the same person.

Student Placement means the provision of supervised education and research opportunities for Students.

The supervised education must be:

1. A requirement of the Student’s qualification; or

2. A requirement for registration into a profession or discipline, or a requirement to be eligible for licensing as a professional association member.

Student Placement Governance Committee means the committee formed pursuant to clause 8.

Student Year means the academic year at the Institution in which the Student is enrolled.

Supervision means the organised and approved mentoring or preceptor (on-the-spot) education by a qualified person in a clinical setting or non-clinical setting for Students in training or education courses required for a health-related occupation.

Vocational Education and Training (VET) means for the purposes of the Agreement post-secondary school Vocational Education and Training program leading to a qualification within the Australian Qualifications Framework in a health-related vocational area.

2.2 Except where the context otherwise requires:

(a) clause headings are for convenience only and are not intended to affect the interpretation of this Agreement;

(b) where any word or phrase has a defined meaning, any other form of that word or phrase has a corresponding meaning;

(c) words in the singular include the plural and vice versa;

(d) all the provisions in any Schedule to this Agreement are incorporated in, and form part of, this Agreement and bind the Parties;

(e) the terms of this Agreement prevail to the extent of any inconsistency between that term and any Schedule to this Agreement;

(f) if a period of time is specified and dates from a given day or the day of an act or event, it is to be calculated inclusive of that day; and
12. MEDICAL CARE

12.203 (g) statutes, regulations, ordinances or by-laws shall be deemed for all purposes to be extended to include a reference to all statutes, regulations, ordinances or by-laws amending, consolidating or replacing same from time to time.

3 TERM

3.1 This Agreement commences on ____________, and continues for a period of five years unless terminated earlier in accordance with clauses 29.1 or 29.2.

Renewal Terms

3.2 No later than ninety (90) days prior to the expiration of the Agreement, the Parties may agree in writing to extend the Agreement on its current terms or on varied terms as agreed between the parties. Such extension or renewal of this Agreement may be for a term of up to a maximum of five (5) years.

4 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH ORGANISATION

Access to Patients, Facilities and Equipment

4.1. It is the responsibility of the Public Health Organisation to provide access to facilities to support Student Placement, wherever practicable.

4.2 The Public Health Organisation will make available to Students and Institution Staff:

(a) reasonable access to Patients for the purpose of the completion of the Student Placement, subject to the authority of the Student Workplace Supervisor and Patient or guardian consent (in accordance with privacy legislation and any Public Health Organisation policies) and the treatment needs of the Patient;

(b) such access to current and archival Patient clinical records as is reasonably necessary for the completion of the Student Placement, provided such access is consistent with any NSW Ministry of Health and/or Public Health Organisation confidentiality guidelines, privacy policies and legislation;

(c) such materials and equipment as reasonably required to undertake the Student Placement and amenities at each Facility sufficient to enable Institution Staff to conduct Student Placement discussions, debriefings and conferences with their Students as and when available;

(d) access to library, internet and other reference materials, where practicable; and

(e) locker, change room, dining facilities and parking, where practicable.

4.3 In making available the access, facilities and equipment provided under clauses 4.1 and 4.2, the Public Health Organisation may impose such conditions as it considers reasonably appropriate.

Orientation and Induction

4.4 The Public Health Organisation will provide Students and Student Supervisors with an Orientation to the workplace where the Student will be undertaking the Student Placement and an induction to the procedures of the Public Health Organisation.

Policies and Procedures

4.5 The Public Health Organisation will make available to Students and Institution Staff access to its own and all relevant NSW Ministry of Health policies, guidelines and procedures, including those related to privacy, open disclosure, work health and safety, security, code of conduct, record keeping, immunisation and infection control, mandatory training, and Staff health as supplemented and amended from time to time. Such policies, guidelines and procedures are available on the NSW Health website (http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/).
12. MEDICAL CARE

5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INSTITUTION

Supervision and Teaching

5.1 The amount and nature of Supervision to be provided to each Student will be co-operatively determined between the Institution and the Public Health Organisation. This will take into account the individual educational needs of Students and the respective roles, where applicable, of Student Supervisors and Student Workplace Supervisors noting the responsibility of the Institution for oversight of the education, including clinical education, of its Students.

5.2 Arrangements for Supervision are to be agreed between the Parties in operational Schedule 1 Part B or otherwise in writing in accordance with the timeframes specified in clauses 10.3 to 10.5.

5.3 If the objectives of any Program are altered, or if the level of Student competence varies, the Institution may review the level of Supervision required, and submit any changes for approval to the relevant Liaison Officer, who may refer the matter to the Student Placement Governance Committee if required, in accordance with clause 9.2.

5.4 The Institution will make available to Public Health Organisation Staff who are providing elements of Supervision in terms of clause 5.1, reasonable access to Institution facilities such as library resources and internet access and any other privileges accorded to its own academic Staff which may assist Public Health Organisation Staff in their Supervision of Students and contribute to their professional development. Provided however, such access will be subject to the Institution’s usual rules, requirements, policies and procedures applying to the access and use by the Institution staff of such facilities and to any restrictions required by law/or agreements with third parties as to use of and access to such facilities.

5.5 The Institution may, from time to time and subject to available resources, provide access to training to all Public Health Organisation Staff who have been appointed to act as Student Workplace Supervisors, who have an interest in or have been identified as having the potential to act as Supervisors. Provided however, any such training shall be subject to all applicable Institution policies and procedures.

5.6 The Institution upon request of the Public Health Organisation will provide written and verbal feedback to Public Health Organisation Staff who have been appointed to act as Student Supervisors so as to assist them in improving their Supervision of Students and in recognition of their knowledge skills and contribution to the Supervision of Students.

Student Assessment

5.7 The Institution is responsible for the clinical and other education of Students on Student Placement, including all learning outcomes and assessments.

5.8 (a) Notwithstanding clause 5.7, Public Health Organisation Staff who have been appointed to act as Student Supervisors, may report on a Student’s performance using institution based assessments, practical skills, learning, knowledge and/or development against learning objectives of the student placement;

(b) Other relevant Public Health Organisation Staff may also provide feedback or input on the Student, where required.

Administration and Conduct of the Course during Student Placement

5.9 Subject to any provisions of this Agreement to the contrary, the Institution will be responsible for the administration and conduct of the Course, including Student guidance, counselling and discipline and, where necessary, the exclusion of Students or Institution Staff from the Student Placement.

5.10 The Institution is responsible for ensuring that Institution Staff have appropriate qualifications and experience to fulfil their obligations under this Agreement.
5.11 The Institution acknowledges and agrees that:

(a) a Student's access to Patients/Clients and Patient/Client medical records is, and remains, subject to the Public Health Organisation's duty of confidentiality to its Patients/Clients;

(b) a Student may only participate in the delivery of health care or treatment as instructed by their Student Supervisor or Student Workplace Supervisor at levels commensurate with the stage of preparation and progress in their Course;

(c) a Student's practice must be supervised by the Student Supervisor or an appropriately appointed nominee in accordance with this Agreement at the level determined by such Student Supervisor or delegate to be necessary to ensure that the care offered to patients is safe and at an adequate standard;

(d) the management, control and treatment of Patients in the care of a Facility will at all times take priority over the supervision, education and training of Students. This will include the Public Health Organisation ensuring adequate privacy and Supervision for all interviews and examinations conducted by a Student;

(e) a Patient/client may refuse and should not feel coerced to have a Student participate in their care, regardless of whether the activity is part of, or additional to, the normal requirement of care. This right of Patients/Clients must be respected at all times; and

(f) Patients/Clients must be treated with respect and should not be placed in situations that may cause them to feel embarrassed, harassed or offended - this includes ensuring adequate personal privacy.

5.12 The Institution will take all reasonable steps to ensure that Students and Institution Staff are aware they must not represent that they are employed, act or communicate either directly or indirectly on behalf of the Public Health Organisation.

Preconditions for Students Undertaking Student Placements

5.13 The Institution represents and warrants that it is a condition of their participation in the Student Placement that they hold and continue to maintain all the required passport and visa documents legally necessary to reside and study in Australia.

5.14 The Institution acknowledges that the Public Health Organisation will not be responsible for arranging registration of Students where any such registration is a requirement of a professional registration body.

National Criminal Record Checks (NCRC) and Prohibited Employment Declaration

5.15 The Institution and Public Health Organisation will comply with the procedures and requirements outlined under NSW Health Policy Directive PD2016_047 Employment Checks - Criminal Record Checks and Working With Children Checks, as amended from time to time.

Immunisation and Infection Control

5.16 The Institution will advise all its Students and Institution Staff in writing prior to enrolment, about the risks of contracting infectious diseases during a Student Placement, and the Students and Institution Staff of their respective responsibilities to comply with the NSW Ministry of Health Policy Directive PD 2011_005 Occupational Assessment, Screening and Vaccination Against Specified Infectious Diseases, as amended from time to time.
Policies and Procedures

5.17 The Institution will take reasonable steps to ensure that all Students and Institution Staff observe the regulations, policies, guidelines and procedures referred to in clause 4.5.

5.18 The Institution agrees to take all reasonable steps to ensure that all Students and Institution Staff are aware of and understand their rights and responsibilities under NSW Ministry of Health Policy Directive PD2015_049 NSW Health Code of Conduct, as amended from time to time, a copy of which will be provided to the Institution by the Public Health Organisation. Further, the Institution will take all reasonable steps so as to ensure that each Student is informed that it is a condition of the Student Placement that each Student signs a declaration to the effect that the Student has read, understands and will abide by the NSW Health Code of Conduct.

Responsibility for Teaching Aids

5.19 Unless the Parties otherwise agree, the Institution is responsible for the insurance and safe custody of teaching aids and equipment in its care, custody or control whilst at the Facility, as required for the purpose of Student Placements.

Student Dress and Identification

5.20 The Institution will advise its Students and Institution Staff that they are to be dressed and to maintain their appearance in a manner that is acceptable to the Public Health Organisation.

5.21 The Institution will provide its Students and Institution Staff with suitable Institution identification to be worn when attending Facilities.

Student Illness and Absenteeism

5.22 The Institution will notify the Public Health Organisation of Student illness or absenteeism where attendance is anticipated. Similarly, the Public Health Organisation will notify the Institution if absenteeism occurs.

6 RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERSONS NOT BOUND BY THIS AGREEMENT

6.1 The Institution will ensure that Students and Institution Staff are informed of and agree to abide by the terms of this Agreement.

6.2 The Public Health Organisation will ensure that Public Health Organisation Staff that participate in Student Placements are informed of and agree to abide by the terms of this Agreement.

7 GOVERNANCE

7.1.1 Governance issues are jointly the responsibility of the Chief Executive of the Public Health Organisation and the Vice Chancellor or Director of the Institution or their delegate. For practical reasons, accountability for establishing the governance processes will rest with the Public Health Organisation. As a matter of course, this will be undertaken in a collaborative and consultative manner.

8 STUDENT PLACEMENT GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

8.1 The Public Health Organisation may establish a Student Placement Governance Committee that includes all Institutions with Student Placements in its Facilities.
8.2 The purpose of the Student Placement Governance Committee is to provide a high-level forum for the Public Health Organisation and Institutions to discuss and address matters relating to Student Placements.

8.3 The functions of the Student Placement Governance Committee are as follows:

(a) providing high level oversight of the organisation and management of Student Placements operating under this Agreement and any equivalent Agreements with other Institutions;

(b) managing any governance issues associated with Student Placements;

(c) monitoring and assessing any trends related to Student Placements and their impact on educational outcomes and provision of care to Patients;

(d) providing advice to the Institution and the Public Health Organisation on issues arising in connection with this Agreement, where requested by the Liaison Officer for either Party; and

(e) such other functions as agreed between the Parties.

8.4 Membership of the Student Placement Governance Committee may include, but not be limited to:

(a) Chief Executive Officer of the Public Health Organisation, or nominee, who will be the Chair of the Committee;

(b) Vice Chancellor or Institute Director or their representative of each Institution with Student Placements in the Public Health Organisation;

(c) Director of Clinical Operations of the Public Health Organisation, or nominee;

(d) Director of Nursing and Midwifery of the Public Health Organisation, or nominee;

(e) Director of Allied Health of the Public Health Organisation, or nominee;

(f) Director of Workforce Development of the Public Health Organisation, or nominee;

(g) Public Health Organisation and Institution Liaison Officers; and

(h) Representatives from one or more Health Facilities.

8.5 Further members may be added by agreement between the Parties.

8.6 Sub-Committees of the Student Placement Governance Committee may be formed as required.

8.7 Membership of sub-committees of the Student Placement Governance Committee will include the Public Health Organisation Liaison Officer.

8.8 The Student Placement Governance Committee will meet at least two times each Student Year.

8.9 The Student Placement Governance Committee will report annually on its activities to the Chief Executive of the Public Health Organisation and the Vice-Chancellor or Institute Director or equivalent of the Institution.
9 COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARTIES

9.1 Each Party will nominate a Liaison Officer, as set out in Schedule 2 Part A.

9.2 The role of the Liaison Officer is to:

   (a) provide a central point of contact between the Parties, in particular for addressing matters where coordination across disciplines and/or facilities is required;
   (b) support the central coordination of Student Placements for all health professions/disciplines between the Public Health Organisation and the Institution within agreed timeframes;
   (c) liaise with Discipline Representatives to monitor the Student Placement process;
   (d) be a member of any sub-committees of the Student Placement Governance Committee;
   (e) advise their Authorised Officer of any issues requiring attention regarding Student Placements; and
   (f) report to the Student Placement Governance Committee on Student Placements across the Public Health Organisation.

9.3 Either Party may substitute its Liaison Officer with another person by notifying the other Party in writing.

9.4 Unless this Agreement specifies otherwise, all communications between the Parties relating to this Agreement or matters that arise out of this Agreement shall be given to or sent by the Liaison Officer.

9.5 Each Party will nominate a Discipline Representative for each Course, to administer Student Placements relating to the Course. The Liaison Officer will be notified in writing of each Discipline Representative prior to the commencement of each academic year.

9.6 Either Party may substitute its Discipline Representative with another person by notifying the Liaison Officer in writing.

9.7 The Public Health Organisation Discipline Representative will, in consultation with the Institution Discipline Representative and Liaison Officers:

   (a) identify Student Placements and appropriately qualified Supervisors in terms of clause 10 across the public health system
   (b) coordinate the Student Placement process for their discipline; and
   (c) maintain details of Student Placements in their discipline as per Schedule 1 (Part A and B) to this Agreement.

10 OPERATIONAL SCHEDULE

10.1 The Parties will co-operatively develop and complete an operational Schedule as outlined in the attached Schedule 1 Part B, or similar as negotiated between the Parties but including all areas of detail specified in Schedule 1 Part B, for each Course in accordance with the requirements of this clause 10.

10.2 The components of the operational Schedule will be completed by the Party in accordance with applicable time periods specified in the operational Schedule.

10.3 The Institution will notify the Public Health Organisation in writing as soon as reasonably possible of any changes to the information provided by it in the operational Schedule.

10.4 The Institution will notify the Public Health Organisation in writing when changes are made to the Course that may reasonably affect the Student Placement, or if the level of knowledge or competence of Students who have been placed or will be placed in the future is likely to vary.

10.5 The Parties may vary the content of the Schedule from time to time by written agreement in accordance with clause 25.2.
11 NUMBER OF STUDENT PLACEMENTS
11.1 The number of Students to be placed with each Facility at any given time will be determined at
the absolute discretion of the Public Health Organisation and will be based on the policy directions
and priorities of the Public Health Organisation. The Public Health Organisation will undertake to
consult with and to provide notice to the Institution regarding the number of Student Placements, in
particular, where there is a variation in the number of Student Placements in any given year/semester.

12 DEFERRAL OR CANCELLATION OF STUDENT PLACEMENT
12.1 Where unforeseen circumstances or causes beyond the control of the Public Health Organisation
cause or threaten major disruption to Patient services or provision of any Student Placement(s),
including without limitation, industrial disputes or implementation of disaster plans, the Public
Health Organisation may, in its absolute discretion, defer, suspend, vary or cancel any agreed
Student Placement(s). The Public Health Organisation’s decision is final and may be
implemented immediately.

12.2 The Public Health Organisation agrees, as far as it is practicable, to notify the Institution of its
intention to defer, suspend, vary or terminate Student Placements under clause 12.1.

12.3 The Institution agrees to notify the Public Health Organisation of any cancellation or deferral of
agreed Student Placements within a timeframe defined between both Parties.

13 DISCIPLINE
13.1 Subject to the rights retained to the Public Health Organisation in clause 13, the ultimate
responsibility for the discipline and control of Students and Institution Staff lies with the
Institution.

13.2 The Public Health Organisation retains the right to instruct a Student in connection with patient
care or treatment or generally acceptable practice in relation to the Student Placement.

13.3 The Public Health Organisation will:
   (a) notify the Institution when in its opinion, action is required to be taken in respect of a
       Student or Institution Staff member; and
   (b) the Public Health Organisation shall give to the Institution in writing:
       i. the Student’s or Institution Staff member’s name;
       ii. the reasons why action is to be taken; and
       iii. the recommended or required action to be taken.

13.4 Once the Public Health Organisation has notified the Institution under clause 13.3 above, the
matter is the responsibility of the Institution.

13.5 The Institution will advise the Public Health Organisation concerning action taken by the
Institution with respect to the Student or Institution Staff member.

13.6 The Public Health Organisation retains the right to remove any Student or any Institution Staff
Member from its facilities or services at any time. The Parties acknowledge that grounds for
removal include:

   (a) unsuitability to undertake or continue with a Student Placement because of unacceptable risk
       to either the provision of satisfactory patient care or Patient/Staff/Student safety; or
   (b) disciplinary matters in terms of the Code of Conduct.
12. MEDICAL CARE

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13.7 The Public Health Organisation is entitled to satisfy itself that Students and Institution Staff are competent to perform their allotted tasks, that they conduct themselves in a safe and professional manner, and that they comply with the Code of Conduct. If the Public Health Organisation is not so satisfied, it may do any or all of the following:

(a) restrict or limit access by a Student or Institution Staff to Patients;
(b) direct a Student or Institution Staff to leave the premises of the Facility; and
(c) take all reasonable steps necessary to ensure that a Student or Institution Staff complies with a direction given under clauses 13.7 (a) or 13.7 (b).

13.8 The Public Health Organisation will use its best endeavours to notify the Institution of its intention to give a direction under clause 13.7 within twenty four (24) hours and will provide written notification to the Institution Liaison Officer of the direction and the reasons for the direction within three (3) working days of its being given.

13.9 If the Institution notifies the Public Health Organisation within three (3) working days of receiving a notice under clause 13.8 that it disagrees with the Public Health Organisation’s direction, the Public Health Organisation will notify the Student Placement Governance Committee who will establish a Sub-Committee consisting of two representatives appointed by the Public Health Organisation and two representatives appointed by the Institution. The Sub-Committee will then consider the matter and make a final decision.

13.10 Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions, the Public Health Organisation retains the right in its absolute discretion to refuse or suspend a Student Placement.

14 Work HEALTH AND SAFETY

14.1 The Institution will make all its Students and Institution Staff on Student Placement aware that they must abide by and comply with the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 No 10 and the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011, together with all guidelines on manual handling and working with hazardous substances and dangerous goods.

15 OPEN DISCLOSURE

15.1 All Students and Institution Staff on Student Placement will be made aware by the Institution of the NSW Ministry of Health Policy Directive and Guidelines PD2014_028 Open Disclosure Policy as amended from time to time and NSW Ministry of Health Policy Directive PD2014_004 Incident Management as amended from time to time, or any successor policy.

16 ACCOMMODATION

16.1 The Institution and/or the Students are responsible for organising accommodation for Students while on Student Placement.

16.2 The Public Health Organisation may, at its discretion, make available residential accommodation to Students and Institution Staff subject to such terms and conditions as the Public Health Organisation considers appropriate, but it is not under any obligation to do so.

16.3 All costs for accommodation will be met by the Student or by the Institution (for Institution Staff) unless other prior arrangements have been made with the relevant Facility Manager.

17 TRAVEL

17.1 All costs of travel to the Public Health facility will be met by the Student or by the Institution (for Institution Staff).
18 USE OF MOTOR VEHICLES

18.1 The Institution acknowledges and agrees that whilst on Student Placement Students may not use Facility vehicles other than to accompany a Facility or Institution staff member who is the driver.

18.2 Institution Staff may only use Facility vehicles in accordance with the following conditions:
(a) Institution Staff hold a current appropriate NSW Licence or other State or Territory equivalent, a copy to be provided to the relevant Facility Manager;
(b) Institution Staff have read the NSW Ministry of Health Policy Directive concerning motor vehicle usage titled PD2014_051 Motor Vehicles - Use of Within NSW Health as amended from time to time;
(c) The vehicle is used for activities related to the Student Placement, such as home visits and meetings.

18.3 The use of fleet motor vehicles is subject to availability and priority of access will be given to Public Health Organisation Staff.

18.4 When no alternative is available, Students/Institution Staff may use their own private vehicle for teaching and educational activities undertaken as a part of their Student Placement only if they possess a current appropriate NSW Licence or other State or Territory equivalent, and compulsory levels of insurance related to the driving of their vehicle.

19 DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION PERTAINING TO STUDENTS

19.1 Provided the Institution receives a Student’s written consent to do so, the Institution will disclose to the Public Health Organisation through its Liaison Officer any information concerning the Student which, in its reasonable opinion, would assist Supervisors and the Facility to accommodate any special needs of the Student.

19.2 The Public Health Organisation will make Student Supervisors aware of their obligation to keep all information disclosed under clause 19.1 strictly confidential.

20 USE AND DISCLOSURE OF PATIENT DATA

20.1 The Institution acknowledges and agrees that all Patient Data will remain the property of the Public Health Organisation and be acknowledged as the property of the Public Health Organisation.

20.2 Upon request by the Public Health Organisation, the Institution must immediately deliver or arrange for the delivery to Public Health Organisation all Patient Data in the possession of the Institution, Institution Staff or Students.

20.3 The Institution will ensure that Institution Staff and Students are aware of their responsibility to not, directly or indirectly, use any Patient Data without the prior written consent of the Patient and the approval of the Public Health Organisation. The Public Health Organisation will ensure that its Patient admission process enables Patients to consent to the Patient Data being used for the purposes of education.

20.4 The Institution will take all reasonable measures to ensure that Patient Data in the possession of the Institution, Institution Staff or Students is protected from unauthorised access from any source and by any means.
21 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
21.1 In accordance with NSW Health Policy Directive PD2005_370 Intellectual Property Arising from Health Research as amended from time to time, the Public Health Organisation may assert rights over any Intellectual Property created by Students during their Student Placement where each or any of the following circumstances apply:

(a) the Intellectual Property has been created utilising substantial resources of the Public Health Organisation;

(b) the Intellectual Property is created as a result of pre-existing Intellectual Property owned by the Public Health Organisation;

(c) the Intellectual Property has been created by a Public Health Organisation team of which the Student is a member; or

(d) the Intellectual Property has been created as a result of funding provided by, or obtained by, the Public Health Organisation.

22 PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY ISSUES
22.1 Subject to clause 22.2, the Institution must advise its Students and Institution Staff that they must not, in any circumstances give access to or disclose Confidential Information to any person.

22.2 The obligation of confidentiality set out in this clause 22 does not extend to Confidential Information that is required to be disclosed by the operation of law but only to the extent that such disclosure is necessary by law.

22.3 The Institution acknowledges that Patient Data is “Personal Information” as defined in the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act (NSW) 1998 and “Health Information” as defined in the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 and that a breach of either Act will constitute a breach of this Agreement.

22.4 The Public Health Organisation agrees to:

(a) use Personal Information of Students or Institution Staff held or controlled by it in connection with this Agreement only for the purposes of fulfilling its obligations under this Agreement;

(b) take all reasonable measures to ensure that Personal Information of Students or Institution Staff in its possession or control in connection with this Agreement is protected against loss and unauthorised access, use, modification or disclosure;

(c) comply with the Information Protection Principles in the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act (NSW) 1998 and the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 to the extent that the content of those principles apply to the types of activities the Public Health Organisation is undertaking under this Agreement, as if the Public Health Organisation were an agency as defined in that Act;

(d) co-operate with any reasonable demands or inquiries made by the Institution on the basis of the exercise of the functions of the Privacy Commissioner under the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 including, but not limited to, a request from the Institution to comply with a guideline concerning the handling of Personal Information of Students or Institution Staff; and

(e) ensure that any person who has an access level which would enable that person to obtain access to any Personal Information of Students or Institution Staff is made aware of, and undertakes in writing, to observe the Information Protection Principles and other obligations referred to in this clause.
12. MEDICAL CARE

23 INDEMNITY

23.1 (a) The Institution indemnifies the Public Health Organisation, its employees and agents against liability in respect of all actions, claims, costs and expenses and for all loss, damage to property or personal injury or death to persons caused by any unlawful or negligent act or omission of the Institution, its employees, agents or Students whilst undertaking a Student Placement except to the extent that the Public Health Organisation, its employees or agents caused the relevant loss, damage or injury.

(b) The Institution’s liability to indemnify the Public Health Organisation under clause 23.1 (a) shall be reduced proportionately to the extent that an act, error or omission of the Public Health Organisation contributed to the loss, liability or expense.

23.2 The Institution agrees and acknowledges that all rights, obligations and liabilities under, or in connection with this Agreement are to apply, even where the relevant circumstances involve a failure to take reasonable care and the existence of concurrent wrongdoers (as that term is defined in section 34(2) of the Civil Liability Act 2002 (NSW), unlimited and otherwise unaffected by anything that, but for this clause 23.2, may by virtue of the provisions of the Civil Liability Act 2002 (NSW) have limited or otherwise affected those rights, obligations and liabilities.

24 INSURANCE

24.1 The Institution must effect and maintain the following insurance policies during the term of this Agreement:

(a) public liability insurance in the amount of not less than $20,000,000.00 in respect of each and every occurrence;
(b) professional indemnity insurance in the amount of not less than $15,000,000.00 in respect of each and every occurrence; and
(c) workers’ compensation insurance for an amount required by law.

24.2 The Institution must, on request, provide to the Public Health Organisation satisfactory evidence that the Institution has effected and renewed the insurance policies referred to in clause 24.

25 AMENDMENTS

25.1 This Agreement once signed by both Parties may be amended only by a written document signed by the Authorised Officer for each Party, unless that variation is to the Operational Schedule.

25.2 Variations to the Operational Schedule may be agreed in writing between the Liaison Officers, on advice from the Discipline Representatives.

26 WAIVERS

26.1 A waiver of a provision of this Agreement or a right or remedy arising under this Agreement, including this clause, must be in writing and signed by the Party granting the waiver.

26.2 A waiver is only effective in the specific instance and for the specific purpose for which it is given.

27 NOTICES

27.1 A notice, consent, approval or other communication (each a notice) under this Agreement must be:

(a) delivered to the Authorised Officer’s address;
(b) sent by pre-paid mail to the Authorised Officer’s address; or
(c) transmitted by facsimile or electronic means to the Authorised Officer’s address.

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27.2 A notice given by a Party in accordance with this Clause is treated as having been given and received:

(a) if delivered to the Authorised Officer’s address, on the day of delivery if a business day, otherwise on the next business day;
(b) if sent by pre-paid mail, on the third business day after posting;
(c) if transmitted by facsimile or electronic means to the Authorised Officer’s address and a correct and complete transmission report is received, on the day of transmission if a business day, otherwise on the next business day.

28 DISPUTE RESOLUTION

28.1 If a dispute arises in connection with this Agreement, or any matter covered by this Agreement, then the Parties agree to the following dispute resolution process:

(a) the Parties shall attempt to settle any dispute using the dispute resolution and mediation processes provided for in this Agreement before resorting to court proceedings, provided howsoever, nothing in this clause will preclude either Party from seeking urgent interlocutory relief;

(b) either Party claiming that a dispute has arisen gives written notice to the other Party stating details of the matter in dispute and requiring that the matter be resolved by a meeting between the Parties;

(c) within five (5) business days of the receipt of such notice the Parties are to establish a Joint Committee of two (2) representatives of each Party (the ‘Joint Committee’). The Joint Committee will within a period of ten (10) business days following its establishment use its best endeavours to discuss the dispute with the view to achieving a resolution of the dispute;

(d) if the dispute remains unresolved the Parties must within a period of ten (10) business days following the expiration of the period stipulated in clause 28.1 (c) refer the dispute respectively to the Student Placement Governance Committee for resolution who will within fifteen (15) business days meet and discuss the dispute with a view to achieving resolution;

(e) if the dispute is not resolved after the Parties have followed the process in clause 28.1 (c) and (d), or within such further period as the Parties may agree in writing, the dispute shall be referred to the Australian Disputes Centre (ADC) for mediation in accordance with the ADC’s ‘Commercial Mediation Guidelines’ which are operating at the time the matter is referred to the ADC. The ADC’s mediation guidelines set out the procedures to be adopted, the process of selection of the mediator and the costs involved. The terms of the ADC’s mediation guidelines are hereby deemed incorporated into this Agreement;

(f) the Parties shall do all things reasonably required to refer the dispute to mediation by ADC; and

(g) in the event that the dispute has not been settled within twenty (20) business days (or such other period as agreed to in writing between the Parties) after the appointment of a mediator, or if no mediator is appointed within twenty (20) business days of the referral of the dispute to mediation, the Parties are free to pursue any other procedures available at law for the resolution of the dispute.

29 Termination

29.1 Termination for Convenience

29.1.1 The Parties may terminate this Agreement for convenience by giving not less than three (3) months’ notice in writing, with such termination being effective upon the expiry of this three (3) month period.
12. MEDICAL CARE

29.1.2 If either Party terminates this Agreement for convenience:

(a) the Party terminating the Agreement may reimburse the other Party for any unavoidable costs and expenses directly incurred as a result of termination provided that any claim:
   (i) is supported by satisfactory written evidence of the costs claimed; and
   (ii) will be in total satisfaction of the liability of each Party in respect of this Agreement and its termination.

(b) the Parties must do everything reasonably possible to prevent or otherwise mitigate any losses resulting from the termination.

29.2 Termination For Cause

29.2.1 This Agreement may be terminated immediately by written notice by either Party for material breach of this Agreement where such breach has failed to be rectified within thirty (30) days of written notification of the breach by the other Party.

29.3 Effect of Termination

29.3.1 In the event of any termination of this Agreement:

(a) the Parties will use their best endeavours to avoid any adverse consequence of termination on the academic progress or provision for any Student of the Institution;

(b) the Parties will use their best endeavours to reduce the impact of termination on Students affected by implementing an effective strategy to complete the Student Placement;

(c) the Public Health Organisation agrees that it will continue to allow Student Placements for a period of 18 months after the termination date so that each such Student has the opportunity to complete the Course for which the Student was enrolled immediately prior to the date of termination.

29.4 Prior Rights not Affected

29.4.1.1 Termination of this Agreement for any reason shall not extinguish, prejudice or affect any antecedent rights that may have accrued to a party prior to the date of termination.

29.4.1.2 Notwithstanding any other provision of this Agreement, the covenants provided by either party shall survive the expiration or earlier determination of this Agreement.

30 GOVERNING LAW

30.1 The laws in force in the State of New South Wales govern this Agreement.

30.2 Each Party submits to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of the State of New South Wales and the courts of appeal from those courts.

30.3 If any provision of this Agreement is or becomes illegal, invalid or unenforceable (“Ineffective”), it will be read down to the extent necessary to ensure it is not ineffective. If the offending provision cannot be so read down, it will be severed. In any event, the remainder of this Agreement will be construed so as to ensure it remains effective to the greatest extent possible.
12. MEDICAL CARE

31 ENTIRE AGREEMENT
31.1 This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the Parties and supersedes all prior representations, agreements, statements and understandings, whether verbal or in writing.

32 COUNTERPARTS
32.1 This Agreement may be executed in counterparts and all such counterparts taken together will be deemed to constitute one and the same Agreement.

33 ASSIGNMENT
33.1 Except with the prior written consent of the Public Health Organisation, the Institution may not assign the whole or any part of the Institution’s obligations under this Agreement. Consent is not to be unreasonably withheld.

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12. MEDICAL CARE

EXECUTED as an Agreement.

SIGNED by …………………………………. [Insert full name] on…………………..(date)

As authorised signatory for the Public Health Organisation:

………………………………………
Signature of Authorised Officer

in the presence of:

………………………………………
Signature of Witness

………………………………………
Name of Witness (Print)

SIGNED by …………………………………. [Insert full name] on…………………..(date)

on behalf of the Institution as its duly authorised officer:

…………………………………..
Signature of Authorised Officer

in the presence of:

………………………………………
Signature of Witness

………………………………………
Name of Witness (Print)

………………………………………
Address of Witness

315(09/12/16)
12. MEDICAL CARE

OPERATIONAL SCHEDULE (SCHEDULE 1) PART A
To be completed by the Parties to this Agreement.

1. Public Health Organisation

2. Institution

3. Disciplines covered by this Agreement

4. Qualifications to be delivered
OPERATIONAL SCHEDULE (SCHEDULE 1) PART B
PLACEMENT DETAILS

To be completed by the Parties in accordance with clause 5 of the Agreement. The Placement Details contain the following highlighted key topics but the Parties may agree to include any other information relevant to the Student Placement.

For all professions, the Institution will provide no later than two (2) weeks prior to the commencement of the Student Placement, the information described in sections 1–5 below, to the Public Health Organisation in accordance with NSW Health Policy Directive PD2013_015 Clinical Placements Policy, as amended from time to time.

1. **Bookings for all clinical placements will be through ClinConnect**

   *Student Placement details for each placement to be entered through ClinConnect.*

2. **Supervision**

   *These will be entered using ClinConnect.*

3. **Student names**

   *These will be entered using ClinConnect.*

4. **Learning Objectives of the Student Placement, including the procedures/activities in which Students should be trained**

   *(Attach list/s unless relevant information has been entered in ClinConnect. If this is the case make a statement such as ‘entered into ClinConnect’ here)*

5. **Relevant Learning Assessment Tools to be used where NSW Health staff are undertaking assessment**

   *(Attach list/s unless relevant information has been entered in ClinConnect. If this is the case make a statement such as ‘entered into ClinConnect’ here)*

   *Where relevant, specify any of these provided/performed by the Institution*  

   *Where relevant, specify any of these that will be provided/performed by the Public Health Organisation*

SIGNED by ……………………………………… [Insert full name] on…………………..(date)

As authorised signatory for the Public Health Organisation:

………………………………………………

Signature of Authorised Officer

in the presence of:

………………………………………………

Signature of Witness

………………………………………………

Name of Witness (Print)
12. **MEDICAL CARE**

SIGNED by ………………………………….. *[Insert full name]* on………………..(date)

on behalf of the Institution as its duly authorised officer:

…………………………………..
Signature of Authorized Officer

…………………………………..
Signature of Witness

…………………………………..
Name of Witness (Print)

…………………………………..
Address of Witness

315(09/12/16)
### DESIGNATED OFFICERS (SCHEDULE 2) PART A

*To be completed by the Parties in accordance with clause 5 of the Agreement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Health Organisation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authorised Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Registered Office Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liaison Officer</td>
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<td>Discipline Representatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authorised Officer</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaison Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline Representatives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This circular provides information on the Victims Rights Act 1996 which was proclaimed on 2 April 1997 and the concomitant requirements on the NSW Health system.

1.2 This circular should be read in conjunction with the NSW Health Victims of Crime Policy released in 1995. Copies of the policy are available from the Health Services Policy Branch of the Central Office of the Department.

2. THE VICTIMS RIGHTS ACT 1996

2.1 This Act establishes:
   • a statutory Charter of Victims Rights;
   • the Victims of Crime Bureau as a branch of the Attorney General’s Department;
   • the Victims Advisory Board; and
   • amendment to the Criminal Procedure Act 1986, by inserting legislative changes relating to victim impact statements.

3. CHARTER OF VICTIMS RIGHTS

3.1 The Charter

3.1.1 Victims of crime in New South Wales now have a statutory (ie enshrined in legislation) Charter to protect and promote their rights. The new Charter is similar to the non-statutory charter which it replaced and is consistent with the NSW Health Victims of Crime Policy. The new Charter, established in the Victims of Crime Act 1996, establishes standards for the appropriate treatment of victims of crime and is overseen by the Victims of Crime Bureau.

3.1.2 Any agency or person exercising official functions in the administration of the affairs of the State (other than judicial functions) must, to the extent that it is relevant and practicable to do so, have regard to the Charter of Victims Rights in addition to any other relevant matter. (Victims Rights Act 1996, Part 2, Section 7 (2))

3.1.3 The Charter of rights of victims of crime, provides among other things:
   • that a victim should be treated with courtesy and compassion, and that the rights and dignity of the victim are respected;
   • a victim should be informed at the earliest practical opportunity, by relevant agencies and officials, of the services and remedies available to the victim; and
   • a victim should have access where necessary to available welfare, health, counselling and legal assistance responsive to the victim’s needs.

3.2 Breaches of the Charter

3.2.1 If a victim considers a Government agency has not abided by its statutory obligations under the Charter, a victim can complain to the Victims of Crime Bureau about the agency.

3.2.2 The Bureau has the responsibility to take all necessary action to resolve the matter. Where the Bureau receives a complaint relating to a Health Service, the Bureau will contact the nominated Complaints Contact Officer in the Health Service, for investigation and a report on the complaint.

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12. MEDICAL CARE

3.2.4 Where the Bureau is unable to resolve the matter satisfactorily, the Bureau will be obliged to make a report to the Attorney General, who can table this in Parliament.

3.3 Full details of the Charter of Victims Rights are attached at appendix 1.

3.4 Additional information on the Charter of Victims Rights, is attached at appendix 2. This attachment provides information on:
• Why Do We Need A Charter?
• Who Is A Victim?
• What Does The Charter Do?
• What Specific Rights Are Protected?

4. THE ROLE & FUNCTIONS OF THE VICTIMS OF CRIME BUREAU

4.1 Establishment of Victims of Crime Bureau

4.1.1 The Victims of Crime Bureau (VCB) has been established within the Attorney General’s Department under the Victims Rights Act 1996. The primary goal of the VCB is to coordinate the delivery of appropriate services to meet the needs of victims of crime.

4.2 What Is The Role Of The VCB?

4.2.1 The VCB is responsible for:
• providing support and referral services to victims of crime;
• coordinating the delivery of victims’ support and counselling services by government and community agencies; and
• overseeing the implementation of the statutory Charter of Victims Rights.

4.2.2 The VCB will also be an information resource for victims of crime and for community and victim support agencies. This role will ensure that information about the range of victim support services operating across the State is readily available and accessible to all.

4.2.3 It will also ensure that victims have access to information which will help them to understand, and participate in, the criminal justice system.

4.3 How Will The VCB Receive Referrals?

4.3.1 While victims of crime will be able to directly contact the VCB for assistance, the VCB will also receive referrals from police and other services who have contact with the victim at the time of the crisis.

4.4 What Happens Once A Victim Is Referred To The VCB?

4.4.1 Once contact has been established with a victim, staff at the VCB will make an assessment of the victim’s needs.

4.4.2 Information will be supplied to a victim based on this assessment, and, if necessary, a referral made to attend other agencies for specialist services.

4.4.3 The overall aim will be to provide an integrated counselling/referral service so that a victim will have immediate access to counselling and other necessary assistance.

4.4.4 It is important to note that the VCB does not offer or provide on-going counselling services, but coordinates the delivery of such services by government and community agencies.

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12. MEDICAL CARE

4.5 Further information on the following is attached at *appendix 3*:

- Other Functions Of The VCB
- The VCB And Other Agencies
- Education & The VCB

5. THE VICTIMS ADVISORY BOARD

5.1 The Victims Advisory Board established under the Act, has the following functions:

- to advise the Minister on policies and administrative arrangements relating to support services and compensation for victims of crime;
- to consult victims of crime, community victim support groups and Government agencies on issues and policies concerning victims of crime; and
- to promote legislative, administrative or other reforms to meet the needs of victims of crime.

5.2 NSW Health is represented on the Board.

6. NSW HEALTH VICTIMS OF CRIME POLICY

6.1.1 The goal of the *NSW Health Victims of Crime Policy* is:

> To ensure that counselling, support and information is available to victims of crime and their families as soon as possible after a crime to minimise secondary trauma and assist in recovery.

6.1.2 The role of the Department/Area Health Services, hospitals, specialist teams and units and Community Health Centres is clearly set out in the Policy, and is summarised in *appendix 4* for information.

7. AREA HEALTH SERVICE RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Under the NSW Health Victims of Crime Policy, Services are required to nominate a position to coordinate the planning and implementation of local protocols. A list of Area Health Service *Contact Officers* for Victims of Crime is attached at *Appendix 5*.

7.2 The Department, in conjunction with the Victims of Crime Bureau, Area Health Services and other Services will be developing protocols for the management of complaints from victims of crime. In the meantime, Area Health Services have nominated a person to whom complaints about the implementation of the Charter can be referred. A list of Complaints Officers is attached at *Appendix 5*.

8. FURTHER INFORMATION

8.1 For further information, please contact Ms Melissa Gibson, Manager, (02 9391 9506) Health Services Policy Branch, NSW Health Department.

8.2 Further information on the Victims of Crime Bureau, including information kits on the VCB, can be obtained from Ms Marianne Curtis, Manager, of the Bureau on 02 9374 3000.

(Nov 1997)
The following comprises the Charter of rights of victims of crime, as listed in the *Victims Rights Act 1996*, Part 2:

**Courtesy, compassion and respect**
A victim should be treated with courtesy, compassion, and respect for the victim’s rights and dignity.

**Information about services and remedies**
A victim should be informed at the earliest practical opportunity, by relevant agencies and officials, of the services and remedies available to the victim.

**Access to services**
A victim should have access where necessary to available welfare, health, counselling and legal assistance responsive to the victim’s needs.

**Information about investigation of the crime**
A victim should, on request, be informed of the progress of the investigation of the crime, unless the disclosure might jeopardise the investigation. In that case, the victim should be informed accordingly.

**Information about prosecution of accused**
A victim should, on request, be informed of the following:
(a) the charges laid against the accused or the reasons for not laying charges,
(b) any decision of the prosecution to modify or not to proceed with charges laid against the accused, including any decision for the accused to accept a plea of guilty to a less serious charge in return for a full discharge with respect to the other charges,
(c) the date and place of hearing of any charge laid against the accused,
(d) the outcome of the criminal proceedings against the accused (including proceedings on appeal) and the sentence (if any) imposed.

**Information about trial process and role as witness**
A victim who is a witness in the trial for the crime should be informed about the trial process and the role of the victim as a witness in the prosecution of the accused.

**Protection from contact with accused**
A victim should be protected from unnecessary contact with the accused and defence witnesses during the course of court proceedings.

**Protection of identity of victim**
A victim’s residential address and telephone number should not be disclosed unless a court otherwise directs.

**Attendance at preliminary hearings**
A victim should be relieved from appearing at preliminary hearings or committal hearings unless the court otherwise directs.

**Return of property of victim held by State**
If any property of a victim is held by the State for the purpose of investigation or evidence, the inconvenience to the victim should be minimised and the property returned promptly.
Protection from accused
A victim’s need or perceived need for protection should be put before a bail authority by the prosecutor in any bail application by the accused.

Information about special bail conditions
A victim should be informed about any special bail conditions imposed on the accused that are designed to protect the victim or the victim’s family.

Information about outcome of bail application
A victim should be informed of the outcome of a bail application if the accused has been charged with sexual assault or other serious personal violence.

Victim impact statement
A relevant victim should have access to information and assistance for the preparation of any victim impact statement authorised by law to ensure that the full effect of the crime on the victim is placed before the court.

Information about impending release, escape or eligibility for absence from custody.
A victim should, on request, be kept informed of the offender’s impending release or escape from custody, or of any change in security classification that results in the offender being eligible for unescorted absence from custody.

Submissions on parole and eligibility for absence from custody of serious offenders
A victim should, on request, be provided with the opportunity to make submissions concerning the granting of parole to a serious offender or any change in security classification that would result in a serious offender being eligible for unescorted absence from custody.

Compensation for victims of personal violence
A victim of a crime involving sexual or other serious personal violence should be entitled to make a claim under a statutory scheme for victims compensation.
1 Why Do We Need A Charter?

1.1 The *Charter of Victims Rights* builds upon principles already adopted by government agencies throughout New South Wales.

1.2 These principles value the needs of victims, and recognise these needs as factors to be taken into consideration in the decision making processes related to the administration of justice in this State.

1.3 By incorporating these principles into a statutory charter, the government is ensuring a recognised position for victims within the NSW criminal justice system.

2 Who Is A Victim?

2.1 Under the *Charter*, a victim includes a person who, as a direct result of a criminal offence suffers physical or emotional harm, or loss or damage to property.

2.2 Where the criminal offence results in the death of the person, a member of that person’s immediate family will also be included as a victim of crime for the purposes of the *Charter*.

3 What Does The Charter Do?

3.1 The *Charter* places a statutory obligation upon government agencies to ensure that a victim is at all times treated with courtesy and compassion, and that their rights and dignity are respected.

3.2 The Victims of Crime Bureau is currently liaising with all relevant government agencies to establish guidelines and protocols in the treatment of victims and the effective delivery of services to meet the needs of victims and compliance with *Charter* obligations.

4 What Specific Rights Are Protected?

4.1 The *Charter* recognises rights of victims to:

- information about, and access to, welfare, health and counselling services;
- privacy and protection;
- information about the investigation of the crime, the prosecution of the accused and the trial process;
- assistance with the preparation of a victim impact statement where relevant;
- information about an offender’s release, escape or eligibility for unescorted absence from custody;
- make submissions concerning parole and eligibility for unescorted absence from custody of serious offenders.

5 What Happens If There Is A Breach Of The Charter?

5.1 If a victim considers a Government agency has not abided by its statutory obligations under the *Charter*, a victim can complain to the Victims of Crime Bureau about the agency.

5.2 The Bureau has the responsibility to take all necessary action to resolve the matter. Where the Bureau is unable to resolve the matter satisfactorily, the Bureau will be obliged to make a report to the Attorney General, who can table this in Parliament.

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12. MEDICAL CARE

Appendix 3

VICTIMS OF CRIME BUREAU

1 Other Functions Of The VCB

1.1 Advice and assistance will also be offered by the Bureau with regard to:
• ensuring that victims are aware of their rights to claim compensation for injuries suffered;
• completing victim compensation applications, where necessary;
• providing victims with an information kit to assist in the preparation of a victim impact statement.
• assisting a victim to have their details recorded in the Victim’s Register to ensure the victim is informed by the Department of Corrective Services of an offender’s impending release or escape from custody; and,
• to oversee the approved counselling scheme.

2 The VCB And Other Agencies

2.1 The VCB is intended to complement and enhance existing services by promoting the development of a cohesive and comprehensive network of victim support services in NSW. It will assist with inter-agency co-ordination of victims’ services, as well as the development of co-operative strategies between agencies at the local level.

2.2 A close working relationship will be developed with this and other community support groups.

3 Education & The VCB

3.1 The VCB will provide an educational role by organising seminars and training sessions for both Government and non-Government agencies, to promote awareness of victims’ needs and their position within the criminal justice system.

(Nov 1997)
NSW HEALTH VICTIMS OF CRIME POLICY

1 What Is the Role of the NSW Health Department?

1.1 To ensure that victims of crime receive appropriate counselling and information as soon as possible after the crime, through either local health services or through referral services. To promote the development of local networks that will ensure appropriate referrals and maximise access. The local networks will include such resources as private therapists, the Sydney City Mission Victims of Crime Telephone Counselling Service, the New South Wales Police Service and the Victims of Crime Bureau amongst others.

2 What Is the Role of Area Health Services?

2.1 Area and Rural Health Services are responsible for the development of local operational plans or protocols. These protocols should recognise the Charter of Victims Rights in both their formulation and implementation. Local protocols should be developed with involvement from Hospital staff, including medical staff, nursing staff and social work departments. The protocols should recognise specialist units, private therapists and other relevant services in the Area skilled in the treatment and care of victims of crime. The protocols should recognise the need for both information and counselling services to be made available for victims of crime.

2.1.1 Protocols should include:

- the provision of culturally appropriate counselling by staff trained in trauma counselling and critical incident stress debriefing or referral to other appropriate services;
- the provision of information to the victim, including information on the VCB;
- procedures for networking with both government and non-government agencies; and
- programs to raise community awareness about the needs of victims of crime and of consequent health services.

3 What Is the Role of Hospital Staff?

3.1 Many victims of crime enter the Health system via public hospitals, where they will receive treatment and subsequent referral. The role performed by hospital staff is vital in ensuring that victims are given access to counselling and information. Staff employed in these areas should be involved in the design and implementation of local protocols.

4 What Is the Role of Specialist Teams and Units?

4.1 There are numerous specialist teams and units throughout NSW. These teams are staffed by highly trained and experienced individuals. Teams such as those which specialise in the counselling of children, the treatment of the aged, the care of the mentally ill and the care of the disabled should be involved in the implementation of local protocols. The victim is more likely to receive optimal care with input from these professionals.

5 What Is the Role of Community Health Centres?

5.1 Community Health Centres should be involved in the development of protocols as they have multidisciplinary staff who provide counselling and therapy services and who are skilled in community development.

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Appendix 5

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<tr>
<th>Area Health Service</th>
<th>V. of Crime Contact Officer</th>
<th>Complaints Contact Officer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Coast Area Health Service</td>
<td>Ms Dorothy MacLean</td>
<td>Mr Jon Blackwell</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Director, Social Work</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Central Coast Area Health Service</td>
<td>Central Coast Area Health Service</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PO Box 361</td>
<td>PO Box 361</td>
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<td>GOSFORD NSW 2250</td>
<td>GOSFORD NSW 2250</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ph (02) 4320 3613</td>
<td>Ph (02) 4320 2111</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fax (02) 4325 0566</td>
<td>Fax (02) 4325 0566</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Sydney Area Health Service</td>
<td>Ms Anne Connolly</td>
<td>Ms Annette Gardner</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Women’s Health Coordinator</td>
<td>Complaints Manager</td>
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<td>CAMPERDOWN NSW 2050</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ph (02) 9515 3272</td>
<td>Ph (02) 9515 9600</td>
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<td>Fax (02) 9515 3282</td>
<td>Fax (02) 9515 9611</td>
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<tr>
<td>Far West Health Service</td>
<td>Ms Voula Smith</td>
<td>Ms Voula Smith</td>
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<td>Young Persons Mental Health Worker</td>
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<td>BROKEN HILL NSW 2880</td>
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<td>Ph (08) 8087 8800</td>
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<td>Fax (08) 8088 2926</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Murray Health Service</td>
<td>Ms Lee Purches, Social Worker</td>
<td>Mr Michael Moodie</td>
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<td>Wagga Wagga Community Health Service</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
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<td>PO Box 159</td>
<td>Greater Murray Health Service</td>
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<td>WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650</td>
<td>Locked Mail Bag 10</td>
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<td>Ph (02) 6938 6411</td>
<td>WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650</td>
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<td>Fax (02) 6938 6410</td>
<td>Ph (02) 6921 5588</td>
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<td>Fax (02) 6921 5856</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hunter Area Health Service</td>
<td>Ms Ros Giles</td>
<td>Dr Katherine McGrath</td>
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<td>Area Advisor in Social Work</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
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<td>Social Work Department</td>
<td>Hunter Area Health Service</td>
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<td>John Hunter Hospital</td>
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<td>Locked Bag 1</td>
<td>NEW LAMBTON NSW 2305</td>
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<td>Hunter Region Mail Centre, NSW 2310</td>
<td>Ph (02) 4921 4960</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ph (02) 4921 3703</td>
<td>Fax (02) 4921 4969</td>
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<td>Fax (02) 4921 3704</td>
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<tr>
<td>Illawarra Area Health Service</td>
<td>Mr Peter Orr</td>
<td>Mr Terry Clout</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Senior Psychosocial Worker</td>
<td>Director, Health Services</td>
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<td>Wollongong Community Health Centre</td>
<td>Operations</td>
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<td>Unit 28/29 341-349 Crown Street</td>
<td>Illawarra Area Health Service</td>
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<td></td>
<td>WOLLONGONG NSW 2500</td>
<td>Private Mail Bag 3</td>
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<td>Ph (02) 4229 2755</td>
<td>PORT KEMBLA NSW 2505</td>
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<td>Fax (02) 4228 5623</td>
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<td>Fax (02) 4276 1447</td>
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### MEDICAL CARE

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<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
<th>Address</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macquarie Health Service</td>
<td>Ms Rhonda Gleeson</td>
<td>Sexual Assault Coordinator</td>
<td>Dubbo Community Health Centre</td>
<td>Ph (02) 6885 8999</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Macquarie Health Service PO Box M61</td>
<td>Ph (02) 6881 2318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid North Coast Health Service</td>
<td>Dr Kevin Wolfenden</td>
<td>Director of Primary Health &amp; Extended Care</td>
<td>Mid North Coast Health Service PO Box 35</td>
<td>Ph (02) 6551 1397</td>
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<td>TAREE NSW 2430</td>
<td>Ph (02) 6583 0721</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid Western Health Service</td>
<td>Ms Sue Burke</td>
<td>Women’s Health Coordinator</td>
<td>Bloomfield Hospital</td>
<td>Ph (02) 6360 7960</td>
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<td>ORANGE NSW 2800</td>
<td>Ph (02) 6583 0721</td>
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<tr>
<td>New England Health Service</td>
<td>Ms Megan Jones</td>
<td>A/Coordinator, Community Health</td>
<td>PO Box 256</td>
<td>Ph (02) 6752 9217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Sydney Area Health Service</td>
<td>Mr Roger Dunston</td>
<td>Head of Department of Social Work</td>
<td>Royal North Shore Hospital Pacific Highway</td>
<td>Ph (02) 9926 7580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Rivers Health Service</td>
<td>Ms Marcia Dwonczyk, Director, Primary &amp; Extended Care Services</td>
<td>Locked Mail Bag 11</td>
<td>Lismore NSW 2480</td>
<td>Ph (02) 6620 2122</td>
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<th>Area Health Service</th>
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<tr>
<td>South Eastern Sydney Area Health Service</td>
<td>Dr Tony Sara</td>
<td>Director of Clinical Services</td>
<td>Sydne Hospital</td>
<td>Macquarie Street</td>
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<td>Ph (02) 9382 7491</td>
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<td>Fax (02) 9382 7515</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mr Robert Beetson</td>
<td>Complaints Coordinator</td>
<td>South Eastern Sydney A H S</td>
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<td>KOGARAH NSW 2217</td>
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<td>Fax (02) 9382 9859</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Western Sydney Area Health Service</td>
<td>Ms Margaret Scrimgeour</td>
<td>Asst to Director of Clinical &amp; Nurs Serv.</td>
<td>Private Mail Bag No 17</td>
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<td>LIVERPOOL NSW 2170</td>
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<td>Fax (02) 9828 5914</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern Health Service</td>
<td>Mrs Carol Madge</td>
<td>Director of Health Service Development</td>
<td>Southern Health Service</td>
<td>PO Box 1845</td>
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<td>Ph (02) 6299 6199</td>
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<td>Fax (02) 6299 6363</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ms Elena Murty</td>
<td>Policy Adviser</td>
<td>Wentworth Area Health Service</td>
<td>PO Box 63</td>
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<td>PENRITH NSW 2751</td>
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<td>Ph (02) 4724 2811</td>
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<td>Fax (02) 4731 1265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Sydney Area Health Service</td>
<td>Ms Jennifer Sheehan</td>
<td>Planning Officer</td>
<td>Western Sydney Area Health Service</td>
<td>Cnr Darcy and Hawkesbury Roads</td>
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<td>Fax (02) 9689 2041</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ms Stephanie Prinitis</td>
<td>Executive Assistant</td>
<td>Western Sydney Area Health Service</td>
<td>C/- Westmead Hospital</td>
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(Nov 1997)
RESEARCH GOVERNANCE IN NSW PUBLIC HEALTH ORGANISATIONS
(GL2011_001)

GL2011_001 rescinds PD2005_207.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this guideline is to facilitate and support the responsible conduct of quality research in NSW Public Health Organisations through an effective research governance framework.

KEY PRINCIPLES

Health and medical research is integral to quality health care systems. It leads to improved health outcomes through enhanced prevention and treatments, and changes in professional practice. Engaging in research activities to advance health and wellbeing is encouraged and supported by NSW Health as part of its overall commitment to improving the health of the people of New South Wales (NSW). While investing in health and medical research can lead to far-reaching benefits for the wider community, it also has the potential to involve risk; risk to participants, institutions, and investigators. Public support, confidence and trust in research conducted in NSW Health is reliant upon an effective governance framework which manages these risks and ensures that all research meets the highest ethical, scientific, regulatory and professional standards.

USE OF THE GUIDELINE

This guideline summarises the principles, standards and requirements for the responsible conduct of quality research. It also clarifies the responsibilities and accountabilities of key parties involved in research taking place in NSW Public Health Organisations. Public Health Organisations are responsible for using this guideline to develop their local operating procedures which clearly define the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of parties involved in research taking place within their premises. The local operating procedures should also define systems and processes to ensure compliance with the principles, standards and requirements of associated legislation and NSW Health policy directives as outlined in this document.

Chief Executives of Public Health Organisations are responsible for ensuring that appropriate research governance personnel, systems and structures are in place (section 4.1).

Specific responsibilities and accountabilities apply to investigators (section 4.2). Directors of research or their equivalent, Research Governance Officers, heads of departments who host and support research and managers of investigators all play a key role in research governance (section 4.3).

All parties involved in research taking place in Public Health Organisations, regardless of their position, employment status and level of engagement in the research are responsible for familiarising themselves with and adhering to the principles, standards and requirements outlined in this guideline.

The Guideline can be downloaded from

117(27/01/11)
PRESSURE INJURY PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT (PD2014_007)


PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:
1. Minimise the incidence of pressure related injuries to NSW Health patients through adequate risk assessment, risk management and appropriate treatment.
2. Establish a consistent, systematic best-practice approach to pressure injury prevention and management across NSW Health.
3. Support Health Services to comply with the relevant National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (NSQHSS) in relation to pressure injury prevention and management.
4. Increase the awareness of staff, patients and the public to the importance of pressure injury prevention and management strategies.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

It is the responsibility of each health service to:
1. Adopt best practice guidelines to prevent and manage pressure injuries.
2. Take reasonable steps to ensure appropriate patient care for patients at risk of and with pressure injuries.
3. Ensure they comply with the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (NSQHSS).

IMPLEMENTATION

An implementation guide to support this policy will be available early 2014.

Clinical Excellence Commission is responsible for:
• Developing and supporting the implementation of the best practice guidelines and provide advice to health services.
• Reviewing reported patient pressure injury incidents and investigation reports derived from incident management systems (e.g. Incident Information Management System - IIMS), conducting analysis, and disseminating information gained.

Chief Executive of Local Health District/Network (LHD/N) is responsible for:
• Implementing best practice guidelines for the prevention and management of pressure injuries.
• Allocating resources to enable effective prevention and management of pressure injuries, including:
  a. Delegating the day-to-day responsibility of establishing and monitoring the implementation of this policy to the relevant senior managers and/or governance group/committee.
  b. Making appropriate education and training available to all clinical and support staff (e.g. wardspersons and hotel services).

Senior Health Management is responsible for:
• Establishing local clinical practice which follows best practice guidelines, to support safe and effective prevention and management of pressure injuries.
• Making appropriate education and training in pressure injury prevention and management available to staff.
• Encouraging a culture of harm prevention and patient participation in their own care.

206(27/03/14)
The availability and accessibility of necessary products and equipment to ensure safe and effective patient care for pressure injury prevention and management.

Developing, implementing and monitoring the product and equipment strategies for the prevention and management of pressure injuries.

LHD/N Clinical Governance Unit is responsible for:

- Supporting and monitoring this policy in line with best practice guidelines for the prevention and management of pressure injury.
- Collecting, collating, analysing and evaluating relevant data to improve patient safety and supporting quality improvement activities.
- Providing feedback to the relevant clinical unit/s validated information on outcomes in relation to this policy.

All NSW Health staff are responsible for:

- Complying with this policy and best practice guidelines to deliver safe clinical practice to prevent and manage pressure injuries.
- Documenting and communicating the pressure injury risk assessment and prevention strategies to all relevant members of the multidisciplinary team.
- Notifying pressure injury incidents in the incident reporting system (e.g. IIMS) in accordance with the NSW Health Incident Management Policy.
- Providing best practice wound management to optimise healing of pressure injuries.
- Developing the care plan in partnership with patients and/or carers.
- Providing information and education to patients and/or carers on the risk, prevention and management of pressure injuries.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) has recognised pressure injuries as the fifth most costly commonly occurring preventable condition. Many pressure injuries are preventable, and it is recognised that their lengthy healing time has consequences for quality of life including susceptibility to infection, pain, sleep and mood disturbance. They also impact on rehabilitation, mobility and long term quality of life. The prevention of pressure injuries is the responsibility of all staff who work in health regardless of location and position. Everyone from staff, patients and/or carers have a role to play in the prevention of pressure injuries.

This Policy Directive describes best practice in accordance with the ACSQHC, National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (NSQHSS), Standard 8 - Preventing and Managing Pressure Injuries, 2012.

Evidence indicates the most effective approaches to pressure injury prevention and management include:

a) Timely risk assessment to identify risk factors.

b) Use of a validated risk assessment tool to guide clinical decision making to identify pressure injury risk.

c) The engagement of patients and/or their carers with clinicians.

d) Implementation of a plan of care that is:

- Tailored to the individual and addresses their risk factors.
- Supported by systems of care that focus on prevention and optimise healing.
- Multifactorial and interdisciplinary.
- Delivered by staff with appropriate skills and knowledge who use appropriate prevention techniques and materials.
- Inclusive of access to appropriate products and equipment.
e) Systems to monitor and analyse pressure injury data, and to implement relevant quality improvement activities.

Despite all prevention strategies being implemented to reduce the risk, pressure injuries may still occur in some patients, e.g. patients with skin failure in end stages of life as part of the dying process.

Appendix 10.1 provides a clinical practice flowchart for the prevention and management of pressure injuries for inpatients.

Appendix 10.2 provides a clinical practice flowchart for the prevention and management of pressure injuries for Multi-Purpose Service (MPS) long stay facilities and NSW Health Residential Aged Care (RAC) facilities.

Appendix 10.3 provides a clinical practice flowchart for the prevention and management of pressure injuries for non-inpatients (community nursing services, ambulatory facilities or clinics).

1.1 NSQHSS, Standard 8 – Preventing and Managing Pressure Injuries

The National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (NSQHSS) were introduced nationally from 1 January 2013. Standard 8 describes the systems and strategies to prevent patients developing pressure injuries, and management when pressure injuries occur.

The Safety and Quality Improvement Guide is available at: Standard 8: Preventing and Managing Pressure Injuries


Standard 8 requires that:
1) Health service organisations have governance structures and systems in place for the prevention and management of pressure injuries.
2) Patients are screened on presentation and pressure injury prevention strategies are implemented when clinically indicated.
3) Patients who have pressure injuries are managed according to best practice guidelines.
4) Patients and carers are informed of the risks, prevention strategies and management of pressure injuries.2

1.2 Key definitions

**Active support surface**
A powered support surface that produces alternating pressure through mechanical means, thereby providing the capacity to change its load distribution properties with or without an applied load. This generally occurs through alternation of air pressure in air cells on a programmed cycle time. Also called an alternating pressure support surface or a dynamic support surface.3

**Bony prominence**
An anatomical bony projection.3
12. MEDICAL CARE

Carers
Carers are people who provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness, an alcohol or other drug issue or who are frail aged.

Carers provide emotional, social or financial support. Carers include parents and guardians caring for children.

Classification of pressure injury

Must
Indicates a mandatory action.

NSW public health facility
For the purpose of this Policy, a NSW public health facility is any clinical unit or service that delivers healthcare services. Health facilities include hospitals, multi-purpose services, emergency services, ambulatory care services, Aboriginal Medical Services and community health services.

Pain
In the context of this policy, pain refers to an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with a pressure injury. Patients may use different words to describe pain including discomfort, distress and agony.

Patient
Refers to inpatient, resident, client or any person that the health service provider owes a duty of care to in respect in the provision of health services. Patient includes adults, paediatrics, infants and neonates.

Pressure Injury
A localised injury to the skin and/or underlying tissue usually over a bony prominence, as a result of pressure, shear and/or friction, or a combination of these factors.

Pressure Injury Risk Assessment scale/tool
Formal scale or score used to help determine the degree of pressure injury risk. The tool must be appropriate for the patient population in accordance with best practice guidelines e.g. Waterlow, Braden, Norton for adult population and Braden Q or Adapted Glamorgan for neonatal/infant and paediatric population.

Pressure Injury Risk Screening
For the purpose of this Policy, screening is a process to identify those individuals who may benefit by further assessment to reduce pressure injury risk. Those individuals include patients who are not necessarily perceived as at risk of, or already affected by pressure injury.

Should
Indicates a recommended action that should be followed unless there are sound reasons for taking a different course of action.
**12. MEDICAL CARE**

**Skin assessment**
General examination of the skin. Skin assessment includes examination of the entire skin surface to check integrity and identify any characteristics indicative of pressure damage/injury. This entails assessment for erythema, blanching response, localised heat, oedema, induration and skin breakdown. Check the skin beneath devices, prosthesis and dressings when practical.

**Staff**
For the purpose of this Policy staff refers to any person working within the NSW Health system including contractors, students and volunteers.

**Standard mattress**
The definition of a “standard mattress” is variable, and may change between facilities and over time. High standard specification foam mattress that meets Australian Standards - classified as Type N according to Australian Standards (AS2281-1993).

**Two part pressure injury assessment**
The pressure injury risk assessment consists of two parts.

a) Use a validated pressure injury risk assessment tool/process appropriate for the patient population in accordance with best practice guidelines, and

b) Skin assessment that is based on visual inspection.

2 GOVERNANCE

A senior manager and/or a governance group/committee is responsible for monitoring compliance with the health service pressure injury policies, procedures and protocols, and ensuring there are systems in place to monitor and analyse pressure injury data, and conducting relevant quality improvement activities.

3 CLINICAL PRACTICE – PREVENTING AND MANAGING PRESSURE INJURY

3.1 Pressure Injury Risk

All LHD/Networks must take reasonable steps to have pressure injury risk screening and assessment processes in place appropriate for their patient populations.

As a minimum, risk screening of all patients must consider the three primary predictors of pressure injury development:

1) Mobility/activity which can be restricted by physical, excessive weight, sensory, cognitive, substance-related, affect and motivational problems.

2) Factors influencing perfusion e.g. diabetes, peripheral vascular disease, poor venous return.

3) Skin/pressure injury status:
   a) General skin status relating to factors which may make the skin more vulnerable to pressure injury development.
   b) Pressure injury status including stage/grade 1 equivalent pressure injury, existing pressure injuries, and previous pressure injuries.

If a patient has a history of pressure injury or pressure injury is present they will be deemed at high risk.

A higher/lower level of risk may be determined for some patients based on the two-part risk assessment with consideration of co-morbidities and environmental factors informing clinical decision making.
3.2 Risk Assessment

As a minimum, all patients must undergo initial risk screening to inform the clinical risk assessment decision making process.

Risk assessment of patients using a validated tool is recommended and does not require a separate screening process.

The pressure injury risk assessment consists of two parts:

a) Use a validated pressure injury risk assessment tool/process appropriate for the patient population in accordance with best practice guidelines, and

b) Skin assessment that is based on visual inspection.

The following table outlines risk assessment requirements based on patient care setting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inpatients</th>
<th>Multi-Purpose Service (MPS) long stay facilities and NSW Health Residential Aged Care (RAC) facilities</th>
<th>Non-inpatients (community nursing services, ambulatory facilities or clinics)*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First pressure injury screen or assessment</strong> to guide clinical decision making</td>
<td>Assessed within 8 hours of presentation to the health facility by health staff skilled in using the risk assessment tools or process appropriate for the patient population.</td>
<td>Assessed at the first presentation by health staff skilled in using the risk assessment tools or process appropriate for the patient population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Patient at risk of developing a pressure injury</strong> the two part assessment to be repeated</td>
<td>Daily as a minimum and: • If there is a change to health status or mobility • Pre-operatively, and as soon as feasible after surgery • On transfer of care • If a pressure injury develops</td>
<td>Monthly as a minimum and: • If there is a change to health status or mobility • On transfer of care • If a pressure injury develops</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Patient not at risk or low risk</strong> the two part screen or assessment to be repeated</td>
<td>Weekly as a minimum and: • If there is a change to health status or mobility • On transfer of care • If a pressure injury develops</td>
<td>Monthly as a minimum and: • If there is a change to health status or mobility • On transfer of care • If a pressure injury develops</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pressure injuries present</strong> - skin inspection and pain assessment</td>
<td>Additionally should occur at each patient care intervention and/or positioning change.</td>
<td>Additionally should occur at each patient care intervention and/or positioning change.</td>
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*NB: Community nursing services that are not the primary care provider for patients who are identified at risk must provide education to the patient and/or carer or other care provider so that they understand the level of risk and their responsibility for ongoing skin assessment monitoring.

**NB**: Non-inpatient spinal cord injury patients are at high risk however may have little change in health status and have prevention strategies in place. Patients may have reassessments completed every three months or if there is a change in health status or mobility.
3.3 Prevention Strategies

1) All patients identified as being at risk (with or without existing pressure injury) should have:
   a) Best practice prevention strategies implemented as a priority within two hours of the assessment.3
   b) For inpatients pressure injury prevention strategies reviewed for their effectiveness:
      • At least four-hourly
      • At every patient care intervention
      • At handover
      • On transfer of care episode.
   c) Best practice strategies reviewed as a minimum at each community nursing visit.

2) Prevention strategies that includes:
   a) Repositioning and/or mobilising routine, including appropriate manual task techniques.
   b) Education of all patients/personal carers on regular repositioning and pressure relieving strategies.
   c) Management and monitoring of pain.
   d) Provision of appropriate products and equipment; support surfaces for beds, trolleys/wheelchairs, chairs, aids, equipment/devices, according to the patient’s risk assessment.
   e) Reduction of pressure, friction, and/or shear through:
      • Use of active support surfaces/positioning aids during care, including theatre, intensive care and emergency departments.
      • Use of dressing products (note dressing products do not reduce pressure).
      • Appropriate hazardous manual task techniques.
      • Correct fitting, removal and checking of pressure from devices/orthoses/anti-embolic stockings, casts and other clinical equipment.
   f) Skin protection and moisture reduction.
   g) Continence management.
   h) Adequate nutrition and hydration, including high protein supplements where indicated (with dietitian supervision if available).8
   i) Referral to health disciplines as clinically indicated for assessment and treatment.

3) Contra-indications for active support surface.

NB: In the case of the patient with an unstable spinal or unstable pelvic fracture, the active support surface is contra-indicated. This is regardless of the patient being identified as at risk for the development of pressure injury or if they have an existing pressure injury. The patient with an unstable spinal or unstable pelvic fracture should stay on the appropriate non-powered mattress and receive regular pressure relief for their condition. Adequate pain relief should be provided.

3.4 Care Planning and Documentation

1) The care plan must be documented and discussed with all patients and/or carers who are assessed as at risk, irrespective of degree of risk. This plan must be communicated during handover at the end of every shift in an acute, MPS long stay facility or NSW Health RAC facility, and as soon as possible (within 24 hours) of initial home visit for community services. Care plans are to include strategies aimed at:
   a) Preventing the development of pressure injury/injuries.
   b) Optimising healing and preventing complications of existing pressure injury/injuries.
2) The care plan must include:
   a) How the patient and/or carer are involved in the pressure injury prevention care planning process.
   b) Input from the multidisciplinary team about additional assessment, recommendations and treatment.
   c) Strategies for:
      • Pressure injury risk and skin assessment, monitoring and reassessment.
      • Mobilising to maintain function.
      • Position changes to relieve pressure, avoiding shear and friction.
      • Skin hygiene.
      • Pain assessment and management.
      • Optimising hydration and nutrition, including supplementation and feeding assistance, if required.
      • Promotion of continence and management of incontinence
      • Wound management.
      • Oedema management
   d) Strategies for protection of skin from moisture, high temperature, skin irritants and medical devices eg. gastrostomy and enteral feeding leakage, friction and skin trauma.
   e) Equipment, devices; manual task techniques to minimise wound pain, eliminate or reduce pressure, friction, shear and to protect existing pressure injury.
   f) Arrangements and planning for transfer of care.

3.5 Managing Pressure Injuries

1) Prevention - All patients with a pressure injury are at a high risk of the injury worsening, or developing other pressure injuries, and therefore:
   a) Where possible, prevention strategies must be implemented immediately, and documented. Any exceptions and the rationale must be documented.
   b) The two part pressure injury assessment and pain assessment must be conducted and care planned.

2) Assessment of pressure injuries should occur when a pressure injury is identified, or on transfer of care at next dressing change.

Appendix 10.4 provides the description of the pressure injury classification system.3

3) Wound Management is provided by or supervised by staff with skills, knowledge and equipment to provide treatments in accordance with best practice.

4) Document the pressure injury in the patient health care record e.g. on a wound chart or care plan or in the Electronic Medical Record. Notify the pressure injury in the incident reporting and management system e.g. NSW Health Incident Information Management System (IIMS).

5) Wound reassessment should occur at least weekly. Wound management should be reviewed if not healing at an optimal rate, i.e. 25% reduction in four weeks.3

6) Consultations should occur in a timely fashion with medical or other health disciplines for their assessment and contribution, planning, and management.

7) Pain should be assessed in accordance with best practice guidelines at least every shift/home visit using a validated tool.
8) **Nutritional management** provided in accordance with NSW Health Nutrition Care Policy.

### 3.6 Transfer of Care

Transfer of care for patients with an existing pressure injury, or at risk of developing a pressure injury, requires timely communication with doctors, next health care providers, patients and/or carers, other community or residential services, equipment suppliers, and appropriate allied health clinicians. Communication should include:

1) The goal of treatment
2) Classification and progress of pressure injury
3) Wound management
4) Prevention strategies
5) Follow-up care required.

### 4 RESOURCES FOR PREVENTING AND MANAGING PRESSURE INJURY

All LHDs/Networks must take reasonable steps to have:

1) Systems in place so that both adequate expertise and resources, products and equipment, are readily available and accessible to provide best practice in pressure injury prevention and wound management.

2) All pressure injury prevention equipment must be:
   a) Used and maintained in accordance with manufacturers’ instructions.
   b) Used and maintained in accordance with NSW Health Infection Control Policies.
   c) Used and maintained in accordance with NSW Health Workplace Health & Safety.
   d) Purchased in accordance with NSW Health Procurement Guidelines.

### 5 COMMUNICATION WITH PATIENTS AND/OR CARERS

All LHDs/Networks must take reasonable steps to have:

1) Systems in place to educate patients and/or carers of the risks, prevention strategies and management of pressure injuries.

2) Information, including written information and other resources, appropriate to the patient population.

3) Education to patients and/or carers by staff following the components of and/or using the CEC Pressure Injury Prevention Patient Information flyer which will be available on the CEC Pressure Injury Prevention Project webpage.

### 6 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

All LHDs/Networks must take reasonable steps to have:

1) Orientation and ongoing training programs related to pressure injury prevention and management available to support staff in the delivery of quality patient care.

2) All clinical staff involved in direct patient care undertake training in pressure injury prevention and management.
   As a minimum, this training should use the comprehensive pressure injury prevention and management education and training program provided by NSW Health.

3) Training for:
   a) Clinical coders on pressure injury classification
   b) Auditors and surveyors who conduct pressure injury audits and point prevalence surveys.

4) Systems in place to monitor education resources and records of attendance at training by staff on preventing and managing pressure injuries.
7 REPORTING

7.1 Pressure Injury Incidents

All LHDs/Networks must take reasonable steps to ensure:

1) All pressure injuries are notified in the local incident reporting and management system e.g. NSW Health Incident Information Management System (IIMS) and reported to the appropriate medical team.

   This includes those pressure injuries present on admission, new pressure injuries, and those that have significantly deteriorated (progressed to the next stage of pressure injury) since admission.

2) A Severity Assessment Code (SAC) 2 rating is applied to health service acquired (i.e. local site) pressure injury of Stage 3, Stage 4, suspected deep tissue or unstageable as the length of stay may increase, there is a likelihood of disfigurement and additional treatment is required.

3) All incidents are investigated, recommendations reported and monitored in accordance with the NSW Health Policy on incident management.

4) The care plan is reviewed by the multidisciplinary care team, within twenty four hours if possible, if a pressure injury develops, or an existing pressure injury significantly deteriorates (progresses to the next stage of pressure injury).

5) When a pressure injury occurs during care, the patient and/or carer are informed in accordance with NSW Health Open Disclosure Policy.

7.2 Auditing and reporting

All LHDs/Networks must take reasonable steps to have systems in place to:

1) Identify pressure injuries that develop during episodes of care for which they are responsible. Reports should be reviewed regularly, preferably quarterly and have engagement from district clinical governance unit.

2) Ensure pressure injury data are communicated to executive sponsors and those responsible for governance of this aspect of clinical care.

3) Analyse pressure injury data to inform care, quality improvement and monitor progress. These requirements are ideally met by:
   a) An annual point prevalence survey (combining audit of documentation with patient assessment using validated tools and supported by a training program for surveyors).
   b) Biannual incidence reports derived from routinely collected data (patient activity data and incidence data), supported by a training program for coders.

4) Measure process data (risk assessment/risk assessment outcomes/preventive care prescribed/delivered) and outcomes data (pressure injury incidence per bed days and annual point prevalence).

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12. MEDICAL CARE

8 REFERENCES


9 RELATED LITERATURES, DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES

1) Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights.
2) Getting Started Kit: Prevent Pressure Ulcers, How-to Guide 2008. 5 Million Lives Campaign. Institute for Healthcare Improvement; Cambridge, MA
3) NSW Procurement Guidelines
4) The related NSW Health policies and guideline (i.e. incident management, nutrient care, open disclosure, infection control and workplace health and safety) can be found at: http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pages/default.aspx
5) Other (NSQHS) Standards underpinned this policy are Standard 1 (Governance for Safety and Quality in Health Service Organisations) and Standard 2 (Partnering with Consumers) which can be found at: http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/publications/national-safety-and-quality-health-service-standards/
6) Pressure Area Care: Management 2012. The Joanna Briggs Institute
8) Pressure Ulcers: Prevention and Management 2011. The Joanna Briggs Institute
10.1 Clinical practice flowchart for the prevention and management of pressure injuries for inpatients.

**Inpatient Pressure Injury (PI) Prevention and Management Flowchart**

- **Patient presents to hospital**
- **Within 8 hours of presentation, two part PI assessment/screening process to be completed to guide clinical decision making.**
  - a) Use a validated PI risk assessment tool/process appropriate for the patient population
  - b) Skin assessment based on visual inspection
- **Does the patient have existing PI?**
  - **Yes**
    - Reassess as per BOX A
      - Complete an IMS Notification for each PI using the NPUAP/EPUAP classification system
      - For patients with PI, skin inspection and pain assessment should occur at each patient care intervention and/or each positioning change
  - **No**
- **Is the Patient ‘At Risk’?**
  - **Yes**
    - Reassess:
      - If there is a change to health status or mobility
      - On transfer of care
      - If a PI develops
      - At least weekly
  - **No**
    - Reassess:
      - Daily PI risk assessment using the two part pressure injury assessment and:
        - If there is a change to health status or mobility
        - Pre-operatively, and repeated as soon as possible after surgery
        - On transfer of care
        - If a pressure injury develops
- **BOX A - Reassess:**
  - Develop the care plan in consultation with the patient and/or carer
  - Implement prevention strategies appropriate to the level of risk e.g. equipment needs, repositioning
  - Make referrals as appropriate
  - Detailed documentation in patient health care record
  - Communicate PI risk and management at handover and transfer of care
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10.2 Clinical practice flowchart for the prevention and management of pressure injuries for Multi-Purpose Service (MPS) long stay facilities and NSW Health Residential Aged Care (RAC) facilities

**Multi-Purpose Service (MPS) long stay facilities and NSW Health Residential Aged Care (RAC) facilities Pressure Injury (PI) Prevention and Management Flowchart**

Patient presents to facility

Within 8 hours of presentation, two part PI assessment/screening process to be completed to guide clinical decision making.

- Use a validated PI risk assessment tool/process appropriate for the patient population
- Skin assessment based on visual inspection

Does the patient have existing PI?

- Yes
  - Reassess as per **BOX A**
  - Complete an IMMS Notification for each PI using the NPUAP/EPUAP classification system
  - For patients with PI, skin inspection and pain assessment should occur at each patient care intervention and/or each positioning change

- No
  - Is the Patient ‘At Risk’?

- No
  - Reassess:
    - If there is a change to health status or mobility
    - On transfer of care
    - If a PI develops
    - At least monthly

- Yes
  - Yes
  - Reassess as per **BOX A**

**BOX A** - Reassess:
Weekly PI risk assessment using the two part pressure injury assessment and:
- If there is a change to health status or mobility
- On transfer of care
- If a pressure injury develops

- Develop the care plan in consultation with the patient and/or carer
- Implement prevention strategies appropriate to the level of risk e.g. equipment needs, repositioning
- Make referrals as appropriate
- Detailed documentation in patient health care record
- Communicate PI risk and management at handover and transfer of care
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10.3 Clinical practice flowchart for the prevention and management of pressure injuries for non-inpatient (community) nursing services, ambulatory facilities or clinics

**Non-inpatient (community) nursing services, ambulatory facilities or clinics**

**Pressure Injury (PI) Prevention and Management Flowchart**

Patients first presentation

Assessed at the first presentation, two part PI assessment/screening process to be completed to guide clinical decision making.

a) Use a validated PI risk assessment tool/process appropriate for the patient population

b) Skin assessment based on visual inspection

- **Does the patient have existing PI?**
  - **Yes**
    - Reassess as per **BOX A**
    - Complete an IMS Notification for each PI using the NPUAP/EPUAP classification system
    - For patients with PI, skin inspection and pain assessment should occur at each patient care intervention and/or each positioning change
  - **No**

- **Is the Patient ‘At Risk’?**
  - **Yes**
    - Reassess:
      - If there is a change to health status or mobility
      - On transfer of care
      - If a PI develops
  - **No**

**BOX A - Reassess:**

Monthly PI risk assessment using the two part pressure injury assessment and:

- If there is a change to health status or mobility
- On transfer of care
- If a pressure injury develops

- Develop the care plan in consultation with the patient and/or carer
- Implement prevention strategies appropriate to the level of risk e.g. equipment needs, repositioning
- Make referrals as appropriate
- Detailed documentation in patient health care record
- Communicate PI risk and management at handover and transfer of care

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### 10.4 Pressure injury classification system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage I pressure injury: non-blanchable erythema</th>
<th>Stage II pressure injury: partial thickness skin loss</th>
<th>Stage III pressure injury: full thickness skin loss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Intact skin with non-blanchable redness of a localised area usually over a bony prominence.</td>
<td>- Partial thickness loss of dermis presenting as a shallow, open wound with a red/pink wound bed, without slough.</td>
<td>- Full thickness tissue loss. Subcutaneous fat may be visible but bone, tendon or muscle are not exposed. Slough may be present but does not obscure the depth of tissue loss. May include undermining and tunnelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Darkly pigmented skin may not have visible blanching; its colour may differ from the surrounding area.</td>
<td>- May also present as an intact or open/ruptured serum filled blister.</td>
<td>- The depth of a stage III PI varies by anatomical location. The bridge of the nose, ear, occiput and malleolus do not have subcutaneous tissue and stage III PIs can be shallow. In contrast, areas of significant adiposity can develop extremely deep stage III PIs. Bone or tendon is not visible or directly palpable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The area may be painful, firm, soft, warm or cooler compared to adjacent tissue.</td>
<td>- Presents as a shiny or dry, shallow ulcer without slough orslough or (NB: slough indicates suspected deep tissue injury).</td>
<td>- Stage II PI should not be used to describe skin tears, tape burns, perineal dermatitis, maceration or excoriation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- May be difficult to detect in individuals with dark skin tones.</td>
<td>- Stage II PI should not be used to describe skin tears, tape burns, perineal dermatitis, maceration or excoriation.</td>
<td>- Stage II PI should not be used to describe skin tears, tape burns, perineal dermatitis, maceration or excoriation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- May indicate “at risk” persons (a heralding sign of risk).</td>
<td>- Stage II PI should not be used to describe skin tears, tape burns, perineal dermatitis, maceration or excoriation.</td>
<td>- Stage II PI should not be used to describe skin tears, tape burns, perineal dermatitis, maceration or excoriation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage IV pressure Injury: full thickness tissue loss</th>
<th>Unstageable pressure injury: depth unknown</th>
<th>Suspected deep tissue injury: depth unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Full thickness tissue loss with exposed bone, tendon or muscle. Slough or eschar may be present on some parts of the wound bed.</td>
<td>- Full thickness tissue loss in which the base of the PI is covered by slough (yellow, tan, grey, green or brown) and/or eschar (tan, brown or black) in the PI bed.</td>
<td>- Purple or maroon localized area or discoloration, intact skin or blood-filled blister due to damage of underlying soft tissue from pressure and/or shear. This area may be preceded by tissue that is painful, firm, mushy, boggy, warmer or cooler as compared to adjacent tissue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The depth of a stage IV pressure injury varies by anatomical location. The bridge of the nose, ear, occiput and malleolus do not have subcutaneous tissue and these PIs can be shallow. Stage IV PIs can extend into muscle and/or supporting structures (eg. fascia, tendon or joint capsule) making osteomyelitis possible. Exposed bone or tendon is visible or directly palpable.</td>
<td>- Until enough slough/eschar is removed to expose the base of the PI, the true depth, and therefore the stage, cannot be determined. Stable (dry, adherent, intact without erythema or fluctuance) eschar on the heels serves as the body’s natural biological cover and should not be removed.</td>
<td>- Deep tissue injury may be difficult to detect in individuals with dark skin tone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Evolution may include a thin blister over a dark wound bed. The PI may further involve and become covered by thin eschar. Evolution may be rapid, exposing additional layers of tissue even with optimal treatment.</td>
<td>- Evolution may include a thin blister over a dark wound bed. The PI may further involve and become covered by thin eschar. Evolution may be rapid, exposing additional layers of tissue even with optimal treatment.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CARE TYPE POLICY FOR ACUTE, SUB-ACUTE AND NON-ACUTE AND MENTAL HEALTH ADMITTED PATIENT CARE (PD2016_039)

PD2016_039 rescinds PD2014_010

PURPOSE

‘Care type’ refers to the overall nature of a clinical service provided to an admitted patient during an episode of admitted patient care.

Correct assignment of care type for admitted patient episodes will ensure that each episode is classified appropriately for Activity Based Funding. This is vital as the classification used will also determine how the episode is reported, weighted, costed and funded:

- Acute care is classified using the Australian Diagnosis Related Groups (AR-DRGs)
- Sub-Acute and Non-Acute care is classified using Australian National Subacute and Non-Acute (AN-SNAP) classification
- Mental health care is classified using the Australian Mental Health Care Classification.

This version of the Policy Directive introduces the mental health care type.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Local Health Districts (LHD) and Specialty Health Networks (SHN) are responsible for accurately reporting the clinical activity within their facilities to the NSW Ministry of Health in order to meet State and Commonwealth reporting requirements.

In order to do so, clinical services must ensure that episodes of patient care are classified using the care type that best reflects the primary clinical purpose or treatment goal of the care provided.

When the clinical purpose or treatment goal changes so must the care type.

The care type to which the episode is allocated must always be evidenced by documentation in the patient health record.

IMPLEMENTATION

Chief Executives are required to ensure that:

- Staff responsible for entering care type changes are made aware of and gain an understanding of the provisions of this policy directive, and
- Relevant staff comply with this Policy Directive.

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 About this document

NSW Health Services have an obligation to count and classify activity in a meaningful and consistent manner. The Care Type Policy for Acute, Sub-Acute and Non-Acute and Mental Health Admitted Patient Care provides a framework to ensure assignment to and changes in care type occur appropriately and correctly. Implementation of this policy will contribute to ensuring that information reflecting the patient’s episode of care is accurate and reflects the type of care provided to the patient.

In 2013 the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) developed a revised set of National care type definitions. This work was commissioned by the Independent Hospital Pricing Authority in order to achieve consistency in classification of admitted patient activity.
There are currently eleven (11) care types in use in New South Wales, they are:

- Acute Care
- Rehabilitation
- Palliative Care
- Maintenance Care
- Newborn Care
- Other Care (note: this category is included for completeness, but is not applicable for admitted patients in NSW. This care type generally applies to residential aged care patients only)
- Geriatric Evaluation and Management (GEM)
- Psycho-geriatric
- Organ Procurement
- Hospital Boarder
- Mental Health.

1.2 Key definitions

Care Type (previously known as ‘service category’)

Care type refers to the nature of the clinical service provided to an admitted patient during an episode of admitted patient care, or the type of service provided by the hospital for boarders or posthumous organ procurement (care other than admitted care), as represented by a code. The care type selected must reflect the primary clinical purpose or treatment goal of the care provided. Where there is more than one focus of care, the care type selected must reflect the major reason for care.

Care Type Change

An admission or stay can consist of one or more episodes and therefore one or more care types. A care type change occurs when there is a change in the primary clinical purpose or treatment goal of the care provided to the patient. For example, a patient who is receiving acute intervention for a stroke will have a care type change to rehabilitation if and when the main focus of care changes from acute management to functional improvement.

When the intensity of treatment or resource utilisation changes but the primary clinical purpose or treatment goal does not change, a care type change is not warranted.

A reduction in the intensity of acute care does not trigger a change to a sub-acute care type if the patient is not receiving care that meets the definition of a sub-acute care type. It is therefore essential that any care type change reflects a clear change in the primary clinical purpose or treatment goal of care provided.

With respect to the mental health care type, for 2016/17 a type change is to occur when a patient is transferred into or out of a specialist mental health unit. Transfers between specialist mental health units will not trigger a care type change.

All care type changes must be clearly documented.

The 11 Care Types are defined below. A full list of definitions is also provided at Appendix 2.

2 PURPOSE

‘Care type’ refers to the overall nature of a clinical service provided to an admitted patient during an episode of admitted patient care.

Admitted patient care is provided in a variety of settings. The care type allocated to an episode of care is independent of the location of the patient, and reflects the primary clinical purpose of the care provided.

Correct assignment of care type for admitted patient episodes will ensure that each episode is classified appropriately for Activity Based Funding (ABF). This is vital as the classification used will also determine how the episode is reported, weighted, costed and funded:
12. MEDICAL CARE

- Acute care is classified using AR-DRGs
- Sub and Non-Acute care is classified using AN-SNAP.
- Mental Health care is classified using AR-DRGs (for 2016/17).

The care type to which the episode is allocated must be evidenced by documentation in the patient health record, i.e. if an episode is allocated to a rehabilitation care type, there must be evidence in the medical record that rehabilitation care, meeting the National Definition (refer below) is occurring.

The care type allocated should not reflect the care that is intended for the patient to receive at some time in the future when, for example, another service takes over care of the patient or when the patient is moved to a different ward.

3 INTENDED AUDIENCE

This policy applies to all staff responsible for the clinical care and / or admission details of patients at all facilities within NSW providing admitted patient care. This includes all medical, nursing, allied health staff and relevant administrative staff such as ward clerks, admission officers, admitted patient data co-ordinators, clinical coders and health information managers.

4 EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The expected outcomes are:

- The care type of all episodes in NSW Health facilities accurately reflects the care provided.
- Statistical information is accurate and timely.
- NSW Health submission requirements for the Admitted Patient Data Collection are met.
- NSW Health submission requirements for the AN-SNAP Data Collection are met.
- NSW Health submission requirements to the Activity Based Funding: Mental Health Care DSS are met.
- Data will be available to assist in ensuring facilities will receive appropriate funding for the care they provide.
- NSW Health submission requirements to the National Hospital Cost Data Collection (NHCDC) are met.

5 PURPOSE

Local Health Districts (LHDs) and Specialty Health Networks (SHNs) are responsible for accurately reporting the clinical activity within their facilities to the NSW Ministry of Health in order to meet State and Commonwealth reporting requirements.

In order to do so, clinical services must ensure that episodes of patient care are classified using the care type that best reflects the primary clinical purpose or treatment goal of the care provided.

When the clinical purpose or treatment goal changes, so must the care type.

6 NATIONAL CARE TYPE DEFINITIONS

6.1 Acute care type

**Acute care type**

The primary clinical purpose or treatment goal is to:

- Manage labour (obstetric)
- Cure illness or provide definitive treatment of injury
- Perform surgery (other than when the exceptions documented in the included guidelines apply)
- Relieve symptoms of illness or injury (excluding palliative care)
- Reduce severity of an illness or injury
- Perform diagnostic or therapeutic procedures, and / or
- Protect against exacerbation and / or complication of an illness and / or injury which could threaten life or normal function.
6.2 Rehabilitation care

Rehabilitation care is care in which the primary clinical purpose or treatment goal is improvement in the functioning of a patient with an impairment, activity limitation or participation restriction due to a health condition.

The patient will be capable of actively participating. Rehabilitation is always:

- Delivered under the management of or informed by a clinician with specialised expertise in rehabilitation, and
- Evidenced by an individualised multidisciplinary management plan, which is documented in the patient’s medical record that includes negotiated goals within specified time frames and formal assessment of functional ability.

6.2.1 Rehabilitation care guidelines

- When an acute patient is waiting for Rehabilitation, but Rehabilitation care has not yet commenced, a care type change to Rehabilitation cannot occur. The patient must remain in an acute care type until rehabilitation care begins. In some instances a care type change to maintenance may be warranted.
- If Rehabilitation is occurring on an acute ward, the Rehabilitation care type should be used, as care type is independent of patient location.
- The period of recovery at the end of an acute episode prior to separation (for example, the final 1-2 days after a joint replacement) is not necessarily a separate episode and should not trigger a care type change to rehabilitation. Even though the care has lower resource intensity and the patient may receive some allied health involvement, unless the definition of Rehabilitation (as stated above) is met, the care type remains acute.
- A multidisciplinary management plan comprises a series of documented and agreed initiatives or treatments (specifying program goals, actions and timeframes) which have been established through multidisciplinary consultation and consultation with the patient and / or carers.
- Patients who receive acute same day interventions, such as dialysis, during the course of a Rehabilitation episode of care do not change care type. Instead, procedure codes for the acute same day intervention(s) and an additional diagnosis (if relevant) should be added to the record of the Rehabilitation episode of care.

6.3 Palliative care

Palliative care is care in which the primary clinical purpose or treatment goal is optimisation of the quality of life of a patient with an active and advanced life-limiting illness. The patient will have complex physical, psychosocial and / or spiritual needs. Palliative care is always:

- Delivered under the management of, or informed by a clinician with specialised expertise in palliative care, and
- Evidenced by an individualised multidisciplinary assessment and management plan, which is documented in the patient’s medical record, which covers the physical, psychological, emotional, social and spiritual needs of the patient and negotiated goals.

6.3.1 Palliative care guidelines

- Interventions such as radiotherapy, chemotherapy, and surgery are considered part of the palliative episode if they are undertaken specifically to provide symptom relief.
- Patients referred to the Emergency Department (ED) by a clinician for palliative care should have a care type of Palliative Care assigned from the ED time of admission.
6.4 Maintenance care

Maintenance (or non-acute) care is care in which the primary clinical purpose or treatment goal is support for a patient with impairment, activity limitation or participation restriction due to a health condition. Following assessment or treatment, the patient does not require further complex assessment or stabilisation. Patients with a care type of ‘maintenance care’ often require care over an indefinite period.

6.4.1 Maintenance care guidelines

- Care provided to a patient, who would normally not require hospital treatment and would be more appropriately treated in another setting, which is unavailable in the short term, or where there are factors in the home environment making it inappropriate to discharge the patient in the short term. For example:
  - A patient requires home modifications in order to be safely discharged home. The modifications are not yet complete and therefore, although ready for discharge the patient cannot safely return home.
  - A patient requires nursing home placement and although ready for discharge a place is not yet available. The patient has a current acute care certificate.

- Nursing Home Type patients for whom there is no acute care certificate.

- Patients in receipt of care where the primary reason for admission is respite.

6.5 Newborn care

Newborn care is initiated when the patient is born in hospital or is nine days old or less at the time of admission. Newborn care continues until the patient is separated.

6.5.1 Newborn care guidelines

- Patients who turn 10 days of age and require clinical care must continue in the newborn episode of care (that is “5 – Newborn”) until separated. A type change to care type “1 – Acute” must not be performed.

- Patients who turn 10 days of age and do not require clinical care are separated and, if they remain in the hospital, are designated as boarders.

- Patients aged less than 10 days and not admitted at birth (for example, transferred from another hospital) are admitted with a newborn care type.

- Patients aged greater than 9 days not previously admitted (for example, transferred from another hospital) are either boarders or admitted with an acute care type.

- Within a newborn episode of care, until the baby turns 10 days of age, each day is either a qualified or unqualified day.

- A newborn is qualified when it meets at least one of the criteria detailed in Newborn qualification status, see Appendix 2 for details

- Within a newborn episode of care, each day after the baby turns 10 days of age is counted as a qualified patient day. Newborn qualified days are equivalent to acute days and may be denoted as such

- This care type can only ever be allocated at the time of admission. As a result, there can never be a care type change to ‘Newborn’.
6.6 **Other care**

Other admitted patient care is care that does not meet the definitions above.

6.6.1 **Other care guidelines**

- This care type is included for completeness only; it is not applicable to admitted patients in NSW.
- The purpose of care type of ‘Other’ is to collect non-admitted activity reported via a patient administration system (PAS). This activity may include community residential care, and residential aged care covered by Commonwealth Block funding.
- Activity collected using this care type is excluded from any reporting of admitted patient care in NSW. This activity is used in cost allocation of residential services in the DNR (District and Network Return)

6.7 **Geriatric Evaluation and Management (GEM)**

Geriatric Evaluation and Management care is in which the primary clinical purpose or treatment goal is improvement in the functioning of a patient with multi-dimensional needs associated with medical conditions related to ageing, such as a tendency to fall, incontinence, reduced mobility and cognitive impairment. The patient may also have complex psychosocial problems. Geriatric Evaluation and Management is always:

- Delivered under the management of, or informed by a clinician with specialised expertise in geriatric evaluation and management, and
- Evidenced by an individualised multidisciplinary management plan, which is documented in the patient’s medical record that covers the physical, psychological, emotional and social needs of the patient and includes negotiated goals within indicative time frames and formal assessment of functional ability

6.7.1 **Geriatric Evaluation and Management guidelines**

- When an acute patient is waiting for GEM, but GEM care has not yet commenced, a care type change to GEM cannot occur. The patient must remain in an acute care type until GEM care begins. In some instances a care type change to maintenance may be warranted.
- If GEM is occurring on an acute ward, the GEM care type should be used, as the care type is independent of patient location.
- The period of recovery at the end of an acute episode prior to separation (for example the final 1-2 days after a joint replacement), is not necessarily a separate episode and should not trigger a care type change to GEM. Even though the care has lower resource intensity and the patient may receive some allied health involvement, unless the definition of ‘GEM’ (as stated above) is met, the care type remains acute.
- A multidisciplinary management plan comprises a series of documented and agreed initiatives or treatments (specifying program goals, actions and timeframes) which have been established through multidisciplinary consultation and consultation with the patient and / or carers.
- Patients who receive acute same day intervention(s) during the course of a GEM episode of care do not change care type. Instead, procedure codes for the acute same day intervention(s) and an additional diagnosis (if relevant) should be added to the record of the GEM episode of care.

6.8 **Psycho-geriatric**

Psycho-geriatric care is care in which the primary clinical purpose or treatment goal is improvement in the functional status, behaviour and / or quality of life for an older patient with significant psychiatric or behavioural disturbance, caused by mental illness, an age-related brain impairment or a physical condition.
Psycho-geriatric care is always:

- Delivered under the management of or informed by a clinician with specialised expertise in psychogeriatric care, and evidenced by an individualised multidisciplinary management plan, which is documented in the patient’s medical record that covers the physical, psychological, emotional and social needs of the patient and includes negotiated goals within indicative time frames and formal assessment of functional ability.

- Psycho-geriatric care is not applicable if the primary focus of care is acute symptom control.

6.9 Organ procurement – posthumous

Posthumous organ procurement is the procurement of human organ or tissue for the purpose of transplantation from a donor who has been declared brain dead.

6.9.1 Organ procurement care type guidelines

- Once clinical staff confirm and document brain death of the patient, a care type change to “Organ procurement – posthumous” must be performed. Date and time of the type change should be recorded as the date and time of documented death, not the date and time the organ or tissue harvest has been completed.

- The posthumous organ procurement care type is to be used for all posthumous organ procurement, irrespective of whether the deceased patient is kept in ICU for the preservation of organs that require oxygen (e.g., heart or lungs, etc.), or whether the deceased patient is transferred to the morgue to await the removal of other tissue (such as corneas, etc.).

- Patients in an Emergency Department (ED) who die in the ED or are dead on arrival do not meet the criteria for admission. However, such patients whose organs are to be procured are to be registered on PAS and be assigned an ‘Organ procurement – posthumous’ care type.

- All ‘Organ procurement – posthumous’ care type episodes are in scope of reporting to the Admitted Patient Data Collection, though the posthumous organ procurement component of the admitted patient stay may be excluded from the calculation of specific KPIs and other activity measures.

- Diagnoses and procedures undertaken during this activity, including mechanical ventilation and organ procurement should be recorded in accordance with the relevant ICD-10-AM / ACHI Australian Coding Standards.

For more detail refer to the Admitted Patient Data Collection Intranet site.

6.10 Hospital boarder

A hospital boarder is a person who is receiving food and / or accommodation at the hospital but for whom the hospital does not accept responsibility for treatment and / or care. Hospital boarders are not admitted to the hospital. However, a hospital may register a boarder.

Babies in hospital at age nine days or less cannot be boarders. They are admitted patients with each day of stay deemed to be either qualified or unqualified. Unqualified newborn days (and separations consisting entirely of unqualified newborn days) are not to be counted for all other purposes, and they are ineligible for health insurance benefit purposes.

6.11 Mental health care

Mental health care is care in which the primary clinical purpose or treatment goal is improvement in the symptoms and / or psychosocial, environmental and physical functioning related to a patient’s mental disorder.
Mental health care:
- Is delivered under the management of, or regularly informed by, a clinician with specialised expertise in mental health
- Is evidenced by an individualised formal mental health assessment and the implementation of a documented mental health plan and
- May include significant psychosocial components, including family and carer support.

6.11.1 Mental health care guidelines
- This care type is to be initially used for patients treated within a specialised mental health inpatient unit only. Other factors such as diagnosis, DRG assignment or treating specialist (where the patient is not in a specialised mental health unit are not to be used as criteria in assigning this care type.
- This care type is to be introduced across all LHDs and SHNs by 30 June 2017. For the 2016/17 reporting year, it will be used at a point as negotiated by the LHD or SHN and the NSW Ministry of Health during the 2016/17 reporting year.
- Assignment of this care type occurs when a patient is admitted or transferred into a specialised mental health unit. Movements into or out of a specialised mental health unit from other inpatient units, where it reflects a change in the primary clinical purpose or treatment goal of the inpatient episode, will trigger a type change, with the following exceptions:
  - Patients within non-mental health units who are transferred into ECT suites for regular ECT and then returned to the non-mental health unit following the ECT procedure are not to be type changed to the mental health care type for the provision of the ECT.
  - Patients within specialised mental health units who are transferred for regular procedures like chemotherapy or renal dialysis, or who go to an operating theatre, and who are returned to the specialised mental health unit following the procedure are not to be type changed from the mental health care type for the provision of the procedure.
- At the point of introduction by the LHD, all existing patients within specialised mental health units are to be type changed to this care type. The date for the type change can be either:
  - The date of the introduction of the care type by the LHD, or
  - The date when the patient was admitted or transferred into the specialist mental health unit. Under this criterion, long standing patients who were in the mental health unit prior to 1 July 2016 are to be backdated to 1 July 2016 only.
  - Note that the decision of which date to use is to be made by the LHD / SHN, and must be applied consistently across the entire LHD / SHN, and not on a facility by facility basis.
- Movements between acute mental health units and non-acute mental health units (rehabilitation or extended care mental health units) do not trigger type changes. They are all to be categorised within this single care type.

7 PROCEDURE FOR ASSIGNING CARE TYPES
7.1 Care type assignment upon admission
Only one care type can be assigned at a time. In cases where a patient is receiving multiple types of care, the care type that best describes the primary clinical purpose or treatment goal should be assigned. For example if a patient is primarily receiving acute care and an in-reach rehabilitation team is also involved with the patient, the care type will be acute. When the focus of care provided to the patient shifts to functional improvement, the care type should be changed to rehabilitation at the point this shift in focus occurs.

The care type is assigned by the clinician responsible for the management of the care, based on clinical judgements as to the primary clinical purpose of the care provided and, for subacute care types, the specialised expertise of the clinician who will be responsible for the management of the care.
For the mental health care type, the clinical judgement as to the primary purpose of the care forms part of the clinician’s decision to admit a patient into the specialised mental health inpatient unit.

At the time of sub-acute care type assignment, a multidisciplinary management plan may not be in place but the intention to prepare one should be known by the clinician assigning the care type.

The clinician determining the appropriate care type to be assigned must ensure that clear documentation of the care type is recorded in the medical record. The clinician determining the appropriate care type to be assigned (or other authorised clinician) must ensure that the ward clerk (or staff member responsible for updating the Patient Administration System (PAS)) is informed of the care type decision.

The ward clerk (or staff member responsible for updating PAS) ensures the correct care type is assigned within the PAS.

### 7.2 Care type change during the admission event

During an admission or stay the primary clinical purpose or treatment goal of care may change. When this occurs, the care type also changes. It is essential that any change in care type is supported by documentation reflecting the change in purpose and goal of care.

Responsibility for the decision to change care type ultimately rests with the senior medical officer but may be delegated to other senior members of the clinical team. The process of care type change generally occurs as follows:

- Clinical staff assesses the patient, their clinical status and treatment needs and then determine the clinical purpose and goals of treatment. If the current care type accurately reflects the treatment goals and focus of care, no further action is required.
- If the current care type for the episode no longer reflects the clinical purpose and goals of treatment and the care provided fits the definition of another care type, then a care type change is warranted.
- The new care type is determined by the clinician who is taking over responsibility for the management of the care of the patient at the time of transfer. (Note, in some circumstances the patient may continue to be under the management of the same clinician).
- Two methods of initiating and informing the change to be made on the PAS are suggested, either:
  - On a form, or
  - In the healthcare record as a handwritten entry / label / stamp.

Local processes will determine which method is most suitable. Regardless of the method used, the medical officer must ensure that clear documentation of the care type is recorded in the medical record.

Documentation must include the following information:
  - When a separate form rather than a notation or sticker in the record is used, the MRN and patient name must be noted on the form
  - Date Effective: indicate the actual date the care type change is effective
  - Time Effective: indicate the actual time the care type change is effective
  - Indicate the new care type
  - If there is an AMO change, document the new AMO and their specialty.

- The receiving or primary clinician must authorise the care type change by signing the documentation.
- The receiving or primary clinician must ensure that the ward clerk (or staff member responsible for updating PAS) is informed that the care type change has occurred.
12. MEDICAL CARE

The ward clerk (or staff member responsible for updating the PAS), updates the care type in PAS, along with any other relevant information that may have changed such as ward or AMO. It is important that the date of change recorded in PAS matches the actual date and time of the care type change.

7.2.1 Additional guidelines for care type change during admission

- A care type change or admission under a sub-acute or non-acute care type may trigger collection of the AN-SNAP data variables.
- Where AN-SNAP data is collected, care must be taken to ensure reconciliation of care type and care type change dates between SYNAPTIX and the PAS.
- The clinician responsible for the management of care may not necessarily be located in the same facility as the patient. This may be the case when a ‘hub and spoke’ model of care is in place. In these circumstances, a clinician at the patient’s location may also have a role in the care of the patient; the expertise of this clinician does not affect the assignment of care type.
- A multidisciplinary management plan comprises a series of documented and agreed initiatives or treatments (specifying program goals, actions and timeframes) which have been established through multidisciplinary consultation and consultation with the patient and / or carers.
- It is highly unlikely that, for care type changes involving sub-acute care types, more than one change in care type will take place within a 24 hour period. Changes involving sub-acute care types are unlikely to occur on the date of formal separation.
- Patients who receive acute same day intervention(s) during the course of a sub-acute or non-acute episode of care do not change care type. Instead, procedure codes for the acute same day intervention(s) and an additional diagnosis (if relevant) should be added to the record of the sub-acute or non-acute episode of care.
- Palliative care episodes can include grief and bereavement support for the family and carers of the patient where it is documented in the patient’s medical record.
- All care type changes must be updated on the PAS at the time of (or as close to) the care type change.
- An Acute Care Certificate should not influence the classification of a patient to a particular care type. Patients may have an Acute Care Certificate and be classified as other than “1 – Acute”.
- The completion of an Aged Care Client Record (ACCR) form should not influence the classification of a patient. For example patients may not have an ACCR form completed but the episode can still be care type ‘Maintenance’
- Regular training sessions for ward and clinical staff should be conducted to ensure that reviewing patient care types becomes part of daily ward routine.

7.3 Retrospective care type changes not identified during the admission event

The care type should not be retrospectively changed unless it is:

- For the correction of a data recording error, or
- The reason for change is clearly documented in the patient’s medical record and it has been approved by the hospital’s director of clinical services or delegated officer, or
- As a result of the introduction of a new care type which can apply retrospectively.

It is the responsibility of the staff member identifying the retrospective care type change to ensure that the care type change details have been updated in the patient administration system and to notify staff responsible for patient movement reconciliation processes.

Appendix 1 contains a number of care type change scenarios.
8 REFERENCES AND RELATED POLICIES

- Admitted Patient Data Dictionary (2009), *Service Category*, NSW Health
- Casemix Policy Unit (2005), NSW SNAP Data Collection: Data Dictionary v 3.0, NSW Health
- Corporate Governance & Risk Management Branch (2007), *Section 5: Nursing Home Type - Fees Procedure Manual for Public Health Organisations*, NSW Health
- Finance Branch (2016), PD2016_011 Nursing Home Type Patients and the National Acute Care Certificate, NSW Health
- Inter-Government and Funding Strategies Branch (2008), *PD2008_028 SNAP Data Collection – Australian National Sub-Acute and Non-Acute Patient (AN_SNAP) Classification*, NSW Health
- Fees Procedure Manual for Public Health Organisations PD2007_050, NSW Health
- National care type definitions: [http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/491557](http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/491557)

9 LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

1. Appendix 1: Care type change scenarios
2. Appendix 2: Definitions of terms

Appendix 1: Care Type Change Scenarios

Temporary Care Type Escalation

(a) Overnight

*Example:* A patient is admitted to Rehabilitation on 01/01/11 for management of a brain injury. On 10/01/11, he falls out of bed and sustains a fractured neck of femur. The patient is transferred to Orthopaedic surgery for surgical management of the fracture. He remains in the Orthopaedics unit for two days and is transferred back to Rehabilitation on 13/01/11. The patient is discharged from hospital on 30/01/11.

The care type should be updated on the PAS to reflect the change in the primary clinical purpose of care provided to the patient from rehabilitation to acute care.

The care type was changed in this scenario because the patient had a clear change in primary clinical purpose or treatment goal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode Date Range</th>
<th>Care Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/01/11 – 10/01/11</td>
<td>Rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/01/11 – 13/01/11</td>
<td>Acute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/01/11 – 30/01/11</td>
<td>Rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Same Day

*Example:* A patient is admitted to Rehabilitation on 01/01/11 for management of a brain injury. On 10/01/11, the patient is admitted to Neurosurgery for a burr hole procedure, and is transferred back to Rehabilitation on the same day. The patient is discharged on 30/01/11. The care type is not changed, however the procedure is coded at the conclusion of the episode.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode Date Range</th>
<th>Care Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/01/11 – 30/01/11</td>
<td>Rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(c) Surgical Interventions for a Palliative Care Patient

*Example:* A patient commences palliative care on 01/02/12. In order to better manage her pain, the patient is taken to theatres for insertion of an intrathecal catheter on 10/02/12. The patient is transferred back to palliative care on the same day. The patient dies on 03/03/12.

The care type is not changed, however the procedure is coded at the conclusion of the episode.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode Date Range</th>
<th>Care Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/02/12 – 03/03/12</td>
<td>Palliative Care</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(d) Surgical Interventions for a Palliative Care Patient

*Example:* A patient commences palliative care on 10/04/12. During the course of the palliative episode exacerbation of acute renal failure necessitated immediate transfer to the surgical ward. To provide acute care for the management of the renal failure ureteral stenting is performed on 10/05/12 with the patient remaining in acute post surgical care overnight. As the need for acute management subsides the patient is transferred back to the palliative care unit on 11/05/12 for ongoing palliative care management. The patient is discharged on 03/06/12.

In this example, the care type is changed as the focus of care in the surgical ward was to deal with the management of an acute condition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode Date Range</th>
<th>Care Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/04/12 – 10/05/12</td>
<td>Palliative Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/05/12 – 11/05/12</td>
<td>Acute care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/05/12 – 03/06/12</td>
<td>Palliative Care</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.1 Change in Intensity of Care

(a) Post-surgical allied health intervention

*Example:* A 70 year-old female patient is admitted to the acute cardiothoracic surgery inpatient unit on 01/01/11 for Coronary Artery Bypass Graft. Following surgery, the patient goes to HDU for five days for monitoring due to her rapid atrial fibrillation and hypertension. The patient then returns to the cardiothoracic surgery ward for ongoing management, concurrently she receives physiotherapy in preparation for discharge, due to post-acute de-conditioning. The patient is discharged on 07/01/11.

The provision of physiotherapy does not on its own meet the definition of Rehabilitation. Therefore, the patient remains in the Acute care type as there has not been a clear documented change in the primary clinical purpose or treatment goal.

The care type was not changed in this scenario because the primary clinical purpose or treatment goal of the episode did not change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode Date Range</th>
<th>Care Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/01/11 – 07/01/11</td>
<td>Acute</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.2 Care Type Change due to Change in Focus of Care

(a) GEM

*Example:* An 80 year-old female patient is admitted to Neurosurgery on 01/01/11 for management of a cerebral aneurysm. Following surgery, the patient experiences left-sided weakness and moderate cognitive difficulties. The patient is referred for an Aged Care consult on 05/01/11. The Aged Care consult is completed on 06/01/11. The patient is accepted for Aged Care, however no beds are
currently available and no intervention to facilitate functional improvement is provided. On 10/01/11 an Aged Care bed becomes available and the patient is transferred. Whilst in the Aged Care Unit, the patient receives interventions to increase her functional independence, ongoing monitoring of her medical condition and assistance to find supported accommodation. These interventions constitute a change of focus of care to GEM. The patient is discharged from Aged Care on 30/01/11.

The care type was changed in this scenario on 10/01/11 because this is when GEM care commenced. Although the patient was identified as an appropriate GEM candidate on the 06/01/11 the care received did not change until the 10/01/11. The patient should remain as an acute patient for the period of time during which they are waiting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode Date Range</th>
<th>Care Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/01/11 – 10/01/11</td>
<td>Acute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/01/11 – 30/01/11</td>
<td>Geriatric Evaluation and Management (GEM)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Maintenance

Example: A 95 year-old female patient is admitted via ED on 26/02/11 for treatment of fractured vertebrae. The patient is transferred to the Aged Care ward on 28/02/11. The patient has a history of falls, lower limb weakness, hypertension and diabetes. During the admission, the patient receives a bone scan, CT scan head and pelvis, and lower limb Doppler ultrasound. During this period of evaluation the patient concurrently receives multidisciplinary interventions aimed at improving her functional status and preparing her for discharge. On 14/03/11 the team determine that the patient will not benefit from Rehabilitation, is unable to return home and will require placement. Interventions are provided to maintain the patient’s current functional status whilst placement is organised. The patient is discharged to a nursing home on 21/03/11.

The maintenance care type was used in this example as the patient was no longer receiving acute interventions and was awaiting placement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode Date Range</th>
<th>Care Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26/02/11 – 14/03/11</td>
<td>Acute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/03/11 – 05/10/12</td>
<td>Maintenance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) Rural patient

Example: A 75 year-old patient is admitted by their GP to a small rural hospital on 1/9/12 with severe influenza. The patient has co-morbidities of diabetes and cardiovascular disease. The patient receives acute interventions to manage their illness. As they recover, it is evident that they are significantly de-conditioned and are unable to be discharged at their current functional level. The nursing staff request a consult by a visiting Physiotherapist and Occupational Therapist. The allied health staff complete their assessments on 18/9/12, including a formal functional assessment. In conjunction with the patient’s GP, a clinician with extensive experience caring for older people with functional impairments, the therapists prescribe a rehabilitation plan that will be carried out jointly by the nursing staff and the therapists on the days that they attend the hospital. This rehabilitation plan includes treatment goals. Regular review of the plan and the patient’s functional status is carried out. The patient is discharged home on 5/10/12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode Date Range</th>
<th>Care Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/09/12 – 18/09/12</td>
<td>Acute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/09/12 – 05/10/12</td>
<td>Rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Mental Health

(a) Patients treated only within one or more specialised mental health unit(s) for the entire stay

*Example*: A patient is transferred from the ED to an associated PECC unit on 01/07/2016. On 03/07/2016, the patient is transferred to an acute mental health specialist unit. They remain there until 17/07/2016 when they are transferred to a mental health rehabilitation unit. They remain there until their discharge on 31/08/2016.

All care delivered within specialised mental health units, regardless of the intended clinical focus of the unit, is to be categorised under one care type, and thus treated as a single admission.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode Date Range</th>
<th>Care Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/07/16 – 31/08/16</td>
<td>Mental Health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Patients treated across a number of units, including a specialised mental health unit

*Example 1*: A patient is admitted on 21/07/2016 to an orthopaedic unit for a planned total hip replacement. After surgery on 22/07/2016, the patient returns to the orthopaedic unit. On 30/07/2016, the patient’s co-morbid schizophrenia deteriorates and a decision is made to transfer the patient to the acute mental health unit. The patient remains there until 16/08/2016 when they develop pneumonia. The patient is transferred to a respiratory unit to manage the pneumonia. They remain there until 27/09/2016 when they are discharged.

Any ongoing or continuous care that is delivered within a specialised mental health unit triggers a type change if they are transferred from another inpatient unit. Likewise, if the patient is transferred from a specialised mental health unit to another unit for ongoing or continuous care, this will also trigger a type change.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode Date Range</th>
<th>Care Type</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21/07/16 – 30/07/16</td>
<td>Acute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/07/16 – 16/08/16</td>
<td>Mental Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/08/16 – 27/09/16</td>
<td>Acute</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Example 2*: A patient is admitted to a specialist acute mental health inpatient unit on 01/08/2016. On 29/09/2016, the patient is treated for their planned cataract surgery. The patient is transferred to the ophthalmology unit after the surgery, where they remain until the 30/09/2016. They are then transferred back to the mental health rehabilitation unit and remain there until their discharge on 22/03/2017.

Any ongoing or continuous care that is delivered outside a specialised mental health unit triggers a type change if they are transferred from a specialised mental health unit and they are not returned directly back to the specialised mental health unit following treatment.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode Date Range</th>
<th>Care Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/08/16 – 29/09/16</td>
<td>Mental Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/09/16 – 30/09/16</td>
<td>Acute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/09/16 – 22/03/17</td>
<td>Mental Health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) Patients treated for ongoing chronic conditions whilst admitted within a specialised mental health unit

*Example*: A patient is admitted on 31/07/2016 to an acute mental health inpatient unit, and they are discharged on 17/11/2016. During the period of treatment within the specialised mental health unit, they receive twice weekly dialysis, for which the patient is moved to the renal dialysis unit to receive the treatment, following which they are returned to the specialised mental health unit.
Any non-mental health procedure that is provided to a patient who is currently in a specialised mental health unit will not trigger a type change if the patient is returned directly to the specialised mental health unit after the procedure is complete.

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<tr>
<th>Episode Date Range</th>
<th>Care Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31/07/16 – 17/11/16</td>
<td>Mental Health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(d) Patients with mental health conditions but not treated within a specialised mental health unit

Example 1: A patient is admitted on 03/08/2016 for a delivery of a newborn. On 07/08/2016, she develops post-natal depression for which she is treated in the maternity ward by a specialist mental health team via consultation liaison. She is discharged on 15/08/2016.

Any mental health care that is not delivered within a specialised mental health unit, regardless of the diagnosis or the treating specialty, is not to be categorised under the mental health care type.

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<tr>
<th>Episode Date Range</th>
<th>Care Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>03/08/16 – 15/08/16</td>
<td>Acute</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 2: A patient is admitted on 05/10/2016 for treatment of a perforated gastric ulcer, and is discharged on 01/11/2016. During the admission, the patient continues to receive weekly ECT treatment, which is conducted in the ECT suite. After each ECT procedure is completed, the patient is returned to the gastroenterology unit.

Any care that does not result in a continuous period of treatment in a specialised mental health unit is not to be type changed and categorised under the mental health care type. This includes where a patient is receiving individual courses of treatment in a specialised mental health treatment facility that sees them return directly to the non-mental health inpatient unit once the treatment or procedure is completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode Date Range</th>
<th>Care Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>05/10/16 – 01/11/16</td>
<td>Acute</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(e) Existing patients treated within a specialised mental health unit

Example: A patient is admitted to a specialist acute mental health unit on 12/02/2016. On 16/03/2016, the patient is transferred to a specialist rehabilitation mental health unit. On 15/06/16 the patient is transferred to a respiratory unit for treatment of the patient’s acute exacerbation of their COPD. They return to the specialist mental health rehabilitation unit on 19/07/16. On 15/08/2016, the facility introduces the mental health care type, and decides to backdate the care type introduction to the beginning of the financial year. The patient is discharged from the facility on 12/12/2016.

For 2016/17, the assignment of the mental health care type for existing patients can be dated to either the date the care type is introduced, or if the LHD wishes to backdate the introduction of the care type, the date is to be either the date the patient was last transferred into the specialist mental health unit, or to the 1st of July 2016 if the continuous period in the specialist mental health unit began before 01/07/2016.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode Date Range</th>
<th>Care Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/02/16 – 16/03/16</td>
<td>Acute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/03/16 – 15/06/16</td>
<td>Rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/06/16 – 19/07/16</td>
<td>Acute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/07/16 – 12/12/16</td>
<td>Mental Health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. MEDICAL CARE

**Same Day Acute Procedures in Sub Acute Care**

(a) **Dialysis**

*Example:* A rehabilitation patient (from 01/03/11 to 13/03/11) receives haemodialysis twice a week. They receive haemodialysis and return to the rehabilitation ward on the same day.

Although dialysis is a high cost and high volume service, national care type definitions state that same day acute interventions or procedures provided to an admitted patient in a sub or non-acute care type do not warrant a change in care type. The provision of dialysis should be captured as a procedure code during coding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode Date Range</th>
<th>Care Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/03/11 – 13/03/11</td>
<td>Rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) **Chemotherapy/radiotherapy during a Palliative Care Episode**

*Example:* A Palliative Care patient (from 01/03/11 to 10/03/11) receives radiotherapy to assist with symptom management.

There is no care type change in this scenario as the provision of radiotherapy or chemotherapy for symptom management meets the definition of palliative care and does not constitute a change in the focus of care.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode Date Range</th>
<th>Care Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/03/11 – 31/03/11</td>
<td>Palliative Care</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) **Non Weight Bearing Scenarios**

*Example 1:* A patient is admitted to hospital following a fall on 31/07/12 and has hip surgery on 01/08/12. After the surgery, the patient is transferred to the orthopaedic ward. The patient experiences post-surgical complications and on 05/08/12 the orthopaedic surgeon advises that the patient is to be non-weight bearing for a period of 6 weeks.

The patient is medically stable, their wound is healing well and they do not require any ongoing acute interventions. The patient is referred to the rehabilitation service on 10/08/12, where the patient is assessed. The rehab team determine that the patient would benefit from interventions to increase their independence in sliding transfers, wheelchair mobility and self care. The patient participates in a modified rehabilitation programme until they are cleared for weight bearing by the orthopaedic surgeon. Once able to resume weight bearing the patient receives ongoing rehab for a further 3 weeks. They are discharged home on 17/10/12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode Date Range</th>
<th>Care Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31/07/12 – 10/08/12</td>
<td>Acute Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/08/12 – 17/10/12</td>
<td>Rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Example 2:* A patient is admitted to hospital following a fall on 31/07/12 and has hip surgery on 01/08/12. After the surgery, the patient is transferred to the orthopaedic ward. The patient experiences post-surgical complications and on 05/08/12 the orthopaedic surgeon advises that the patient is to be non-weight bearing for a period of 6 weeks.

The patient is medically unstable, experiencing intermittent chest pain and issues related to wound healing. They receive ongoing monitoring and care related to these medical issues. The patient is referred to the rehab service for assessment. The rehab team determine that the patient is not currently suitable for a rehabilitation program. On 12/09/12 the orthopaedic surgeon reviews the patient and clears them for weight bearing. The rehab team reviews the patient on 13/09/12 and determines that they are appropriate for rehab. The patient commences rehab on 14/09/12. They are discharged home on 17/10/12.
12. MEDICAL CARE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode Date Range</th>
<th>Care type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31/07/12 – 14/09/12</td>
<td>Acute Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/09/12 – 07/10/12</td>
<td>Rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example 3:** A patient is admitted to hospital following a fall on 31/7/2012 and has hip surgery on 1/8/2012. After the surgery the patient is transferred to the orthopaedic ward. The patient experiences post surgical complications and on 5/8/2012 the orthopaedic surgeon advises that the patient is to be non weight bearing for a period of 6 weeks.

The patient is medically stable. The patient is referred to the rehab service for assessment. On 06/08/12 the rehab team determine that the patient is not currently suitable for a rehab program. The patient is unable to be discharged home due to access and safety issues. The patient is transferred to a medical ward and receives ongoing minimal nursing care and occasional physiotherapy to maintain current physical status. On 12/09/12 the orthopaedic surgeon reviews the patient and clears them for weight bearing. The rehab team reviews the patient on 13/09/12 and determines that they are now an appropriate candidate for rehab. The patient commences rehab on 14/09/12. They are discharged home on 17/10/12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode Date Range</th>
<th>Care type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31/07/12 – 06/08/12</td>
<td>Acute Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/08/12 – 14/09/12</td>
<td>Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/09/12 – 17/10/12</td>
<td>Rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix 2: Definitions of Terms**

| Acute Care Certificate | After 35 days of hospitalisation, private and DVA patients in need of ongoing acute or sub-acute care must have an Acute Care Certificate completed by the registered doctor caring for them. The Acute Care Certificate is valid for a period of up to 30 days, after which a new certificate will need to be issued if the patient is still undergoing acute/subacute care in hospital. If an Acute Care Certificate cannot be issued by the treating doctor, a type change to Maintenance Care is required. The financial class must be reclassified to nursing home type and the appropriate charges to the patient must be organised. Note: For policy details regarding Acute Care Certificates see the Public Fees Procedures Manual for Public Health Organisations (Sections 2.56 to 2.67, as amended from time to time) and Policy Directive PD2016_011 Nursing Home Type Patients and the National Acute Care Certificate.

**AMO** | Attending Medical Officer: the medical officer/senior clinician (a visiting medical practitioner, staff specialist or academic clinician) responsible for the care of the patient, and under whose care the patient is to be admitted. May also be referred to as Admitting Medical Officer.

**Other Authorised Clinician** | Clinical staff authorised by the AMO to be responsible for care type changes e.g. Registrar, Resident Medical Officer, Junior Medical Officer, Nursing Unit Manager or senior nursing staff.

**APDC** | Admitted Patient Data Collection: the framework for mandatory data reporting for all admitted patients within New South Wales.

**Clinical Coding** | Clinical Coding involves abstracting disease and procedure information from the medical record and then assigning codes using the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th Revision, Australian Modification (ICD-10-AM) and the Australian Classification of Health Interventions (ACHI). The process of Clinical Coding is performed by Clinical Coders.

**Clinician** | Medical, nursing and allied health staff involved in patient care.
## 12. MEDICAL CARE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>AR-DRGs</strong></th>
<th>Australian Refined-Diagnosis Related Groups are the classification tool allocated to acute inpatients. DRGs are used to fund inpatient episodes of care for acute care.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Episode of Care</strong></td>
<td>The period of admitted patient care between a formal or statistical admission and a formal or statistical discharge, characterised by one care type. (Refer <em>National Health Data Dictionary</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nursing Home Type Patient (NHTP)</strong></td>
<td>A nursing home type patient is a patient who has been in one or more approved hospitals (public or private) for a continuous period of more than 35 days, without a break of seven days, and who is not deemed to be receiving acute care. After 35 days, the patient will be reclassified as a NHTP unless an Acute Care Certificate is issued by a medical practitioner to certify that the patient requires acute care. An Acute Care Certificate may be reissued every 30 days thereafter, for as long as the patient requires acute care. In the event of readmission to a hospital within 7 days (or transfer between hospital), the previous related inpatient periods will be regarded as contributing towards the period of 35 days hospitalisation. The periods of leave themselves are not counted towards the 35 day qualifying period. Hence, a patient who has been in hospital for 20 days and then leaves the hospital for 3 days, will start at day 21 when returning to hospital. However, where a patient is discharged and a period of more than 7 days elapses before readmission, the previous stay in hospital will not be counted. The date of discharge is not to be counted as one of the 7 days; seven days commences from the day after discharge or on leave. The nursing home type patient arrangement does not apply to Third Party, Workers’ Compensation and other compensable patients, or patients who are ineligible under Medicare. For compensable patients, Acute Care Certificates should be issued where appropriate in case the patient’s compensation claim is rejected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PAS</strong></td>
<td>Patient Administration System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Care Type (Previously known as ‘service category’)</strong></td>
<td>Care type refers to the nature of the clinical service provided to an admitted patient during an episode of admitted patient care, or the type of service provided by the hospital for boarders or posthumous organ procurement (care other than admitted care), as represented by a code. The care type selected must reflect the primary clinical purpose or treatment goal of the care provided. Where there is more than one focus of care, the care type selected must reflect the major reason for care. Reference: <a href="http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/491557">http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/491557</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Care Type Change</strong></td>
<td>An admission or stay can consist of one or more episodes and therefore one or more care types. A care type change occurs when there is a change in the primary clinical purpose or treatment goal of the care provided to the patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AN-SNAP</strong></td>
<td>Australian National Sub-Acute and Non-Acute Patient Classification: the framework for mandatory data reporting for all sub-acute and non-acute episodes within New South Wales designated services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stay</strong></td>
<td>The period of admitted patient care between a formal admission and a formal discharge which comprises one or more episodes of care. Refer also ‘Care Type Change’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type Change</strong></td>
<td>See ‘Care Type Change’. This terminology is interchangeable with the term Care Type Change.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A newborn qualification status is assigned to each patient day within a newborn episode of care. A newborn patient day is ‘qualified’ if the infant meets at least one of the following criteria:

- Is the second or subsequent live born infant of a multiple birth, whose mother is currently an admitted patient, or
- Is admitted to an intensive care facility in a hospital, being a facility approved by the Commonwealth Minister for the purpose of the provision of special care, or
- Is admitted to, or remains in hospital without its mother.

A newborn patient day is ‘unqualified’ if the infant does not meet any of the above criteria.

The day on which a change in qualification status occurs is counted as a day of the new qualification status.

If there is more than one qualification status in a single day, the day is counted as a day of the final qualification status for that day.

Reference: [http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/327254](http://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/327254)
New South Wales is recognised nationally and internationally, as a leader in improving the quality and safety of clinical services provided to patients.

The NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program provides the framework for significant improvements to clinical quality in our public health system. Success depends on a culture of openness in which errors are acknowledged and reported so as to reduce the chance that others will make the same mistakes.

In a system as large and complex as the NSW public health system, it is unrealistic to expect that no mistakes will occur, and our aim is to develop a system that continually strives for ongoing improvement - where lessons are learnt from mistakes and are communicated to other health services.

The Government has invested $55 million in improving frontline clinical care through the NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program. The Program is ambitious and sets the agenda for one of Australia’s most comprehensive clinical quality programs, ensuring patient safety and excellence in healthcare is the top priority for the NSW health system.

The key components of the program are:
• Systematic management of incidents and risks
• A new Incident Information Management System
• Clinical Governance Units in each Area Health Service
• A Quality Assessment Program for all public health organisations
• The establishment of the Clinical Excellence Commission.

These initiatives are designed to support clinicians and managers with improving quality and safety for patients and will focus on promoting and providing the delivery of the best care in health services. Key to the success of the program is the active involvement of doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, health managers and our community.

With this level of commitment, the result will be a more consistent approach to high quality patient care and people in NSW will continue to enjoy access to one of the best health systems in the world.

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1. Introduction
2. Key components
3. Guiding principles
4. Patient expectations
5. Roles and responsibilities
6. Policy and standards
7. Clinical Governance Units
8. Incident management
9. Clinical Excellence Commission
10. Quality System Assessments (QSA)
11. Key policy directives and related documents supporting the program
12. Definition of terms

Diagram 1:
NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program flowchart
1. Introduction

There is a growing body of international and Australian knowledge that has contributed to the evolving concept of quality improvement in healthcare.

Borrowing from other high-risk industries where safety is paramount, the health industry is developing techniques to better identify risks, investigate and analyse incidents and to improve practice. These techniques allow health services to manage known risks actively and to develop systems to identify new or emerging risks.

In healthcare, as in any industry, sometimes things go wrong. Equipment can fail, systems can prove inadequate and errors of judgment are made. In relatively few cases, serious incidents occur that might have been prevented and some of these result in serious harm to patients. The majority of these incidents are not the result of a single action by an individual but, more commonly, are generated by a chain of events.

Preventing error depends on identifying the deficiencies in the sequence of events and fixing any identified problems. It is crucial to capture all the relevant information about an incident, investigate all known causes and to take decisive action to protect patients from a recurrence of that kind of event.

The aim of the NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program is that all significant adverse incidents are reported and reviewed so that education and remedial action can be applied across the whole health system. This shift in thinking about how we deal with error, combined with the rollout of a new system for electronic reporting of incidents, will lead to an increasing number of events being reported. Somewhat paradoxically, a rising number of events reported will be one measure of success for the program.

This first year of the program lays the groundwork for what is potentially one of the greatest ever systemic improvements to clinical quality in our public health system. Future success will depend on a culture of openness in which errors are acknowledged and reported so as to reduce the chance that others will make the same mistakes.

Everyone working in the health system is encouraged to contribute their knowledge of how and when mistakes are made in this constructive spirit, free of anxiety that the response will be unnecessarily punitive. The lessons from each localised incident can then be used to inform safety improvements in every health facility throughout NSW.

2. Key Components

The NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program has five key components:
1. The systematic management of incidents and risks both locally and statewide to identify remedial action and systemic reforms.
2. The Incident Information Management System (IIMS) to facilitate the timely notification of incidents, track the investigation and analysis of health care incidents, enable the reporting about incidents, particularly the provision of trended information by incident type, and to understand the lessons learned.
3. The establishment of Clinical Governance Units (CGU) in each Area Health Service (AHS) to implement the NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program.
4. The development of a Quality Systems Assessment (QSA) Program for all public health organisations undertaken by an external agency, to determine whether the above components are in place and working well. The focus of the assessments is on AHS patient safety and clinical quality systems.

5. A Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC) to promote and support better clinical quality and to advise the Minister for Health on where systemic improvements can be made.

3. Guiding Principles

The NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program is underpinned by guiding principles:

1. **Openness about failures** - errors are reported and acknowledged without fear of inappropriate blame, and patients and their families are told what went wrong and why.

2. **Emphasis on learning** - the system is oriented towards learning from its mistakes and extensively employs improvement methods for this.

3. **Obligation to act** - the obligation to take action to remedy problems is clearly accepted and the allocation of this responsibility is unambiguous and explicit.

4. **Accountability** - the limits of individual accountability are clear. Individuals understand when they may be held accountable for their actions.

5. **Just culture** - individuals are treated fairly and are not blamed for the failures of the system.

6. **Appropriate prioritisation of action** - action to address problems is prioritised according to the available resources and directed to those areas where the greatest improvements are possible.

7. **Teamwork** - teamwork is recognised as the best defence against system failures and is explicitly encouraged and fostered within a culture of trust and mutual respect.

4. Patient Expectations

As a patient admitted to a hospital or requiring treatment from a health service what might you reasonably expect?

1. Appropriate treatment for my condition when I need it.
2. The best possible care at all times, based on the latest evidence.
3. To be treated with respect and have easy and honest communication with the doctors, nurses and other health care professionals who are providing care to me.
4. To be looked after by clinicians who have the necessary clinical skills for the work that they do.
5. Those who provide care to me are well-supported and part of effective teams, and have access to the resources (including equipment and information) they need to do their work.
6. Systems are designed to prevent inadvertent or accidental harm to me while in hospital.
7. If I have concerns, I will be able to talk to someone immediately and have my concerns addressed to my satisfaction.
8. If something goes wrong with my care, that there is a system in place to openly report, investigate and fix the underlying problems so that others are not harmed. In addition, I will be told openly and honestly what went wrong and receive an apology.
9. Reassurance that there is an external body evaluating the safety of care in hospitals and working to improve quality and safety in the NSW health system.
Patient expectations have been incorporated into standards and performance measures developed to monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of the NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

NSW Department of Health

The NSW Department of Health is established under section 6 of the Health Administration Act 1982 and supports the Minister in performing his statutory functions including responsibility for patient safety and clinical quality in the NSW health system. The Quality and Safety Branch is responsible for the development of the essential components of the NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program with lead responsibility for:

- Setting standards for Area Health Service Quality Systems
- Developing policies on quality and safety that need statewide implementation
- Developing and reporting on system wide quality indicators
- Monitoring and analysing serious clinical incidents, and taking appropriate action such as advice and warnings to the health system
- Overseeing statewide clinical governance issues
- Overseeing consistent implementation of the NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program.

Area Health Services

Area Health Services (AHS) and all Public Health Organisations (PHO) are responsible for the quality and safety of the services provided by their facilities, staff and contractors. With the recent implementation of the health reforms, clinical governance has been embedded in the new AHS through the mandatory requirement for all AHS to establish a consistent organisational structure, including a Clinical Governance Unit (CGU) directly reporting to the Chief Executive (CE). These Units are responsible for the rollout of the NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program within their AHS.

Clinical Governance Units

The Clinical Governance Units (CGU) have the roles of support, performance and conformance to develop and monitor policies and procedures for improving systems of care. The CGU will contribute to the program by ensuring it is uniformly implemented across the state and for overseeing the risk management of patient safety and clinical quality by building upon existing incident management and investigation systems.

The Clinical Excellence Commission

The Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC) is a statutory health corporation established under the Health Services Act by the NSW Minister for Health as part of the NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program, and builds on the foundation work carried out by the Institute of Clinical Excellence established in 2001. The core mission of the CEC is to identify issues of a systemic nature that affect patient safety and clinical quality in the NSW health system and to develop and advise on implementation strategies to address these issues. Part of the role of the CEC is to acquire and share information about how well the NSW health system is performing and to use this information to improve the performance of the system.
The CEC has a statewide research oversight, monitoring, education and advisory role. It is not
directly responsible for the implementation of the NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program.

6. Policy and standards

The NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program lists standards that Area Health Services are
required to comply with. This builds upon existing frameworks, programs and initiatives currently
well established in all Area Health Services. The Program is based on standards against which a
health service’s quality system will be assessed.

These standards are derived from existing Departmental policies and guidelines that are familiar to
health service staff, administrators and clinicians.

Governance responsibility for identifying patient safety risks and undertaking remedial action is
vested in Area Health Services and public health organisations and it is their responsibility to
undertake activity to address the standards mandated by the Department.

Standards

Standard 1
Health services have systems in place to monitor and review patient safety.

Standard 2
Health Services have developed and implemented policies and procedures to ensure patient safety and
effective clinical governance.

Standard 3
An incident management system is in place to effectively manage incidents that occur within health
facilities and risk mitigation strategies are implemented to prevent their reoccurrence.

Standard 4
Complaints management systems are in place and complaint information is used to improve patient
care.

Standard 5
Systems are in place to periodically audit a quantum of medical records to assess core adverse events
rates.

Standard 6
Performance review processes have been established to assist clinicians maintain best practice and
improve patient care.

Standard 7
Audits of clinical practice are carried out and, where necessary, strategies for improving practice are
implemented.
12. MEDICAL CARE

STANDARD 1

Health services have systems in place to monitor and review patient safety.

Components

Committee Structure

The Area Health Service has clearly articulated its commitment to quality improvement and patient safety and has an effective committee structure that oversees quality improvement and patient safety.

Clinical Governance Unit

The Area Health Service has established a Clinical Governance Unit responsible for managing patient safety and clinical quality and has developed an operational plan consistent with Departmental directives. NSW Clinical Governance Directions Statement, issued 2005.

Establishing Clinical Indicators and Performance Information

The Area Heath Service monitors and analyses performance information on quality and patient safety using performance measures and clinical indicators included in strategic planning and business documents.

Monitoring and Reporting Performance Information

The Area Heath Service monitors, analyses and compares performance information on quality and patient safety reported to Area executive and Advisory Council and strives to compete with the best performing facilities. PD2014_004 Incident Management Policy.

Using Performance Information to Improve Patient Care

Performance information is used by Area executive to evaluate and improve safety and patient care and to develop strategies to reduce clinical and patient safety risks. PD2014_004 Incident Management Policy.

Public Awareness of Quality and Safety

The Area Health Service publicly reports information on patient safety activities and outcomes.

Patient Safety Performance

Health services perform to desired levels against targets for patient safety and performance is improving.
STANDARD 2

Health services have developed and implemented policies and procedures to ensure patient safety and effective clinical governance.

Components

Minimum Requirements

The Area Health Services develop, implement and review patient safety policies and protocols for incident management, complaint management, complaints or concerns about clinicians, new interventions and correct patient/site/procedure.

Implementation

Systems are in place to effectively disseminate, implement, review and update new policies and procedures on patient safety to health facilities in the Area, including Departmental directives and safety alerts. NSW Clinical Governance Directions Statement, 2005.

Detailed Policy Review - New Interventions

The Area policy on new interventions is consistent with Departmental guidelines and risk assessments are undertaken before new procedures are introduced. An implementation plan is prepared for each new procedure introduced by the Area.

Detailed policy review - correct patient/site/procedure (Note: does not apply to the Ambulance Service)

Health Services have developed an implementation plan to ensure all procedural teams comply with PD2014_036 Clinical Procedure Safety.

Policy Directives and Related Documents

PD2006_007 - Complaint or Concern about a Clinician - Principles for Action
PD2006_073 - Complaint Management Policy
GL2006_002 - Complaint or Concern about a Clinician - Management Guidelines
GL2006_023 - Complaint Management Guidelines
PD2014_004 - Incident Management Policy
PD2014_036 – Clinical Procedure Safety.

STANDARD 3

An incident management system is in place to effectively manage incidents that occur within health facilities and risk mitigation strategies are implemented to prevent their reoccurrence.

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Components

Notifying and Assessing Incidents

The Area Health Service supports a culture that facilitates incident reporting, the use of systems to notify and record incidents using the Severity Assessment Code (SAC) matrix to identify matters requiring investigation, and ensures incident reports are forwarded to relevant authorities within the required timeframe.

Investigating Incidents

High-risk incidents are investigated in accordance with Departmental guidelines by a multidisciplinary team nominated by the Area executive in a timely manner to analyse the incident, and to recommend key actions to minimise the risk of recurrence.

Implementing Recommendations

Recommendations arising from investigations are implemented in health facilities to improve patient safety. Incident data is monitored and analysed to detect trends and determine whether system-wide improvements are needed. Feedback on the outcome of investigations is provided to the Root Cause Analysis (RCA) team and the person who reported the incident (where identified) and feedback is provided to staff on policy and procedural changes.

Incidents Involving the Death of a Patient

Systems are in place to monitor deaths and determine whether changes in practice are needed to improve patient care. PD2014_004 Incident Management Policy.

STANDARD 4

Complaints management systems are in place and complaint information is used to improve patient care.

Components

Complaint Monitoring and Review

Responsibility for the timely management of complaints and feedback on the outcome of investigations to complainants is assigned appropriately and systems are in place to record, monitor and review complaints.

Systems Improvement

Complaint data are monitored, analysed to identify trends and to determine whether system-wide improvement is needed to prevent recurrence. Processes are in place to address the systems issues identified by complaints, to implement recommendations by health facilities and to ensure complaints information is reported to Departmental and other relevant authorities.

Management of Complaints or Concerns About Individuals

Complaints or concerns against individuals are dealt with according to Departmental policy and within relevant timeframes. PD2006_073 Complaint Management Policy and GL2006_023 Complaint Management Guidelines. PD2006_007 - Complaint or Concern about a Clinician - Principles for Action. GL2006_002 - Complaint or Concern about a Clinician - Management Guidelines
12. MEDICAL CARE

STANDARD 5

Systems are in place to periodically audit a quantum of medical records to assess core adverse events rates.

Components

Health services have developed an appropriate system of chart review.

Systems Improvement

The results and recommendations of chart reviews and investigations are reported to management/Area executive and staff, and the recommendations are implemented to effect system improvement.

STANDARD 6

Performance review processes have been established to assist clinicians maintain best practice and improve patient care.

Components

Performance Review Process

Health services have developed an appropriate system of performance review and meetings where clinical management issues are adequately discussed and improvement action identified and documented.

PD2012_028 - Recruitment & Selection of Staff of the NSW Health Service.
PD2015_023 - Appointment of Visiting Practitioners in the NSW Public Health System
PD2005_497 - Visiting practitioners and staff specialists Delineation of clinical privileges
PD2011_010 - Visiting Medical Officer (VMO) Performance Review Arrangements.

Systems/Performance Improvement

Performance review reports are forwarded to an appropriate delegate within the Area for action, matters requiring further review are investigated, and feedback is provided to staff on any policy and procedural changes to effect system improvement.

STANDARD 7

Audits of clinical practice are carried out and, where necessary, strategies for improving practice are implemented.

Components

Topic Selection

Health services have developed a program of clinical practice audits that targets major care processes or practices considered to be high risk.

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Review Process

People with relevant skills and knowledge conduct the audits. Audits are conducted in an efficient and effective manner against pre-determined components or performance standards.

Systems Improvement

The audits identify clinical management issues that need to be addressed to improve patient safety and quality care. Audit results are reported to management/Area executive and feedback is provided to staff on policy and procedural changes and ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness of systems changes is in place.

7. Clinical Governance Units

The developing focus on the integrity and accountability of health systems through clinical governance is integral to improving the performance of health systems and the enhancement of clinical care through analysis and feedback. The concept of clinical governance integrates clinical decision-making within an organisational framework and requires clinicians and administrators to take joint responsibility for the quality of clinical care delivered by the organisation.

With the recent implementation of the health reforms, clinical governance has been embedded in the new Area Health Services (AHS) through the mandatory requirement for all AHS to establish a consistent organisational structure, including a Clinical Governance Unit (CGU) as a direct report to the Chief Executive (CE).

Core Functions

The primary focus of the CGU can be summarised as the risk management of patient safety and clinical quality through implementation of the NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program. The Program will be implemented in collaboration with the Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC), the Department and the CGU.

The CGU will build upon existing incident reporting and investigation systems enhanced through the implementation of the Incident Information Management System (IIMS). Functions that will guide the role of the CGU in 2004/05 are:

1. Structural establishment
2. Incident management
3. IIMS implementation
4. Complaints management
5. Death review
6. Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) support
7. Communication training
8. Policy development
9. Clinician performance review
10. Reporting
11. External reports.

18 Draft NSW Clinical Governance Units Implementation Framework, 2004
Other Functions

- Management of individual performance issues. The establishment of clinician performance review is a key part of the NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program. The role of the CGU will be to determine an appropriate performance management framework for the health service, in collaboration with the CEC, and be a source of advice and expertise regarding due process for those line managers.

- Complaints management. The CGU will ensure a single point of access for staff and the public to register complaints and to take responsibility for the management of serious complaints. The CGU will lead the process of complaints management but should not take over this function on behalf of the health service.

- Integrated risk management. Clinical risk management is an integrated responsibility for clinical operations and for the CGU. The CGU will advise and support clinical operations in the recognition and management of clinical risk. It is not intended that the CGU assume global risk management responsibility for the health service.

8. Incident Management

A quality improvement framework requires routine examination of all incidents that cause patient harm. Most adverse events are not caused by a single, individual action. They usually result from a chain of events where inadequate safeguards and other systemic vulnerabilities erode patient safety. Preventing incidents depends on identifying the deficiencies that allowed the event to occur and fixing those problems.

In the past, information about adverse events was generally derived from single studies and often specific only to a hospital or clinician. Through the NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program, Area Health Services are now well placed to systematically collect incident information to effect system-wide improvement.

In NSW, all incidents that result in detriment to a patient are ‘reportable’ - they must be reported to management and, depending on their severity, the AHS and the NSW Department of Health for analysis and remedial action.

The NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program aims to develop a culture where health care incidents are identified, reported, investigated, analysed and acted upon. The lessons learned locally will be disseminated statewide through a knowledge management strategy.

The Program is supported by an information system, the Incident Information Management System (IIMS), that assists health care workers to achieve this.

The Incident Information Management System (IIMS)

The Incident Information Management System is an electronic system activated in all AHS in December 2004 to:

- Record all healthcare incidents, both adverse events and incidents that did not result in adverse events, but might have, in four categories:
  1. Clinical
  2. Complaints
  3. Property security and hazards
  4. Staff, visitors and contractors

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- Assist managers to deal with incidents in their areas
- Record the results of reviews and investigations of incidents
- Provide reports on all incidents recorded in the system.

There are 100,000 potential users of the IIMS system that includes all NSW health system employees and contractors. A comprehensive training and education program has been developed using ‘e-learning modules’, a CD-ROM, DVD and video to ensure all potential users have consistent training in the use of the IIMS.

Full deployment was completed in May 2005 across the whole of NSW.

9. **Clinical Excellence Commission**\(^\text{19}\)

The Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC) is a statutory health corporation established under the *Health Services Act* and launched by the NSW Minister for Health as part of the NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program and builds on the foundation work of the Institute of Clinical Excellence established in 2001. The NSW Department of Health, public health organisations, the Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC) and professional registration boards are the other principal organisations with major roles in this program.

The CEC will work effectively in partnership with these organisations to:
- Promote and support improvement in clinical quality and safety in public and private health services
- Monitor clinical quality and safety processes and performance of public health organisations and to report on these to the Minister
- Identify, develop and disseminate information about safe practices in health care on a state wide basis, including (but not limited to) developing, providing and promoting training and education programs, and identifying priorities for and promoting the conduct of research about better practices in health care
- Consult broadly with health professionals and members of the community in performing its functions
- Provide advice to the Minister for Health and Director-General of Health on issues arising out of its functions.

**Patient Safety Risk Identification**

A major role of the CEC will be to analyse information from a range of relevant sources regarding adverse events, to identify trends, causes and preventative strategies and to work with Public Health Organisations (PHO) to facilitate ongoing improvements in the health care system. The CEC will analyse information provided by the Department and PHO. This may include information from the following sources to identify systemic issues that need to be addressed:
- Root Cause Analyses (RCAs)
- Incident Information Management System (IIMS)
- Coroners’ findings and recommendations
- Special Committees’ and expert committees’ reports
- Treasury Managed Fund and medical defence organisations
- Quality System Assessments (QSA)
- Information from the Health Care Complaints Commission
- Literature reviews, research and other sources as appropriate
- Special reviews.

10. Quality System Assessments

The effectiveness of the implementation of the NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program will be routinely monitored through an external review process, the Quality System Assessments (QSA) conducted by the Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC).

The QSA is an annual review of Area Health Services (AHS) to identify, analyse and advise on issues of a systemic nature that affect patient safety and clinical quality in the NSW health system. The CEC will assess AHS and PHO to identify if there has been effective implementation of the Program.

Specifically, the QSA will review patient safety arrangements in AHS focusing on compliance with the standards and policy requirements developed by the Department. The key areas for review are:

- Quality and safety reporting structures
- Safety polices and procedures
- Incident management
- Complaint management
- Medical record reviews
- Audits of clinical practices.

The CEC will provide the QSA Report to the Chief Executive of the AHS and Public Health Organisation, and a copy to the Department of Health. The AHS and PHO will notify the Department of the actions taken to address safety and quality issues contained within the report, and work with the Department to ensure appropriate implementation. It is acknowledged that from time to time significant issues may be identified from a Quality Systems Assessment.

The Department will support AHS and PHO to address risks identified by the CEC, or through its own sources of information and advice. The Areas can also approach the CEC for advice and assistance in improving quality systems.
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Documents Supporting the Program

**PD2015_023** Appointment of Visiting Practitioners in the NSW Public Health System

**PD2005_497** Visiting practitioners and staff specialists Delineation of clinical privileges.

**PD2006_007** Complaint or Concern about a Clinician - Principles for Action

**PD2006_073** Complaint Management Policy.

**GL2006_002** Complaint or Concern about a Clinician - Management Guidelines

**GL2006_023** Complaint Management Guidelines.

**PD2014_004** Incident Management Policy.

**PD2014_036** Clinical Procedure Safety.

**PD2011_010** Visiting Medical Officer (VMO) Performance Review Arrangements.

**PD2012_028** Recruitment & Selection of Staff of the NSW Health Service.

NSW Clinical Governance Directions Statement, 2005.


**Definition of Terms**

**Adverse Event**

Any event or circumstance leading to avoidable patient harm which results in admission to hospital, prolonged hospital stay, significant disability at discharge or death.

**Area Health Advisory Councils (AHAC)**

A clinical and community advisory body established in Area Health Services following the health reforms to give clinicians including doctors, nurses and allied health professionals, health consumers and local communities a stronger voice in health decision-making.

**Area Health Services (AHS)**

Area Health Services provide the operational framework for the provision of Public Health Services in NSW. They are constituted under the *Health Services Act 1997* and are principally concerned with the provision of health services to residents within the geographic area covered by the Area Health Service.

**Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC)**

A statutory health corporation established under the *Health Services Act* to promote and support improvement in clinical quality and safety in NSW health services.

**Incident Information Management System (IIMS)**

A state-wide electronic reporting and incident management system designed to underpin the NSW Safety Improvement Program.

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Incident

An unplanned event resulting in, or having the potential for, injury, damage or other loss.

Public Health Organisation (PHO)

Means an area health service, a statutory health corporation or an affiliated health organisation in respect of its recognised establishments and recognised services, as defined in section 7 of the Health Services Act, and in addition, for the purposes of this document, includes the Ambulance Service of NSW.

Quality System Assessment (QSA)

Criteria for the collection and analysis of information on the quality and safety of health services designed to test the effectiveness of the systems in place to monitor and improve quality and patient safety.

Severity Assessment Code (SAC)

A risk matrix used to stratify the consequence and likelihood of an incident to generate a numerical rating from 1 to 4. SAC 1 events always require investigation and notification to the Area Health Service Executive and the NSW Department of Health. SAC 2 events require notification to the Area Executive and local assessment as to the level of investigation required. Incidents rated 3 or 4 will be managed locally by the Area Health Service.

KIDNEY HEALTH CHECK: PROMOTING THE EARLY DETECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE (PD2010_023)

PURPOSE

This policy directive promotes the early detection and management of chronic kidney disease. It aims to optimise existing contacts with at risk patients in hospital settings in order to prevent progression to end stage kidney disease. The screening tool described is the Kidney Health Check. If disease is detected, a primary care referral will be made, highlighting the importance of treating the condition in order to encourage remission and regression of the disease.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Area Health Services are to develop and implement a framework to screen for chronic kidney disease which consists of three steps:
1. **Identification of High Risk Patients** - risk factors are listed in section 2 step 1 of the attached Kidney Health Check procedures;
2. **Kidney Health Check** - assessment of urinalysis, blood pressure and an estimated measure of glomerular filtration rate (section 2 step 2); and
3. **Follow Up** - a referral is to be made to the patient’s General Practitioner or Nurse Practitioner if any one of these tests yields abnormal results (section 3).

IMPLEMENTATION

Chief Executives of Area Health Services are responsible for implementing this Policy Directive and must ensure:
• Local policies and procedures are developed for clinical care establishing standards of practice;
• Staff education and training programs are in place to support the implementation of the Kidney Health Check; and
• An evaluation framework is in place to assess that the Kidney Health Check has been implemented and that the target group has been identified, screened using the Kidney Health Check, and followed up appropriately.

The Clinical Excellence Commission will conduct a longer term evaluation of the Policy Directive at a state level.

BACKGROUND

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is defined as the occurrence of kidney damage or decreased kidney function (decreased glomerular filtration rate) for a period of three or more months.

CKD is responsible for a substantial burden of illness and premature death with:
• 1 in 3 Australians at risk of developing the disease;
• 1 in 7 Australians over the age of 25 years having at least one clinical indicator of existing CKD;
• the disease being the 7th leading cause of death.
• CKD being a preventable and treatable condition. Once the disease is diagnosed and treatment implemented, the progression to end-stage renal failure can be reduced by up to 50%\(^3\); and

• proteinuria, which is a clinical marker for CKD, also indicative of an increased risk of cardiovascular disease\(^4\).

Early detection of CKD is the key to both the prevention and the slowing of the progression of the disease.

The purpose of this policy directive is to provide a framework to identify those who have or are at high-risk of developing CKD and for the implementation of timely treatment in order to prevent the progression to end-stage kidney disease. In turn, this will raise awareness of CKD for staff and the public and reduce the burden of disease associated with kidney disease in the NSW population. It will be the responsibility of each Area Health Service to develop and implement a framework for the program.

Area Health Services should have in place systems to screen patients in high-risk categories as identified by Kidney Health Australia by conducting the Kidney Health Check. This system of screening should, in the first instance, be implemented within all high-risk inpatient units in hospital settings.

The application of this policy to a broader range of clinical settings should be considered subject to evaluation within the hospital setting.

**CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE SCREENING**

The following process is summarised as a simple algorithm in Appendix 1.

**Step 1 - Identification of high-risk patients**

Patients who have not previously been diagnosed with chronic kidney disease should undergo the Kidney Health Check if they have one or more of the following features:

• cardiovascular disease;

• diabetes;

• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;

• tobacco smokers.

• obesity;

• hypertension;

• aged over 50 years; and

• a family history of kidney disease;

**Step 2 - Kidney Health Check**

Area Health Services will implement the Kidney Health Check in high-risk inpatient groups such as cardiology, cardiovascular, general medicine, endocrine, stroke, rehabilitation, geriatric medicine and maternity units, and include patients undergoing cardiac surgery and vascular surgery. Over time, it would be expected that the practice is expanded to other areas of the health service including high-risk outpatient clinics and Emergency Departments.
Patients identified as being at high risk for CKD should undergo the Kidney Health Check, as described below. All three tests, that is, assessment of urinalysis, blood pressure and an estimated measure of glomerular filtration rate must be conducted to constitute a Kidney Health Check.

- **Urinalysis (“Dip Stick”)**

Proteinuria has been demonstrated to be an independent risk factor for progression of renal disease. Microalbuminuria is a predictor of progressive renal disease in diabetes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patient without diabetes</th>
<th>Test for protein</th>
<th>Abnormal &gt; 30mg/dL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patient with diabetes</td>
<td>Test for albumin</td>
<td>Abnormal &gt; 3mg/dL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Albumin specific dipstick)

- **Blood pressure assessment**

Hypertension can contribute to the development of CKD.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abnormal result</th>
<th>&gt;140/&gt;90 mmHg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **Estimated Glomerular Filtration Rate (eGFR)**

The eGFR is considered to be an accurate measure of kidney function, although the test is not always accurate in all circumstances (for example, in patients who are obese, elderly or for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abnormal result</th>
<th>&lt; 60 mL/min/1.73m²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Clinicians should be mindful that proteinuria and haematuria may be clinical indications of a more rapidly deteriorating patient requiring immediate referral to a renal physician.

**Step 3 - Follow Up**

Should any of these results be abnormal, this suggests the possibility of CKD. A referral for ongoing assessment must be made, highlighting that re-testing is required to confirm a diagnosis.

The Kidney Health Check should be conducted no more frequently than twelve monthly in the absence of abnormal results.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

Area Health Services should implement the introduction of the Kidney Health Check and appropriate follow up arrangements in accordance with local policies and practices. Efforts to encourage compliance with recommended follow up arrangements should reflect the level of risk associated with non-compliance. This should include, but not be limited to:

- informing the patient of the need for follow up with their GP and/or Nurse Practitioner;
- referral to their GP and/or Nurse Practitioner for follow up; and
- provision of appropriate documentation for their GP and/or Nurse Practitioner and written information for the patient.
Sample letters for both the patient and the patient’s GP and/or Nurse Practitioner are contained in Appendix 2 and 3.

It is anticipated that Area Health Services will develop an education program to support clinical staff to implement the Kidney Health Check. This could include an education program through Nurse Educators and Clinical Nurse Educators (so that education can be provided to staff of inpatient wards), through the established training/education sessions for junior medical staff and registrars, and through nurse practitioners in transitional positions.

Area Health Services must implement an evaluation framework to assess that the Kidney Health Check has been implemented and patient care improved. The Clinical Excellence Commission will be undertaking a longer term evaluation of the outcome of the Policy Directive at a state level.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX 1: Algorithm for CKD screen

Algorithm for CKD screen

**STEP 1. Identification of high risk patient**
- **Patient at risk of CKD**

**STEP 2. Kidney Health Check**
- **No abnormality.**

**STEP 3.**
A) Inform patient of risk of Chronic Kidney Disease.
Recommend follow-up with usual General Practitioner or Nurse Practitioner (Form Letter suggested)
B) Send information regarding identified abnormalities to patient’s General Practitioner or Nurse Practitioner (Form Letter suggested)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>STEP 1:</strong> High risk patients have 1 or more of the following risk factors:</th>
<th><strong>STEP 2:</strong> Kidney Health Check comprises:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Cardiovascular Disease</td>
<td>I. Dipstick analysis for protein.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Diabetes</td>
<td>II. &gt; 30 mg/dL is abnormal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples</td>
<td>III. Check Blood pressure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tobacco Smokers</td>
<td>IV. &gt;140/&gt;90 mmHg is abnormal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Obesity</td>
<td>V. Check eGFR (estimated from serum creatinine).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Hypertension</td>
<td>&lt; 60 mL/min/1.73m² is abnormal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Age over 50 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Family history of Kidney Disease</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2: SAMPLE LETTER PATIENTS (Copy to GP or Nurse Practitioner)

[Name]
[Address]
[Suburb] [State] [Post Code]

Dear [Name],

During your hospital stay, routine screening showed that you may be at risk of developing early kidney disease. It is important that you are seen by your GP or nurse practitioner within 3 months so that a few simple tests can be done to confirm if the condition is ongoing.

Chronic kidney disease often has no symptoms so regular screening of high-risk individuals is recommended. You may be at risk if you have one or more of the following features:
- a previous stroke
- heart disease
- high blood pressure
- a family history of kidney disease
- diabetes
- are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent
- aged over 50 years
- obesity
- tobacco smokers.

The good news is that if kidney disease is found early, changes can be made to your lifestyle and/or medications can be prescribed to slow or stop the progression of the disease. If the condition is left untreated, the final outcome may be heart disease and/or end-stage kidney failure and premature death.

A letter has also been sent to your GP or Nurse Practitioner recommending that you are re-tested in 3 months and then annually. The testing, known as a Kidney Health Check, involves:
1. Testing a urine sample for protein
2. Taking your blood pressure to assess if it is within normal limits
3. Taking a sample of blood to assess overall kidney function.

If you would like more information, please contact:

Name and position
Phone number

Please make an appointment with your GP or Nurse Practitioner 3 months after coming home from hospital for further testing.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]
APPENDIX 3: Sample Letter to GP or Nurse Practitioner

Dear [Name],

Re: (Insert patient identification sticker)

During (patient’s name) recent hospital stay, he/she was screened for kidney disease. Clinical signs of the disease have been detected but diagnosis of the condition cannot be made until further testing. If you have already tested for chronic kidney disease within the last 12 months, please disregard this letter.

As you are aware, chronic kidney disease often has no symptoms. Regular screening of high-risk individuals through the Kidney Health Check is therefore recommended. Your patient was considered at-risk as they have one or more of the following features:

- cardiovascular disease
- hypertension
- family history of kidney disease
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin
- diabetes
- aged over 50 years
- obesity
- tobacco smokers

A letter has been sent to your patient explaining that if chronic kidney disease is left untreated, the final outcome may be end-stage kidney failure whereby individuals require renal dialysis or a kidney transplant to avoid premature death.

What you need to do

Please repeat the Kidney Health Check within three months of your patient being discharged from hospital. This involves:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Abnormal Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STEP 1 Dipstick analysis for protein</td>
<td>Greater than 30 mg/dL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP 2 Check blood pressure</td>
<td>Greater than 140/90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP 3 Check eGFR (estimated from serum creatinine)</td>
<td>Less than 60 mL/min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kidney Health Australia’s booklet on Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) Management in General Practice (2007) contains information on screening and treatment protocols, and indications for referral to a Nephrologist. This can be accessed via the Kidney Health Australia website at [http://www.kidney.org.au/HealthProfessionals/PublicationsforHealthProfessionals/tabid/635/Default.aspx](http://www.kidney.org.au/HealthProfessionals/PublicationsforHealthProfessionals/tabid/635/Default.aspx)

If you would like more information on the contents of this letter, please contact (Name and position) on (contact phone number).

Yours sincerely,

[Name]
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The NSW Department of Health wishes to acknowledge the contributions of the members of the Advance Care Directive Working Party.

PURPOSE

To provide advice to health professionals on the best practice use of advance care directives within an advance care planning process.

Contents

Introduction

Why is advance care planning important?

Aims of advance care planning

Barriers to advance care planning

How an advanced care directive (ACD) functions as one component within the process

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Starting the discussion process
Multicultural perspective
Documentation standards
Ways of documenting an ACD
Role of health professionals
More information

Questions about interpreting and acting on advance care directive instructions

Glossary

Search strategy

References

INTRODUCTION

Advance care planning refers to the process of preparing for likely scenarios near the end of life and usually includes assessment of, and dialogue about, a person’s understanding of their medical history and condition, values, preferences, and personal and family resources. An advance care directive (ACD), sometimes called a ‘living will’, is a document that describes one’s future preferences for medical treatment in anticipation of a time when one is unable to express those preferences because of illness or injury. Completion of an ACD ideally should be one component of the broader advance care planning process. This document was guided by a literature search conducted in March 2003 (see Search strategy).
Why is advance care planning important?

Improving advance care planning for end of life care is likely to become an increasingly important quality of care issue. There is a growing societal expectation that one’s wishes for medical treatment will be respected at the end of life if progressive disease has taken away decision-making capacity. At the same time there is a need for improved mechanisms whereby an incompetent person’s prior wishes about end of life care can be known and considered at the time that critical treatment decisions need to be made. This is likely to become even more urgent in the next decade as a large predicted increase in the number of people with dementia and cognitive disability results in greater numbers with loss of capacity to determine their own medical treatment.

In addition, there appears to be significant variation in the ways that health care professionals currently approach situations where the use of life-sustaining treatment is being considered. There are concerns that such treatments are being used in terminally ill patients resulting in over-zealous treatment or, less frequently, inappropriate under-treatment. Advance care planning may allow for use of life-sustaining treatments in ways that are more consistent with the individual’s choice and priorities at the end of life.

Although family or others close to the person who becomes incompetent usually become involved in making treatment decisions, they are often not able to easily judge the person’s wishes without prior discussions taking place with that person. Families and others often shoulder significant burdens in such situations. Reflective discussion in a non-crisis situation can prepare all involved and may diminish any guilt or concerns over later decisions to limit treatment.

AIMS OF ADVANCE CARE PLANNING

Effective and thorough advance care planning aims to achieve the following:
1. Encouraging conversation about what are the most important things for someone as they approach death, and specifically the place of life-sustaining treatment in relation to that.

2. Achieving a sense of control for the person as their death approaches, and a means of mapping a personal approach to their care during the terminal phase by explicitly considering the person’s values and goals. It is nonetheless important not to focus solely on medical treatment preferences as this may result in avoiding thinking about the person’s goals, values, priorities and expectations during the final phase of their life.

3. Engaging others in decision-making according to the person’s wishes. An ACD can be a private, individual process, and does not have to involve family members or close friends. However, evidence suggests that many people would like selected members of their family or friends to be involved, in which case the ACD is not only an instruction to health care workers but also a document guiding family and friends who may be called upon to help make decisions. The process of advance care planning may provide opportunity for talking about dying wishes, settling interpersonal differences, may prevent later conflict over substitute decisions about treatment, and improve communication amongst family members. The autonomy of the patient is enhanced whether the locus of control is with the individual alone, or the individual plus their family.

4. Providing flexibility in how treatment decisions are made. Advance care planning is a continuum of treatment choices that may be reviewed as the person’s condition, and possibly preferences, change. The person may defer at any time to family or others close to them to decide on their behalf. In some cultural groups, such as some Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities, the latter is the preferred way of making decisions about care during the dying phase.
Advance care planning and the use of advance care directives are always optional and some individuals will prefer not to make decisions for the future, but rather make decisions about their medical treatment at the time the need arises.

BARRIERS TO ADVANCE CARE PLANNING

A number of barriers or impediments to effective advance care planning may exist in the health care sector and wider community. These include:

1. Time constraints - advance care planning is perceived as onerous with necessarily lengthy discussions with patients and their families.

2. Discomfort in talking about death on the part of the patient, family, or health professionals.

3. Patient perceptions about who should or does control medical decision-making. Where people prefer their doctors to lead decision-making, they may be less inclined or willing to engage in this process.

4. Fears about being unable to change one’s mind once treatment preferences are documented.

5. Patients and families may not know about the availability of advance care directives, or the medical implications of their documented preferences.

6. Health professionals may not appreciate the legal standing of advance directives, or the legal implications of acting on treatment limitation decisions generally.

HOW AN ADVANCED CARE DIRECTIVE (ACD) FUNCTIONS AS ONE COMPONENT WITHIN THE PROCESS

Advance care planning may or may not involve the completion of an ACD. Where an ACD is used the following comments are applicable:

1. Different contexts An ACD may be made in a wide variety of circumstances. These may include the person who is healthy but wants to plan their future medical care, the chronically ill person who anticipates deterioration in their condition, or someone who is terminally ill and faces more immediate treatment choices.

2. Authority - An advance care directive that complies with the requirements set out in this document is legally binding in NSW, and functions as an extension of the common law right to determine one’s own medical treatment. A failure to comply with such an advance care directive refusing a particular treatment may result in the health professional incurring criminal or civil liability for providing that treatment. See 5.3 and 5.4 for discussion of documentation standards for ACDs.

3. A tool for discussion - Although the ACD has legal authority, its use in practice should be thought of as an assisting device: an education tool, a ‘worksheet’, a framework for discussion, or a way of documenting preferences when substitute decision-makers may later be unsure or disagree. Its completion is not the only goal, and effective advance care planning does not necessarily require the completion of a directive. The person may instead choose to verbally communicate specific wishes to treatment decisions on their behalf in the event of their incompetence.

4. Scope - An ACD can usefully document:
   • Medical treatment preferences, including those influenced by religious or other values and beliefs.
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- Particular conditions or states that the person would find unacceptable should these be the likely result of applying life-sustaining treatment, for example severe brain injury with no capacity to communicate or self-care.

- How far treatment should go when the patient’s condition is ‘terminal’, ‘incurable’ or ‘irreversible’ (depending on terminology used in specific forms).

- The wishes of someone without relatives to act as their ‘person responsible’ in the event they became incompetent, or where there is no-one that person would want to make such decisions on their behalf.

- A nominated substitute decision-maker that the treating clinician may seek out to discuss treatment decisions.

- Other non-medical aspects of care that are important to the person during their dying phase.

- Although the content of an ACD usually stipulates treatment limitation preferences, this should never be assumed as some individuals may indicate they want full measures to prolong their life.

5. Enduring guardianship and ACDs - Two main elements to advance care planning are recognised: the written directive and the appointment of a substitute decision-maker. In NSW, the Guardianship Act provides for a person to make their wishes known about medical treatment through appointment of an ‘enduring guardian’ who acts as their substitute decision-maker. A person may choose to prepare written instructions as to their future care in the enduring guardianship appointment document. Where a person has made both a separate ACD and appointed an enduring guardian, an examination of both documents is required. See 6.6 and 6.7 for further discussion.

BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Starting the discussion process

- A key factor in effective advance care planning is starting up and continuing discussions about what the person finds important at the end of life. These wishes usually focus on medical treatment preferences but may also include other matters, such as spiritual or interpersonal issues. The patient, their family and health professionals should expect ongoing consultation in order to allow the person to make their choices known over time as death approaches.

- Suggest that the person involve family members, such as the ‘person responsible’ or others close to them, so as to minimise the decision-making burden and thoroughly understand their wishes. The question is ‘How can you guide those closest to you to make the best decisions for you if you are no longer able to do so yourself?’ The family’s role may initially involve only listening, taking notes or asking questions for clarification. The person should at least inform them of their wishes and the existence of an advance directive (where one exists). It is likely that the family will be involved in some way in the decision-making process if the person becomes incompetent, whether they have an ACD or not.

- Some people will not have an eligible substitute decision-maker or ‘person responsible’ (see Glossary), or may prefer that no-one makes particular medical decisions on their behalf. Encouraging the person to consider making a more detailed directive in these circumstances may be appropriate.

- Where a health professional conducts discussions about end of life care, it is best if they are someone who is identified as significantly involved in active care of the person and can discuss prognostic information in clear terms. It is recognised that pastoral care workers or clergy also frequently conduct these discussions but, in order for it to be useful, such information needs to be communicated to the treatment team; therefore a multidisciplinary approach to advance care planning is recommended.
Many individuals welcome the opportunity to discuss end of life care in advance, when raised by doctors or other health professionals. Some people will raise these issues themselves, but many will usually expect health professionals to initiate these discussions. Not all, however, will choose to complete an ACD.

Opportunities for opening these discussions may include when the person or their family enquires about whether palliative care is appropriate, when a person has recently been hospitalised for severe progressive illness or with repeat recent admissions, when a person says they want to forego recommended life-sustaining treatment, or when they express a wish to die.

Advance care planning is most easily accomplished during stable health or after adjustment to a new illness has occurred. A non-threatening environment like an outpatient or GP’s clinic may be preferable.

Begin by enquiring how familiar the person is with advance care planning and explain the goals: that is, to plan for the potential loss of their capacity to make decisions, either temporarily or permanently, and to ensure they are protected from either unwanted or under-treatment.

An understanding of the person’s goals and values may be elicited through asking about past experiences with illness, either their own or others, describing possible scenarios, or potentially by asking them if they would like to write down in a letter how such scenarios should be handled. Such a letter may be a tool for developing a formal ACD, if the person subsequently chooses to prepare one.

The person usually needs information to understand the meaning of the types of clinical scenarios that may arise in their situation, and the benefits and burdens of various treatment options. Key medical terms should be explained in words they can understand. Time for reflection and discussion is usually needed after this information has been given.

5.2 Multicultural perspective

Different cultural groups in NSW may have different perceptions of how end of life decisions are to be made, and by whom. Different views of autonomy and how this is to be respected exist, and any advance care planning process should be sensitive to this.

5.3 Documentation standards

The following should be satisfied before an ACD is considered to have sufficient authority to act on:

- **Specificity** - It must be clear that an advance directive applies to the clinical circumstances arising. This can include treatment preferences in relation to both conditions existing at the time the ACD is made, as well as future anticipated conditions (including catastrophic injury). The advance care directive should be clear and specific enough to guide clinical care. The specificity of the ACD may be improved if the person discusses it with their doctor.

- **Currency** - An advance care directive prepared a long time before it is referred to may not reflect the current intentions of the patient. Nonetheless, if the person was competent at the time the ACD was made then it should still be treated as legally binding. People should be encouraged to review their directives periodically, for example once a year, after an illness, or with a change in health as treatment preferences may change accordingly.

- **Competence** - The person must have been competent to make their own health care decisions when the advance directive was drafted. A person should be considered competent to make a health care decision if they appear able to comprehend, retain, and weigh up the relevant information and then make a choice. Some situations may pose particular difficulties in assessing competence to make an ACD, such as early dementia or intermittent mental health problems. A second opinion from a suitably qualified health professional is advisable.
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• Witnessing - It is not essential to have an ACD witnessed. However, there are a number of reasons to encourage a person to do this. It may allow for later follow-up if doubts are raised about the person’s competence at the time of drafting.

It offers some protection against forgery. It may also allay concerns about undue influence in the expressed treatment choices. If an ACD is completed in conjunction with the appointment of an enduring guardian, then the witness may only be a solicitor, barrister or registrar of the Local Court. If a ‘stand alone’ ACD is prepared, the person may select whom they wish to witness the document.

See also 6: Questions about interpreting and acting on advance care directive instructions for further information on legality of advance care directives in NSW.

5.4 Ways of documenting an ACD

Someone wanting to prepare an ACD may or may not choose to initially discuss this with a health or legal professional, although such discussion is encouraged (see 5.1 and 5.6).

A person may simply write their wishes down, as if writing a letter and with no ‘form’ used.

Alternatively, and more commonly, a specifically designed form is used. Several forms are available in NSW from a number of organisations but forms obtained from other states or overseas may also be used. As there is no legislation in NSW pertaining to ACDs, there is no mandated form. The NSW Department of Health does not endorse the use of one particular form over another but does endorse forms that satisfy the recommendations in Parts 5.1 and 5.3 of this document.

There is no requirement to lodge the form with any agency or office in NSW. There is also currently no register of people who have appointed an enduring guardian.

Advance care directives are designed in different ways. One size does not fit all and different forms are more or less appropriate in different contexts. For example they may contain:
• Statement of general values (a ‘values history’ - this will often ask the person to rank certain states as ‘worse than death’). The values expressed can be referred to, and inform later treatment decisions made by substitute decision-makers. This approach may be good for situations that were not anticipated - perhaps if the person was healthy when they prepared the ACD.
• Statement of goals - may provide a bridge between general values and specific wishes (eg comfort measures only).
• Statement of specific treatment preferences relevant to an existing illness (eg use of invasive or non-invasive ventilation techniques in a patient with chronic respiratory failure).

Often these approaches are combined within one form.

5.5 Role of health professionals

A person is not required to involve a health professional in preparing an ACD. There are however a number of advantages in having a doctor or other health professional involved with the person in preparing an ACD. These include:
• Raising the issue of end of life care options at the outset.
• Providing information about prognosis or treatments that may specifically relate to the person’s condition.
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- Clarifying terminology.
- Encouraging the person to involve other appropriate substitute decision-maker/s in discussions about treatment preferences.
- Witnessing the ACD as a means of vouching for the person’s competence at the time of discussion/writing.

5.6 More information

More information about ACDs and/or forms can be obtained from the following organisations:

1. Advance Care Directive Association
   - Print an order form at http://www.advancecaredirectives.org.au/AdvanceCareDirectives-publications.html
   - Write to the Advance Care Directive Association Inc. at 18/113 Johnston Street, Annandale NSW 2038, asking for a form
   - Leave a message with your name and address on 0423 157 003.

2. Department of Disability, Health and Aged Care ‘Planning Ahead Kit’
   - Tel. (02) 8270 2000

3. Law Consumers Association
   - Tel. 1300 668 001

4. Guardianship Tribunal

5. Voluntary Euthanasia Society

QUESTIONS ABOUT INTERPRETING AND ACTING ON ADVANCE CARE DIRECTIVE INSTRUCTIONS

1. Can a person use an ACD to instruct a doctor or other health professional to help them die?

No. An ACD may not contain instructions for illegal activities, such as euthanasia or assisted suicide.

2. What are the legal implications of acting contrary to an advance directive?

A failure to comply with an advance care directive that meets the standards discussed in this document and refuses treatment may be considered an assault and battery under common law. Civil liability may also ensue.

3. Who else should be consulted if there are concerns about the details or the legality of an ACD?

Where concerns about legality or applicability arise in an emergency, then the medical practitioner can treat the person in accordance with the person’s perceived best interests, regardless of what is said in an advance care directive. Legal advice should be sought as a matter of urgency so that timely treatment decisions can subsequently be made.
Where there is more time to resolve concerns and the person is not competent, the family or those close to the person should be consulted to see if those concerns could be resolved. For example, if an ACD was made some years ago and there are concerns about its currency, those close to the person may be able to confirm that the person’s wishes remained the same. When there are concerns about the person’s competence at the time of making the ACD, those close to the person may be able to provide information on this issue.

4. **What should be done if undue influence on the person preparing the ACD is suspected?**

A directive must be free from the ‘undue’ influence of others. The person must not have been forced or pressured by others to such an extent that they could not exercise free choice when the ACD was made. Factors to consider are the person’s level of maturity, the effect of their condition, the influence of treatment and the relationship between the persuader(s) and the person. If it is suspected that a person was unduly influenced into making an ACD and they are now incompetent, the health professional should seek legal advice and, in the interim, make treatment choices consistent with what is perceived to be in the patient’s best interests.

5. **What should be done when the prior documented wishes of the patient conflict with those of substitute decision-makers?**

If the person’s prior expressed wishes regarding treatment or its limitation are known, and the documentary evidence is authoritative, then these wishes take priority over those of the family. Disagreement by the family or other legitimate substitute decision-maker with the person’s prior wishes is usually resolved by further discussion and the provision of ancillary support through social workers, pastoral care workers or others aimed at the family’s acceptance of the person’s wishes.

While some cultural groups believe that the locus of control appropriately lies with collective or family decisions when a person is dying, there may be wide variation in beliefs within a population and the dying person may not adhere to the dominant cultural norm. The overriding legal and ethical responsibility of the health care professional is to the patient and thus to his or her desire for direct communication and information. Family involvement in treatment discussions is only permissible on the fact or presumption that the person would permit their involvement.

6. **What if the person has appointed an enduring guardian and made an ACD?**

A person may choose to prepare written instructions as to their future care in the enduring guardianship appointment document. If an ACD has been drafted independent of the enduring guardianship appointment, and this ACD is authoritative, then an enduring guardian is bound by these directions. If such a directive is not sufficiently authoritative to act on (for example it does not apply to the clinical circumstances at hand), then the enduring guardian consents or refuses consent to treatment according to the perceived best interests of the patient. Where a person has not appointed an enduring guardian and an ACD is not sufficiently authoritative to act on, the ‘person responsible’ (see Glossary) takes on this role.

7. **What if an appointed enduring guardian disagrees with the ACD?**

They are bound like everyone else. An ACD is the author’s decision. The enduring guardian has no power to disagree.
8. What is the status of an oral directive, for example if a person tells the family or a nurse what they do or do not want regarding life sustaining treatments?

Advance care directives are usually written and signed by the person himself or herself. However, anyone can make an oral directive by making their wishes known through discussion with their family or health care team. This may arise where physical disability, illness or illiteracy means that writing is not possible but may also be the person’s preferred approach. These wishes should be clearly documented in the person’s medical history, even if a specific advance care directive ‘form’ is not used, and made known through liaison between treating health professionals.

9. Is a NSW ACD valid interstate and is an interstate ACD valid in NSW?

Yes, in both circumstances. Most states preserve the right to make an ACD at common law in addition to prescribed forms where they exist, such as in Queensland or South Australia. In some states, like Queensland, there is express recognition of interstate ACDs.

10. What should a person do with an ACD after they have completed it?

In order for an advance care directive to be acted upon, it must be available and its contents known at the time decisions need to be made, including time-pressured situations such as resuscitation decisions. A simple approach is for the likely ‘person responsible’ to be given a copy of the directive and any revisions it receives, along with the GP, any other doctors involved, and other key family members. An ACD should be brought to the attention of new treating clinicians as soon as possible. The ACD should be included in a prominent position in the medical history.

GLOSSARY

Advance care directive - An ‘advance care directive’ contains instructions that consent to, or refuse, specified medical treatments in the future. They become effective in situations where the person is no longer able to make decisions. For this reason advance care directives are also, though less frequently, referred to as ‘living wills’.

Advance care planning - The process of preparing for likely scenarios near the end of life that usually includes assessment of, and dialogue about, a person’s understanding of their medical history and condition, values, preferences, and personal and family resources.

Enduring guardian - A formally appointed substitute decision-maker of an individual’s choice to make lifestyle and/or health care decisions should the individual lose the capacity to make their own decisions at some time in the future. The terms of all guardianship appointments must be carefully checked to ensure they cover the situation at hand, as some appointments are limited to handling only property and financial affairs and do not apply to health care decisions.

Person responsible - The role of the ‘person responsible’ is to make substitute decisions that consent to, or refuse consent to medical treatment. This person is required to have regard to the views of the patient but they are not bound to follow them. The ‘person responsible’ replaces the old term ‘next of kin’ as the person from whom consent for active treatment in the incompetent patient must be sought. The ‘person responsible’ is determined according to the hierarchy within the Guardianship Act 1987 (NSW) and in the following order:

- An appointed guardian (enduring guardian) with the function of consenting to medical and dental treatment. If there is no-one in this category:
- A spouse or de facto spouse who has a close and continuing relationship with the person. If there is no-one in this category:
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- The carer or person who arranges care on a regular basis and is unpaid (the carer pension does not count as payment). If there is no-one in this category:
- The carer of the person before they went into residential care. If there is no-one in this category:
- A close friend or relative.

SEARCH STRATEGY


Websites of the e-journals MJA, BMJ, CMAJ, NZJM and Internal Medicine Journal were also searched with these strategies, and Google was used to search for material not available in these databases.

The bibliographies of key articles were hand-searched for further articles relevant to the Australian experience of advance care planning. Preference was given to papers including empirical data as well as expert opinion, those from Australian jurisdictions and those in peer-reviewed journals.

Three hundred articles were selected on the basis that they provided insight into the following themes: ‘efficacy’, ‘reliability and validity’, ‘accessibility’, ‘durability’, ‘consumer view’, ‘portability’, ‘principles, processes and forms’. Forms from various jurisdictions were collated to provide examples of legally mandated forms, disease- or treatment-specific forms and goals, values or outcome-based forms.

Some of these citations are included in the reference section.

REFERENCES

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Section 5


GUIDELINES FOR END-OF-LIFE CARE AND DECISION-MAKING (GL2005_057)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NSW Health consulted extensively in developing these guidelines. Comment was sought from health professionals, service providers, ethical organisations, government departments, as well as religious, community, and multicultural groups, and members of the public. NSW Health is appreciative of this input as it has been invaluable in developing these guidelines.

NSW Health wishes to thank in particular:
- Members of the expert advisory group:
  - Dr Nick Brennan - geriatrician, South East Sydney Area Health Service
  - John Le Breton - former Public Guardian, Office of the Public Guardian
  - Geoff Bloom - Legal & Legislative Services Branch, NSW Health
  - Professor Malcolm Fisher - Area Director, Intensive Care Services, Northern Sydney Area Health Service
  - Deborah Frew - Manager, Health Ethics Branch
  - Julie Letts - Health Ethics Branch (project manager)
  - Nick O’Neill - former President, Guardianship Tribunal
  - Dr Ray Raper – Head, Intensive Care Unit, Royal North Shore Hospital
  - Dr Peter Saul - Senior Intensive Care Specialist, John Hunter Hospital & Director, Clinical Unit in Ethics and Health Law, University of Newcastle
  - Associate Professor Cameron Stewart - Senior Lecturer in Law, Macquarie University
  - Managers and staff of Quality & Clinical Policy Branch who undertook early phase consultation
  - Dr Bernadette Tobin - Director, Plunkett Centre for Ethics in Health Care

PURPOSE

NSW Health places a high priority on health professionals working collaboratively with each other, and with patients and their families throughout all phases of end-of-life care. Such care is dependent on open and early communication in an environment of trust. These guidelines set out a process for reaching end-of-life decisions. This process promotes such communication, compassionate and appropriate treatment decisions, fairness, and seeks to safeguard both patients and health professionals.
Ideally, patients are able to determine their own decisions for end-of-life care. Some aspects of the guidelines apply to these patients. Often, however, patients lose decision-making capacity before their wishes for the use of life sustaining treatment have been determined. In those situations, the treating team and family together need to plan care that considers the patient’s best interests: reflecting the patient’s wishes and values as much as possible and avoiding both inappropriate over- and under-treatment. These guidelines are particularly relevant to such situations where a consensus building approach is recommended.

Dying patients are cared for in many settings including intensive care units, hospital wards, hospice facilities, aged care facilities and the home. These guidelines provide useful advice for health professionals about a process for negotiating end of life decisions wherever that care is delivered.

These guidelines replace the Dying with Dignity: interim guidelines on management (1993).

PRINCIPLES

A large part of this document focuses on building consensus, in particular where patients do not have the capacity to decide on life-sustaining treatment for themselves. Consensus building is the most inclusive process for determining what is the best treatment for that individual, at that time, and in that place. A consensus view about best treatment is ethically based when it is in accordance with the following guiding principles.

Respect for life and care in dying

A primary goal of medical care is preservation of life, however when life cannot be preserved, the task is to provide comfort and dignity to the dying person, and to support others in doing so.

The right to know and to choose

All persons receiving healthcare have a right to be informed about their condition and their treatment options. They have a right to receive or refuse life-prolonging treatment. Caregivers have an ethical and legal obligation to acknowledge and honour these stated choices and preferences in accordance with these guidelines.

Appropriate withholding and withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment

Appropriate end-of-life care should intend to provide the best possible treatment for an individual at that time. It recognises that if the goals of care shift to primarily accommodate comfort and dignity, then withholding or withdrawal of life-sustaining medical interventions may be permissible in the best interests of the dying patient.

A collaborative approach to care

Families and healthcare professionals have an obligation to work together to make compassionate decisions for patients who lack decision-making capacity, taking account of previously expressed patient wishes where known. Many health professionals in the treating team play a role in end-of-life care and a collaborative approach should be fostered.

Transparency and accountability

In order to preserve the trust of those receiving health care, and to ensure that decisions are fairly made, the decision-making process and its outcomes should be clear to the participants and accurately recorded.
Non-discriminatory care

Treatment decisions at the end of life should be non-discriminatory and should be dependent only on factors that are relevant to the patient’s medical condition, values and wishes.

Rights and obligations of healthcare professionals

Health professionals are under no obligation to provide treatments that, in the circumstances, are unreasonable, in particular, those that offer negligible prospect of benefit to the patient. Patients have a right to receive care, and health professionals have a responsibility to practice, in accordance with community and professional norms and legal standards.

Continuous improvement

Health professionals have an obligation to strive for ongoing improvement in standards of end-of-life care. This situation requires education and support for those health professionals managing dying patients and their families.

PLANNING IN ADVANCE

Decision-making capacity is often lost as serious illness or death approaches. Therefore timely and appropriate decision-making about end-of-life care is more likely where those close to the patient understand the patient’s wishes in advance. With discussion and planning, the patient’s preferences and values can inform decision-making as priorities change during the time leading to the patient’s death. Currently in NSW, people can plan in advance for end-of-life care by:

- developing an advance care plan in conjunction with their healthcare professionals while being treated in a care setting
- discussing their preferences for life-sustaining treatment with their family before they are acutely ill
- formally appointing and informing an enduring guardian
- writing an advance care directive.

The critical element for effective advance care planning by any of the above approaches is discussion between the patient and those close to him or her while the patient still has decision-making capacity.

NSW Health has developed best practice guidelines for health professionals on advance care planning for end-of-life care titled Using Advance Care Directives (NSW). Those guidelines should be read in conjunction with this document in order to assist advance care planning where possible and at the earliest appropriate stage. The guidelines are available at http://www.health.nsw.gov.au (see also paragraph 7.6 of these guidelines).

FOUNDATIONS OF SOUND DECISION-MAKING

The following section discusses a number of factors that support a sound process for end-of-life decision-making. The process itself is discussed in more detail in section 5. These factors include:

- the changing context of treatment limitation decisions at the end of life
- the relationship between the treating team and the patient with decision-making capacity
- the collaborative nature of the treating team
- the consensus building model where the patient has no decision-making capacity
- accountability
- the importance of palliative care.
4.1 The changing context of treatment limitation decisions at the end of life

Because planning for end-of-life care usually takes place in the context of ever-changing circumstances, it is useful to follow the cyclic feedback process for end-of-life decision-making set out in section 5 (see 5.1). One reason for this constant change is the difficulty in predicting, with certainty, an individual’s response to particular treatment. Often life-sustaining treatment will be commenced while further investigations are carried out or information sought in order to make a more accurate prognosis. When all available information has been collected, the appropriateness of continuing the treatment is reviewed with the treating team, patient and/or their family. Furthermore, patients’ wishes may change as they develop an appreciation of their clinical condition. This process of review, decision-making and treatment trial may be repeated a number of times as the patient’s condition improves or deteriorates. These decisions are often based on probabilities, rather than certainties.

4.2 The relationship between the treating team and the patient with decision-making capacity

People are said to have decision-making capacity if they are able to comprehend, retain and weigh up relevant information and then make a choice. A person’s decision-making capacity may be adversely affected by a number of chronic or acute illnesses. As a result, decision-making capacity may vary over time and therefore necessitate re-assessment periodically.

An adult patient with decision-making capacity may accept or refuse life-sustaining treatment, even where that decision may lead to serious deterioration in health or death. It is crucial that the patient is properly informed of the consequences of refusing such treatment. A patient may make choices about treatment consistent with his or her own values, even where these values differ from those of the treating team.

A patient with decision-making capacity does not share decision-making authority with treating health professionals. Rather the treating team acts in an advisory capacity to the patient enabling him or her to make choices regarding reasonable treatment options. Such patients may choose to make decisions without reference to family or others close to them. It is essential that health professionals continue to keep patients informed about their medical condition as they improve or deteriorate, and as the patient’s decision-making capacity fluctuates. Patients should be given the opportunity to participate in treatment decisions consistent with their level of decision-making capacity.

The general principles regarding consent for medical treatment apply in relation to the treatment of dying patients as they do for other patients. Healthcare professionals must be familiar with the Department’s policy on consent PD2005_406.

4.3 The collaborative nature of the treating team

The treating team involved in end-of-life care, either through direct decision-making or in supportive roles, may variously include medical specialists, surgeons, general practitioners, nurses and allied health workers such as social workers, patient advocates, chaplains or pastoral care workers. Individual members of the treating team may have closer or prolonged involvement with the patient and may be aware of the patient’s values and wishes. Other team members may be more involved in how the patient is psychologically or spiritually coping with illness. Each member may bring valuable perspectives and information to the process of planning care and their collaborative involvement should be actively pursued. Junior nurses and doctors should not be excluded where end-of-life decisions are considered, although they should be supervised in any discussions about end-of-life decisions with patients or their families. Reaching agreement within the treating team about appropriate care is an important initial step in a collaborative approach, particularly where the patient no longer has decision-making capacity. It can help reduce subjectivity or bias, particularly in cases of uncertainty.
Nurses and doctors have independent ethical duties towards patients, and the particular burdens that treatment limitation decisions place on nurses should be recognised. Nurses play a significant role in providing clinical and social information about or to the patient and family; in the potential initiation of treatment limitation discussions; and as managers of the dying process. Nurses must be part of the collaborative process whereby the treating team develops a management plan with patients and/or their families.

4.4 A consensus-building model when the patient lacks decision-making capacity

A consensus building approach to end-of-life decision-making that considers the patient’s best interests as paramount is recommended where the patient lacks the capacity to determine his or her own care. This collaborative process aims to draw on the family and treating team’s knowledge and understanding of the patient’s personal values and medical condition. A consensus is sought within the treating team, and between the treating team and family about a plan of care that is as consistent with the patient’s wishes and values as possible, and which also supports the family in the degree of involvement it wishes to have.

The approach of shared decision-making is recommended as sole decision-making by any one party, either the senior treating clinician or the family, may fail to achieve the best possible treatment decision. A consensus approach with appropriate involvement from both treating team and family:

- avoids placing a senior treating clinician in a position of guessing at a patient’s wishes concerning end-of-life treatment without the participation of others, or precipitously withholding or withdrawing treatment
- is consistent with a desire by many patients for their family to be involved in end-of-life decisions when they are not able
- avoids imposing possibly additional stress on a family who may perceive that they carry the burden of decision-making and which may later contribute to feelings of guilt
- minimises inappropriate input to decisions where concerns arise about conflict of interest within a family or a family’s inability to understand medical aspects of care.

The treating team, and senior treating clinician in particular, should therefore not merely outline treatment options then delegate decision-making responsibility to families, but rather they should make recommendations for management based on their understanding of the patient’s medical condition and prognosis, allow time for discussion and reflection, while continuing to work with, and support, a family and reach a consensus decision.

Families should be provided with a contact point for appropriate members of the treating team, hospital or community-based staff after the patient’s death to discuss unanswered questions, as this may be beneficial in allaying guilt or uncertainties.

Elements that are critical to the success of this approach and options for resolving disagreements are discussed in section 5.

4.5 Accountability

The senior treating clinician is accountable, as leader of the treating team, to the patient, the family, the employing health authority, and ultimately the courts for the process whereby a consensus about end-of-life decisions is sought, and the reasonableness of the planned course of action. Following the process set out in these guidelines and adequate documentation of that process will ensure that the senior treating clinician and the treating team meet the obligations required for accountability in end-of-life treatment decisions.
4.6 Importance of palliative care

The provision of palliative care for patients should continue throughout all phases of terminal illness, and especially during the dying phase. This care should encompass controlling pain, relieving other systems of disease and providing emotional and psychological support in preparation for death. Other issues such as relief of psychological suffering, spiritual care and addressing any unresolved issues for the patient may be raised during discussions about end-of-life care. The specific details of palliative care should be documented. See 7.3.

DEVELOPING A MANAGEMENT PLAN

Planning end-of-life care is an iterative or cyclic process based on assessment, disclosure, discussion and consensus building with the patient and/or their family and the treatment team. This process can take place over a short period, such as hours, where the patient suddenly or unexpectedly deteriorates, but it can also extend over weeks or months. The key points in each step of this process (section 5.1) are discussed in the following sections.

5.1 Process of end-of-life decision-making

5.2 Assessment

A sudden or unexpected deterioration, or uncertainty about prognosis, usually requires efforts to stabilise the patient so that a complete assessment can be undertaken and potential reversibility of the condition be established. The treating team should undertake this assessment at the earliest appropriate time. Life-sustaining treatment already commenced may be subsequently withdrawn if deemed appropriate upon assessment of the patient’s wishes or clinical condition.

Where there is reasonable doubt about the medical assessment in the treating team, advice should be sought from other senior clinicians with experience in the condition if possible. Second opinions should be documented.
Assessment should also include evidence of the patient’s preferences and values where available from the patient, or his or her family if the patient has no capacity to express those wishes. Patients’ preferences for life sustaining treatment are not static over time and should be regularly reviewed by the treating team.

A patient’s desire regarding direct communication and information must be respected. The patient also has a choice to nominate someone to receive information on his or her behalf, or to exclude family members from discussions and decision-making processes.

The desire for autonomous-style decision-making or the preference for a collective or delegated approach to end-of-life decisions may vary among patients from different cultural or religious backgrounds. This aspect should be explored on an individual basis to avoid inappropriate clinical decisions and poor interaction with patients and families. The informal use of untrained interpreters such as other family members should be avoided where possible to prevent role confusion and misinterpretation of clinical information.

Failure to demonstrate any improvement in clinical condition over an extended period appropriately generates questions about further initiation or continuation of treatment. The patient, the treating team or the family may initiate such discussions.

5.3 Disclosure

Honest information in non-technical language should be provided to patients and their families for them to participate meaningfully in decisions about end-of-life care. Uncertainty about prognosis or likely response to treatment should be communicated to patients and their families. Prognostic information is ideally given by a health professional who is respected as an expert.

Patients and families may be caught off guard when conversations about the goals of care and possible treatment cessation occur suddenly, very late, without preparation, or when they have not received a balanced picture of the patient’s prognosis. Patients and their families should be engaged in open communication about possible outcomes early in treatment, especially where the patient is seriously or critically ill, in order to prevent unrealistic expectations about what can be achieved with treatment. Early, honest and regular communication can also help create the trust needed for shared decision-making and to defuse tension.

5.4 Discussion

Discussions with patients and their families about treatment limitation should ideally occur in stages over a period of time, preferably while the patient can determine the appropriateness of treatment or its cessation. The presence of nursing staff, or other key members of the treating team, at these discussions is recommended to support and facilitate communication between the treating team and the family.

Strategic opportunities for the treating team to initiate or revisit discussion about end-of-life care may include recent hospitalisation with severe, progressive illness or repeated recent admissions, inquiries from the patient or family about palliative or hospice care or an expression by the patient of a wish to die.

Having the same person/s communicate with the patient or family on behalf of the treating team throughout this process can be useful, as minor differences in explanation of the patient’s condition or progress can seem to patients and families like major disagreements or discord in the team. Ideally, this health professional should be experienced in conducting such discussions, have earned trust before treatment limitation is discussed, and be able to discuss prognostic information.
The phrases ‘do everything’ or ‘do nothing’ are unproductive and should be avoided: neither term is ever strictly enacted and such terminology is a barrier to informed discussion regarding the benefits and burdens of certain courses of action. The ongoing care with the goal of providing comfort to the dying patient should be emphasised with the patient and his or her family where limitation of life-sustaining treatment is planned.

5.5 Documenting a consensus decision

The agreed management plan for end-of-life care, and decisions about the use of life-sustaining treatment within that plan, should be documented and conveyed to all members of the treating team. Such communication may be difficult where many staff care for the patient but adequate documentation may assist in this regard. The senior treating clinician is responsible for summarising discussions held with the patient, family and treating team in the patient notes. These notes must clearly state:

- medical facts leading to the decision, including prognosis
- persons involved in the discussion
- statement of the patient’s wishes, where known
- goals of treatment
- details about medical treatments to be provided, timeframe before review, or details about treatments to be withdrawn/withheld.

Management plans may cover a shorter or longer period of time, depending on the clinical situation of the patient. Decisions that involve withholding treatment such as CPR should be regularly reviewed in accordance with fluctuations in the patient’s condition. A change in the appropriateness of withholding treatment such as CPR needs to be re-documented. (See also 7.5).

Other appropriate treating team members should continue to document other aspects of care that will be maintained or enhanced, such as comfort measures.

Thorough documentation of decision-making processes and subsequent care enables greater transparency and accountability in the care provided and ensures that all health professionals fulfil their professional and legal obligations.

RESOLVING DISAGREEMENTS

In most situations where a patient is dying, the patient, family and treating team readily come to an agreement on appropriate medical management. However, disagreements can arise regarding treatment limitation decisions, or about other aspects of end-of-life care. Most disagreements between the treating team, the patient or the family can be prevented by early, sensitive and proactive communication that clarifies goals of treatment, possible outcomes and the patient’s values and wishes.

6.1 Disagreement in the healthcare team

In circumstances where one team member is in disagreement with the others, the team as a whole should consider the basis for disagreement and seek the opinions of professionals from the same discipline as the disagreeing member. In the event that support for this position cannot be found, it may be appropriate for the dissenting member not to continue being involved in the treating team. As in other areas of clinical practice, a health professional may exercise conscientious objection and not participate in a particular practice which is contrary to his or her moral beliefs.
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Counselling or other psychological support may be appropriate where disagreement occurs about the appropriateness of treatment limitation, particularly for nurses who, in some settings and by their more intimate involvement in the care of dying patients, may be more acutely aware of the patient’s distress.

6.2 When a patient’s family disagrees with a patient’s decision

The wishes of the adult patient with decision-making capacity are paramount. If the patient’s expressed wishes regarding active treatment or refusal of treatment prior to loss of decision-making capacity are known, then these wishes prevail over the wishes of the family. Disagreements between the patient and his or her family may arise if the family is not properly informed by the treating team about the directions given by the patient, and every effort should be made to communicate this information to the family.

6.3 Inappropriate requests for continuing treatment

At times a family or a patient requests a test or intervention that appears unreasonable or inappropriate to the treating team. Such a request may appear inappropriate in the following scenarios:

- where the patient’s condition continues to deteriorate even with optimal therapeutic interventions
- where the treatment would not be successful in producing the clinical effect for which it is ordinarily used
- where the treatment might successfully produce a clinical effect, but still fail to serve important patient goals such as independence from life-support devices, survival in order to leave hospital, or improvement from permanent unconsciousness.

A focus should be kept on the patient. All requests for continuing treatment should be given due consideration before decisions about the appropriateness of treatments are made. Any request should lead to a review of the diagnosis and prognosis and the margins of certainty in each aspect. Health professionals should initially endeavour to explain to the patient or family why they think the desired test or treatment is inappropriate.

Families of patients without decision-making capacity who demand continued treatment in such situations might have unrealistic expectations about what can be achieved. More often though, a family will ask for ‘everything to be done’ if they are not ready to accept the patient’s inevitable death. This situation may be exacerbated when the family are not engaged early in treatment planning prior to the onset of the dying process (see 5.2) or where guilt may be associated with fractured or distant relationships within the family.

The efforts of nursing and medical staff, pastoral care workers, social workers or other counsellors should be directed to supporting family members and assisting them to resolve their difficulties in accepting the reality of the patient’s impending death. In such circumstances, it is preferable to continue treatment until conflict with relatives is resolved; however time critical situations pose extremely difficult choices and challenges (see 6.5).

6.4 Potentially inappropriate requests for cessation of treatment by the patient

Unrelieved pain, suffering or depression may influence a patient’s request for treatment cessation. Under such circumstances, it is appropriate to explore the patient’s feelings, possibly with the assistance of a qualified professional, and to address any issues that may be resolvable.
12. MEDICAL CARE

It may be appropriate to negotiate with the patient an agreed plan of continuing treatment and further discussion in the near future, while acknowledging that sustained wishes for treatment refusal in the competent patient are ultimately paramount.

6.5 Options for resolving disagreement

The following approaches are possible avenues for resolving disagreements in the end-of-life care setting. Not all options will be available in all clinical contexts. However, the simple approaches should be taken first.

Time and repeat discussion

Unless decisions about life-sustaining treatment need to be made urgently, giving families time to come to terms with the impending death of the patient, and to seek further discussion with family or others providing support may be sufficient to resolve outstanding issues.

Second medical opinion

A request for a second medical opinion may be raised with, or directed to, any member of the treating team. Offering a second opinion may also be appropriate if the family are displaying anxieties or uncertainties regarding diagnosis or prognosis. It is the responsibility of the senior treating clinician to facilitate any second medical opinion. This opinion should be from a health professional with relevant expertise in the patient’s condition and who is demonstrably independent from the treating team.

Time limited treatment trial

Such a course of action may be undertaken to clarify prognostic uncertainty or resolve disagreement about prognosis, provided the trial is in the best interests of the patient. It may be advisable to clarify with the treating team and family what treatments are being commenced or continued, the criteria for assessment and the timeframe for review before possible continuation or withdrawal.

Facilitation

Involvement of a third party may assist in clarifying and addressing the concerns of the patient and/or family members, or in finding agreement where an impasse has occurred between the family and the treating team. The third party may be a senior member of the hospital administration, a senior health professional, or another person agreed upon by those involved. The person should have sufficient seniority, be respected by all parties, and be demonstrably independent of the treating team.

Patient transfer

When the above steps have not resolved the situation, the practicality of transferring the care of the patient to another institution or another suitable treating clinician within the same institution should be investigated with those involved.

Guardianship Tribunal

The Guardianship Tribunal may provide advice in relation to end-of-life care for patients lacking decision-making capacity. Advice may include whether it is appropriate for the Tribunal to deal with an application for consent to a proposed treatment on behalf of such a patient.
12. MEDICAL CARE

As palliative care is medical treatment under Part 5 of the *Guardianship Act*, consent may be sought for it to be provided to replace more active treatment. The application must set out the proposed treatment, and any alternative treatments, and the nature and degree of any significant risks associated with either the proposed treatment or the alternatives to it.

**Legal intervention**

The NSW Supreme Court, or the Family Court of Australia in respect of children and young people under 18 years old, has jurisdiction to hear matters relating to treatment limitation decisions. Senior treating clinicians or their delegates may consider initiating a Court action when they are unsure of whether the proposed treatment or treatment limitation is in accordance with their duties as medical practitioners, and when all of the above steps have failed to resolve their concerns.

Before initiating a Court action, the senior treating clinician should usually have:

- obtained a second specialist medical opinion in writing
- received senior institutional advice
- discussed this course of action with the family
- sought advice from the Guardianship Tribunal if the patient does not have decision-making capacity
- informed the hospital executive of the proposed approach.

Where this option is taken, continued consultation should take place with family members to assist in clarifying the issues and to determine whether a legally acceptable solution that is in the best interests of the patient can be reached. Family members or ‘persons responsible’ may decide to independently initiate a Court action if they have concerns regarding end-of-life decisions where the patient lacks decision-making capacity. Family members or person responsible should be specifically informed that they have this option, where appropriate.

**SPECIFIC ISSUES**

7.1 Distinction between euthanasia, assisted suicide and lawful treatment limitation decisions

Euthanasia and assisted suicide both involve deliberate acts or omissions that are undertaken with the intention of ending a person’s life and are inconsistent with the duties of a medical practitioner.

Euthanasia and assisted suicide are different from withholding or withdrawing life-sustaining treatment in accordance with good medical practice by a medical practitioner. When treatment is withheld or withdrawn in these circumstances, and a patient subsequently dies, the law classifies the cause of death as the patient’s underlying condition and not the actions of others (see 7.3). Care of terminally ill patients that is lawful never involves an intention to end a patient’s life.

Both euthanasia and assisted suicide are crimes under the *Crimes Act 1900* (NSW) and are not endorsed in this document, or by the NSW Department of Health.

7.2 Children and young people

End-of-life decisions in children pose particular difficulties. This difficulty is in part because, unlike adults, children are often unable to understand or fully understand choices concerning life-sustaining treatments or functional states, and the implications for decision-making. Children are also less likely to have expressed values that would, in adults, be known by the family and inform treatment decisions. Parents and the treating team may nevertheless consider that continued treatment is not appropriate where the child’s condition is intolerable to the child or where the child is dying.
Older or mature minors (that is, between 14 and 18 years) may not make treatment limitation decisions solely by themselves, even where their capacity to make other medical decisions is not in doubt. However, older minors should be involved in discussions with their parents and the treating team regarding their prognosis and treatment, as appropriate to their level of understanding, emotional maturity and in accordance with their best interests. Multidisciplinary support, as described below, may be necessary where a child’s expressed wishes about end-of-life treatment are contrary to those of his or her parents.

Where the treating clinician and parents differ in their assessment of what is in the best interests of the child, or where the parents disagree with each other, the following strategies (additional to those discussed in 6.5) may be useful:

- The understandable anxieties of parents in relation to treatment limitation decisions may be complicated by potential feelings of guilt and responsibility for the child’s subsequent death. Appropriate multidisciplinary support for parents should be provided at this time. This assistance may ultimately involve working with parents to refocus their hopes and goals.
- Assessment of the family dynamics and possible genesis of disagreement within that family by an appropriately qualified mental health or social work professional and family counsellor.
- Appointment of an appropriately qualified professional, such as a counsellor, in the treating team to advocate independently for the interests of the child.

The consensus-building approach to treatment limitation decisions outlined elsewhere in these guidelines is also applicable in this setting. Where the process fails to bring a consensus about the appropriateness of treatment limitation, resolution will require application to the Court.

In situations where the child is subject to a care order conferring parental responsibility on the Minister for Community Services generally or specifically for medical decisions, the law treats the Minister as the child’s parent. The treating clinician should consult with the Minister about the appropriateness of life-sustaining medical treatment by contacting the Department of Community Services. Treatment should continue to be provided, time permitting, while consultation takes place. Disagreements between the treatment team and the Minister or Minister’s delegate about the appropriate course of action should be resolved by the same processes as apply to other parents as outlined in these Guidelines.

7.3 Appropriate use of analgesia and sedation

Analgesia and sedation should be provided by whatever route is necessary for relief, in proportion with clinical need, and with the primary goal of relieving pain or other unwanted symptoms. Such administration will not be unlawful provided the intention of the medical practitioner is the relief of symptoms, even if the medical practitioner is aware that the administration of the drug might also hasten death.

7.4 Artificial hydration and nutrition

Use of artificial hydration and nutrition is an intervention with its own possible burdens and discomforts, for example, those related to having tubes in situ or regularly replaced. Withdrawal of artificial hydration and nutrition, like the withdrawal of other medical interventions, can be seen as a treatment limitation decision that may be made in accordance with these guidelines. It is recognised that the provision of artificial hydration and nutrition may be a particularly sensitive matter for some in the community who believe that it must be continued, unless specifically refused by the patient.
The offering of food and fluids by ordinary, non-medical means should be part of the care of dying patients as appropriate to their clinical condition or wishes.

7.5 No CPR orders

The term No Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (No CPR) order is preferred as less ambiguous than Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) or Not For Resuscitation (NFR) orders and the interventions to which they apply.

The principles for withholding CPR are consistent with those for withdrawing life-sustaining treatment as outlined in these guidelines. Decisions relating to withholding CPR should be made on an individual basis, not involving blanket decisions or policies, for example, related to age or disability. (See also section 3 Planning end-of-life care in advance).

A No CPR order may be compatible with providing the patient with maximum therapeutic care, short of CPR. The treating clinician and treating team should reassure the patient, or his or her family, that all comfort and other appropriate care will be provided.

No CPR orders should be clearly written in the patient’s medical notes as with other treatment decisions. Use of covert symbols on charts, medical notes or wristbands is not appropriate. Where the decision to apply a No CPR order has not been discussed with the patient because he or she lacks decision-making capacity, that fact should be documented.

Where no explicit decision has been made about the appropriateness, or otherwise, of attempting resuscitation of the hospitalised patient, then resuscitation should be commenced until a senior doctor is available who should determine, based on likely prognosis, whether CPR should continue and then direct the team accordingly.

Where paramedics have been called to a patient whose condition has deteriorated and cardiac arrest occurs, there is a presumption that emergency medical care is appropriate.

7.6 Advance care directives

A number of conditions, outlined below, should be met before the treatment decisions in an advance care directive (see Glossary) are followed:
- the directive is intended to apply to the clinical circumstances that have arisen
- the directive must be sufficiently clear and specific to guide clinical care
- there must not be any evidence to suggest that the directive does not reflect the current intentions of the patient, or was made as a result of undue influence
- the directive should be made by the patient him or herself and should reflect his or her wishes, rather than the wishes of another person.

In addition, it is best practice, but not legally necessary, that:
- the patient should periodically review the directive, for example, once a year, after an illness, or with a change in health status
- the directive should be available at the time decisions need to be made, for example, by ensuring the likely person responsible and primary healthcare provider have a copy of the directive and any of its revisions
- the directive should be signed and witnessed
- a medical practitioner should be involved in discussions with the patient to assist with the development of the directive.
See also section 3 of these guidelines. For more detailed information about advance care directives and advance care planning, see Using Advance Care Directives (NSW), NSW Health, 2004.

7.7 Persistent vegetative state (post-coma unresponsiveness)

Treatment limitation for a severely brain-injured patient is a decision that should be made in accordance with these guidelines. Diagnosis of persistent vegetative state is difficult and usually protracted, often taking months to confirm. The National Health and Medical Research Council has released advice on this matter titled Post-coma unresponsiveness (vegetative state): a clinical framework for diagnosis. It is available on http://www.nhmrc.gov.au

7.8 Emergency treatment

In some circumstances, for example where a patient’s condition suddenly deteriorates and his or her wishes or likelihood of recovery are unknown, a treating clinician or health professional may provide medical treatment without consent (from either the patient or the person responsible) if the treatment is necessary as a matter of urgency. Such situations might be to:

• save the patient’s life
• prevent serious damage to the patient’s health; or, except in cases of special medical treatment,
• alleviate significant pain or distress.

This treatment should be no more than is reasonably required in the best interests of the patient. This does not apply, however, if the patient, when competent, has unequivocally refused the provision of such treatment in the applicable circumstances and the clinician is satisfied on the available evidence that such a direction has been made.

DEVELOPING LOCAL POLICY

These guidelines should form the basis of local policy on end-of-life decision-making, considering local conditions and resources. Local policy development is recommended for the following situations:

• No CPR orders
• minimum standards for documentation of decisions about withholding, or withdrawal of, treatment
• dispute resolution for patients, families and staff.

Local policy may expand on these guidelines by, for example, identifying relevant persons or contacts within the hospital/Area Health Service who may serve certain roles.

Quality improvement activities for end-of-life care that incorporate self-audit, with other sources of performance feedback, such as complaints and commendations, should be developed to guide future practice.

Area Health Services or individual hospitals should identify an appropriate implementation group to undertake local policy development using these guidelines.

GLOSSARY

Advance care directives

An advance care directive contains instructions that consent to, or refuse, the future use of specified medical treatments. It becomes effective in situations where the patient no longer has the capacity to make treatment decisions.
Family
For the purposes of this document and recognising the collaborative nature of end-of-life care, the term ‘family’ is used to refer to a person or persons who have a close, ongoing, personal relationship with the patient, whom the patient may have expressed a desire to be involved in treatment decisions, and who have themselves indicated a preparedness to be involved in such decisions. This person or persons may or may not include the immediate biological family. However, it may include other relatives, partner (including same sex and de facto partners), friend, or ‘person responsible’ according to any expressed wishes of the patient.

Life-sustaining treatment
Life-sustaining treatment is any medical intervention, technology, procedure or medication that is administered to forestall the moment of death, whether or not the treatment is intended to affect life-threatening diseases or biological processes. These treatments may include, but are not limited to, mechanical ventilation, artificial hydration and nutrition, cardiopulmonary resuscitation or certain medications (including antibiotics).

Palliative care
Palliative care is competent and compassionate care which provides coordinated medical, nursing and allied health services for people who are terminally ill, delivered where possible in the environment of the patient’s choice. It provides relief from pain and other distressing symptoms, integrates psychological and spiritual aspects of care, focuses on supporting patients to live as actively as possible until death, and includes grief and bereavement support for the patient, family and other carers during the life of the patient, and continues after the death of the patient.

Patient
For the purposes of this document, the patient describes the person receiving end-of-life care in an institution such as an intensive care unit, hospital ward, hospice facility, aged-care facility and the home.

Person responsible
The Guardianship Act 1987 (NSW) establishes who can give valid consent for medical treatment to an incompetent patient aged 16 years and over. Consent of the person responsible is required in relation to provision of minor and major medical treatment. The Act establishes a hierarchy for determining who is the person responsible as follows:

- The patient’s lawfully appointed guardian (including an enduring guardian) but only if the order or instrument appointing the guardian extends to medical treatment.
- If there is no guardian, a spouse including a de facto spouse and same sex partner with whom the person has a close continuing relationship.
- If there is no such person, a person who has the care of the patient (otherwise than for fee and reward).
- If there is no such person, a close friend or relative.

See the Department’s consent policy PD2005_406 for further information on substitute consent and persons responsible.

Treatment limitation decisions
Decisions that involve the reduction, withdrawal or withholding of life-sustaining treatment.

Treating team
The multidisciplinary team of health professionals involved in the patient’s management and care, including medical, nursing, allied health, social workers and counsellors, carers and spiritual advisors.
12. MEDICAL CARE

RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

NSW Department of Health

1. Information on requirements for organ donation and autopsy:
   PD2005_341 - Use and retention of human tissue including organ donation, post-mortem examination and coronial matters

2. Information on informed consent requirements:
   PD2012_014 - Human Tissue - Consent for Donation of Regenerative Tissue by Young Children and Consent Form

These Policy Directives, further copies of these Guidelines and Using Advance Care Directives (NSW) can be downloaded through NSW Health websites:

- Health website (internet)
- Healthnet (intranet)

Hard copies of these guidelines can also be obtained through:
Better Health Centre,
Locked Mail Bag 5003
Gladesville NSW 2111
Tel. (02) 9816 0452   Fax. (02) 9816 0492

Other websites

3. Information on palliative care standards and guidelines:
   http://palliativecare.org.au/

4. Information on substitute consent and the role of the Office of the Public Guardian

5. Information on enduring guardianship and the role of the Guardianship Tribunal Guardianship Tribunal

6. Information on organ donation and brain death

Other resources

Video - Substitute consent: when the patient can’t give a valid consent,
Guardianship Tribunal, Locked Bag 9, Balmain NSW
Tel. (02) 9555 8500 or Fax. (02) 9555 9049

Guide - Enduring Guardianship: Your Way to Plan Ahead,
Office of the Public Guardian,
PO Box A231 Sydney South NSW
Tel. (02) 9265 3184 or Fax. (02) 9265 2645

NSW Health General Bereavement Support Training Program (information booklet and CD ROM)
RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY DURING HOSPITALISATION (PD2017_001)

PD2017_001 rescinds PD2008_010

PURPOSE

This Policy Directive has been updated and replaces PD2008_010 Disability – People with a Disability: Responding to Needs During Hospitalisation.

This policy describes the responsibilities of all staff working in hospitals caring for people with disability. The scope of the policy includes: pre-admission planning, admission to hospital, care planning during the hospital stay and planning for the transfer of the patient back to the community; planned and emergency admissions; and in-hospital patient care settings (including Hospital in the Home), hospital emergency departments, and hospital outpatient departments.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

This Policy Directive applies to all NSW Health services, which are required to have local policies, protocols and procedures in place based on the attached Procedures in all hospitals that provide admitted patient services to people with disability.

This policy requires NSW Health organisations and staff to provide services to people with disability that are:

- Inclusive
- Person-centred
- Accessible.

Health service staff must:

- Make reasonable adjustments according to needs of the individual
- Communicate with and provide information to the person with disability in a way they understand
- Involve the person with disability, and where appropriate, consult their carer, family, guardian and/or disability support staff as outlined in the attached policy directive
- Implement this policy in conjunction with other NSW Health policies relevant to admission to, treatment in, and transfer out of hospital as referenced in this policy.

IMPLEMENTATION

The following NSW Health organisations have responsibilities in relation to this policy:

- Local Health Districts (LHDs)
- Statutory health corporations – network governed (Specialty Health Networks)
- Statutory health corporations – chief executive governed
- Statutory health corporations – board governed
- Affiliated Health Organisations
- Statewide health services.
These organisations and their staff will:

- Treat people with disability, their carers and families equitably, with respect and use a person-centred approach in line with the guiding principles outlined in the attached Procedures
- Aim to keep people with disability healthy and out of hospital
- Allocate responsibility for implementing this policy in hospital facilities to an executive role
- Review their systems for meeting needs of people with disability in line with this Policy Directive, including but not limited to use of the Implementation Checklist in Appendix 3
- Use existing patient safety and quality monitoring processes to identify and address issues in the quality of health care provided to patients with disability and associated outcomes
- Monitor length of stay and unplanned hospital re-admission rate for people with disability and develop mechanisms to determine if there is a difference in outcomes for people with disability when compared to the general population
- Use this policy in the development of LHD / SHN local policies, protocols and procedures related to improving health care provided to people with disability when they are hospitalised (from admission to transfer to care).

Under this Policy Directive the NSW Ministry of Health will:

- Monitor and provide guidance and policy support to relevant health organisations to implement this policy
- Promote awareness of this policy across the NSW Health system
- Encourage LHDs, SHNs and other relevant health organisations to involve people with disability in the development of local policies, protocols and procedures
- Encourage LHDs, SHNs and other relevant health organisations to adopt the principles outlined in this policy.

1. BACKGROUND TO THIS DOCUMENT

This Policy Directive is an update of and replaces PD2008_010 Disability – People with a Disability: Responding to Needs during Hospitalisation.

The purpose of this policy is to improve the experience of people with disability accessing the State Health system, providing a safe and responsive stay during hospitalisation. This policy sets out the requirements of effective communication with the person with disability and where relevant their carer, family, guardian and disability support staff. It also sets out requirements to make reasonable adjustment during the patient journey to ensure people with disability access equitable, effective and safe health care.

Disability for the purpose of this policy is defined as “a long-term physical, psychiatric, intellectual or sensory impairment that, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder the person’s full and effective participation in the community on an equal basis with others.”\(^{14}\) Disability itself is not an illness but people with disability may have long-term illnesses, chronic diseases, or co-morbidities that require ongoing attention and management.

People with disability have the right to the highest attainable standard of health. This is achieved through being able to access health services on an equitable basis, receive care that meets individual assessed health needs and through appropriate supports that ensure that high quality health care services are received prior to, during, and after hospitalisation; that barriers are not created due to a person’s disability.

The NSW Disability Inclusion Act (2014) commits the NSW Government to making communities more inclusive and accessible for people with disability. This will be achieved by, among other things, promoting the independence of people with disability and enabling choice and control.

This policy, in alignment with the Act, requires staff to provide services that are inclusive, person-centred and accessible.

\(^{14}\) NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014 No 41
2. KEY PRINCIPLES

2.1 Inclusion

The NSW Government is committed to supporting the fundamental right of people with disability to “have the same right to choose the way to live their lives, to access the same opportunities and enjoy the benefits of living and working in our society”, and that the state and community have a responsibility to facilitate the exercise of those rights.\(^{15}\)

For more information on how NSW Health is working to improve access and inclusion for people with disability see the *NSW Health Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) 2016-2019.*

2.2 Person-centred services

A person-centred approach places the person at the centre of decision making, and works with the carer, family, guardian, natural networks of support, and service providers as partners.

For the person to be at the centre of care he or she needs to be well informed about the hospital experience and involved at the centre of decision-making through all the stages of: planning for admission, during hospital stay, and transfer back to the community.

The treating practitioner is responsible for determining the capacity of the person with disability to participate in developing person-centred care plans, or what type of assistance the person needs to support their participation.

2.3 Accessibility

Accessibility includes access to the full range of hospital services and hospital amenities, and information about hospital services including complaints mechanisms. NSW Health organisations should ensure that facilities, services and information are accessible to both the person with disability and those who support them.

Ways to improve access to facilities include:

- Ensuring there is adequate space for wheelchairs and other equipment, and assistance animals
- Ensuring staff are aware that assistance animals are allowed in hospital buildings, including awareness of the Guideline on GL2012_007 - *Animal Visits and Interventions in Public and Private Health Services in NSW*
- Ensuring call systems, diagnostic equipment, toileting facilities, emergency / evacuation procedures and examination tables are fully accessible
- Having an alternative call system in place for patients who are unable to reach or use the call bell
- Providing any information available to patients, and their families, in an accessible format, for example signage, labels, directions and instructions.

Accessibility of information for patients

Health professionals have an obligation to ensure that information is provided to patients in a way that they can understand. This obligation could include the provision of communication aids, including interpreters or translators.

Information should be given in advance of admission to hospital, where possible, to the person, and to their carer and / or their support network as this will enable them to explain the information and prepare the person prior to the hospital stay.

Written information can be made more accessible when it is supported by verbal information given in an explanation. During hospitalisation, from pre-admission to transfer out of hospital, appropriately trained staff should take the time to go through written material with the person with disability, then check whether the person has understood the information, and answer any questions they may have.

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2.4 Communication

The most significant factor associated with both a positive and a negative patient experience is the existence and degree of effective communication between health staff and the patient.

It is important there is effective communication between health staff, the person with disability and where relevant their carer, family, guardian and / or disability support staff to understand the person’s health and support needs, to understand expectations and feelings, and respective roles and responsibilities.

People with significant and permanent disability living in both residential care and the community are a particularly vulnerable population. Many people often require assistance with activities of daily living, including communication. It is important that the communication support required is identified, documented and used.

All communication should always be addressed in the first instance to the person with disability in matters including treatment, comfort, services, supports, amenities and needs relating to their disability. Health professionals should consult the person with disability for advice on the most effective method of communication.

If the person is unable to advise hospital staff of the most effective method of communication, health professionals should then consult the carer, family, guardian and / or disability support staff for information about what is ‘usual behaviour’, how the person communicates and whether they use any particular Augmentative and Alternate Communication (AAC) methods.

Information on the person’s communication needs and preferences must be documented in communication profiles in care plans, records and the Transfer of Care Referral form. Documentation should include any communication aids used by the patient, interpreting gestures, signs and behaviours which they may use to convey their needs and responses.

Ways to improve communication:

- Recognise that some patients may be unfamiliar with healthcare information and address each person’s level of understanding
- Identify methods a person may use to communicate such as signs and gestures and use these methods when communicating with them such as pointing to objects
- Always speak directly to the person and not through the interpreter or the person’s carer, family member or companion
- Allow sufficient time and be patient when communicating
- Listen attentively when talking with a person who has difficulty speaking and let them finish
- Keep sentences short, be specific and talk about one step at a time
- If you are not understood, repeat or rephrase the information, reduce the amount of information, use visual supports, or seek help from someone who knows the person well
- Confirm that the person (or carer / family member / disability support staff) has understood all the information provided, encourage questions
- If you do not understand the person, do not pretend to understand, clarify and confirm what the person is saying, ask the person to say it in a different way, ask the person to show you what they mean, check if the person’s non-verbal communication supports what they are saying
- People with a cognitive and / or psychiatric disability may require key information to be communicated more than once - using reminders and reassurance can improve communication.

Additional training may be required for health care workers to optimise their ability to effectively communicate with people with disability.

Health professionals may need to access information from other parties to assist in providing appropriate care to a person with disability. The person with disability should be actively involved as much as possible in providing information to health professionals, being informed about their care in hospital, and making decisions about their care.

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16 Complex communication needs. Department of Communities (Disability Services), QLD. 2011
Health Care Interpreting and Translating Services

The Policy Directive, PD2006_053 - Interpreters - Standard Procedures for Working with Health Care Interpreters is a mandatory policy. This Policy Directive requires the use of professional health care interpreters (Australian Sign Language (Auslan) and/or spoken languages) to facilitate communication between staff and people who are not fluent in English, or people who are deaf.

- Health care interpreters are professionally accredited by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) or similar accreditation agencies
- Staff are not to be used as interpreters unless they are NAATI accredited at least at paraprofessional level
- NAATI accredited interpreters (AUSLAN and spoken languages) must be booked, as necessary and as requested, to communicate with people with disability and/or their carer and family
- Services are available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. The service is available either face-to-face, by telephone or via videoconference if available.
- Interpreters are also available to provide ‘sight translation’ of documents such as consent documents. Sight translations should always occur in the presence of health service providers so questions can be addressed
- Subject to the requirements of the NSW Health Privacy Manual for Health Information carer, family, guardian, advocates, and/or disability support staff may be consulted using an interpreter for information that may affect the care or treatment of the person with disability
- It should not be assumed that because a person has good spoken language they have equal understanding of written language
- It should not be assumed a person whose first language is Auslan has English literacy skills.

2.5 Reasonable adjustment

In order for health care services to be accessible and safe for people with disability, adjustments need to be made. Making reasonable adjustments means doing things differently to ensure people are not disadvantaged or harmed.

In practice reasonable adjustment means “removing barriers people with disabilities experience in accessing services. This includes changing the ways services are delivered, ensuring that protocols and procedures work equally well for people with disabilities, and ensuring that staff are equipped with the necessary training and resources to deliver effective, timely and quality healthcare to people with disabilities”.

In the context of anti-discrimination legislation, a person-centred approach to individualised-planning, the requirements of the Disability Inclusion Act 2014, and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) there is growing expectation and increasing demand for accommodating the needs of people with disability through mainstream services.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) (the Act) recognises the rights of people with disability to equality before the law and makes discrimination based on disability unlawful. The Act defines both direct and indirect disability discrimination. A failure to make reasonable adjustments is an explicit feature of the definitions of direct and indirect discrimination.

Local Health Districts (LHDs) / Specialist Health Networks (SHNs) must make reasonable adjustments to respond to the needs of people with disability during hospitalisation. Health staff should consult with the patient and where relevant their carer, family member, guardian and/or disability support staff and acknowledge and act on the advice provided.

Examples of reasonable adjustment include:

- Adjusting communication methods by taking into account the patient’s communication needs

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19 Definition of reasonable adjustment is defined in section 4(1); definition is copied in the Glossary.
20 See section 5(2) direct discrimination and section 6(2) indirect discrimination.
12. MEDICAL CARE

- Addressing the patient’s ability to cope with different environments, changes in routines, unfamiliar procedures and unfamiliar staff
- Addressing the patient’s need to change the ways in which care or treatment is provided
- Allowing extra time to provide the support that is required
- Including and supporting the patient’s carer, family member, guardian or disability support staff as expert care partners
- Providing patient information in alternate formats such as ‘easy read’ documents.

LHDs / SHNs must consider:

- The barriers a person with disability may experience within their hospital’s facilities, processes and systems
- The individual person’s specific needs
- Supports the NDIS can or is providing for the patient and how they complement Health interventions.

3. THE PATIENT JOURNEY

Hospital can be a daunting experience for patients, in particular for people with disability due to unfamiliar environments, routines and care arrangements.

A hospital stay can have a significant negative or destabilising effect on people with disability as well as their carer, family, guardian and support networks. It can result in a loss of living skills, depression, and poor adjustment to school, employment and relationships. Some children, young people and adults with disability spend significant amounts of time in hospital.

For people with physical disability, hospitalisation can result in deterioration in their general physical and mental condition such as: loss of joint range, muscle strength and tone, functional independence, and ability in activities of daily living. Similarly, the patient’s previous confidence in mobility may deteriorate unless this is noted on admission and reinforced daily within the limits of the patient’s presenting diagnosis or condition. The patient’s confidence in their ability to perform all functional tasks within the limits of their disability may also deteriorate unless health professionals continue to encourage maintenance of, or improvement on pre-hospitalisation independence.

Where appropriate, Hospital in the Home (HITH) should be considered for people with disability to enable them to receive the hospital care they need in their home environment allowing for the maintenance of routines and care arrangements.

Where hospitalisation is needed, it is important that people with disability receive flexible service delivery, where the health service adapts to meet their particular needs. Ensuring the patient is at the centre of their care, involved in pre-admission planning and supported with information will lead to a good hospital experience for people with disability.

While communication, consultation, consent and planning are essential elements of a good hospital experience for all people, these elements can be particularly important for people with disability.

3.1 Privacy

The collection, use, exchange, or disclosure personal information about the patient must be undertaken in accordance with the NSW Health Privacy Manual for Health Information (the Manual) which can be found at: [http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/manuals/Pages/privacy-manual-for-health-information.aspx](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/manuals/Pages/privacy-manual-for-health-information.aspx)

The NSW Privacy Commission has issued a Direction for permitting an exception to the Health Privacy Principles to enable the exchange of health information to assist in the transition of funded individuals to the NDIS.21


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21 This Direction has effect until 28/10/2017
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The direction will enable Family and Community Services (FACS) (and other NSW public sector agencies including Health and Education) to collect, use and disclose personal health information about individuals and their carers, who receive disability supports funded by FACS, Health, NSW public sector agencies or an allied agency for the purposes of transitioning funded individuals to the NDIS.

The National Disability Insurance Authority (NDIA) will use this information to contact those individuals and commence their entry into the NDIS.

Guidance should be sought from LHD / SHN Privacy Contact Officers in relation to any external requests to release patient information under the Direction:

Resource: Privacy Information Leaflet for Patients

3.2 Consent

The NSW Health Policy Directive PD 2005_406 - Consent to Medical Treatment – Patient Information sets the legal requirements for obtaining a valid consent from patients and advising patients of material risks associated with any proposed medical or dental treatment.

The policy also outlines how the law is to be applied when obtaining consent from a person who lacks capacity, is a minor, or is a patient who is being treated under the Mental Health Act. The Consent Policy can be found at: http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/PD/2005/pdf/PD2005_406.pdf

Treating practitioners should assume that an adult patient has capacity to consent unless there is evidence to contradict this assumption. The patient must have capacity to give consent to medical or dental treatment. A person has decision making capacity if they can:

- Understand the facts and choices involved
- Weigh up the consequences, and
- Communicate their decision.

For information on obtaining consent for people who lack capacity see Appendix 2.

3.3 People with disability and their support networks

People with disability may have a range of support needs and may access these supports from a range of sources, and have multiple parties involved in providing care or support to have those needs met.

It is important that health professionals find out if the person with disability has a support network and whether the person will need the support network’s involvement during their hospital stay.

Developing a plan for disability support while in hospital should be part of pre-admission planning.

Health staff should communicate with the carer, family, guardian, and / or disability support staff, about ways to provide safe and personalised care for people whose disability could result in significant risk of harm to themselves, the carer or hospital staff e.g. due to fear, anxiety, absconding, challenging behaviours, difficulties with communication.

With the consent of the person with disability, health professionals should ensure that appropriate information is effectively communicated to the relevant members of the person’s support network, in both the admission and the transfer of care planning stages.

Refer to section 4.2 Protocols between key agencies on LHD / SHN responsibility for negotiating and establishing frameworks and protocols with local disability support service providers for the provision of disability support services to the person with disability while they are in hospital.

Carers, family members, and disability support staff may assist with basic needs at the request of the person with disability and in consultation with health professionals, but are not obliged to assist with individual or medical care needs.
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Carers

A carer\(^{22}\) provides ongoing, unpaid\(^{23}\) support to a family member, neighbour, or friend who needs help because of disability, chronic, terminal or mental illness or frail ageing.

The patient, their carers, hospital staff and the health care system all benefit from involving carers as a partner in the health care team. The work carers do is essential to the wellbeing of the person with disability and it is essential that they are listened to and consulted with through all stages of a person’s hospitalisation.

The level of carer involvement may vary. Regardless of whether the carer chooses to remain with the person, or not, carers should be consulted at all stages of the patient’s hospitalisation.

LHDs / SHNs should develop local policies which outline the level of support that is available for the carer while the person with disability is in hospital e.g. bedside accommodation for the carer or family are providing support to the patient.

When a person the disability has a paid carer or disability support worker, due consideration will need to be paid to their status on the wards as an employee of the person with disability. Please refer to section 4.2 for more specific advice.

3.4 Care coordination

Care coordination and transfer of care arrangements for people with disability should be made in accordance with NSW Health Policy Directive PD2011_015 - Care Coordination: Planning from Admission to Transfer of Care in NSW Public Hospitals\(^{24}\)\(^{25}\), which sets out five stages of care coordination:

1. Pre Admission / Admission
2. Multidisciplinary Team Meetings
3. Estimated Date of Discharge (EDD)
4. Referrals and Liaison for patient transfer of care
5. Transfer of care out of the hospital.

LHDs / SHNs are responsible for establishing mechanisms to ensure that the essential stages of care coordination are undertaken in each facility and are sustained as part of normal care coordination and transfer of care planning.

Preparing for planned admission

Health services should ensure that as part of their pre-admission screening process, people with disability are offered pre-admission meetings for all planned episodes of hospitalisation. A relatively simple procedure can become unnecessarily complicated if there is insufficient pre-admission planning to ensure optimal supports are in place for the person with disability.

If the person requires multiple tests and / or procedures, consideration should be given to scheduling these in a way to maximise outcomes for the person during their admission to hospital.

Close liaison with the person’s General Practitioner (GP) or other community based health professionals will support safe, quality, smooth admission into hospital and subsequent transfer back to the community.

Hospital staff should inform and involve the person’s carer, family, guardian and / or disability support staff in planning for the admission as appropriate and with the agreement of the patient.

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9 As defined in the NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010, refer to the Glossary for definition.

22 Carers may receive the Carer Payment or Carer Allowance

23 Care Coordination. The following links to three documents that were developed to support staff with implementation of the Policy Directive PD2011_015 Care Coordination: Planning from Admission to Transfer of Care in NSW Public Hospitals:
http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/pdfs/Pages/carecoordination.aspx . The three documents are:

2. Care Coordination Policy Directive Staff Booklet
3. Planning your hospital stay patient brochure
Should there be an expectation that during the patient’s admission their accommodation needs will change, discussing these with the patient and their carer or family as early as possible will facilitate a smoother discharge.

Information about the facility’s Patient Representative and consumer feedback mechanisms as well as the Inquiry Service of the Health Care Complaints Commission should be provided as part of pre-admission planning.

**Pre-admission meeting**

A pre-admission meeting should be arranged with the person, and when relevant, involve the carer, family, guardian, disability support staff and relevant hospital staff. Reference should be made to GL2013_001 section 4.3.1, Pre admission meeting (pp.10-11), of the *NSW Health and Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) Joint Guideline: Supporting residents of ADHC operated and funded accommodation supported services who present to a NSW Public Hospital, NSW Health.*

Staff should be aware that additional time may be needed to develop a pre-admission plan with people who use augmentative and alternative communication methods.

Hospital staff should ensure that information about the hospital admission, hospital routines, and procedures are communicated to the person in the person’s preferred communication style.

**Transfer of Care Risk Assessment Tool**

The person conducting the Transfer of Care Risk Assessment (TCRA) is responsible for communicating any identified risk to the relevant members of the multidisciplinary team. When a transfer of care risk is identified it must be documented and managed.

A TCRA should be conducted at pre-admission and patients with an identified risk should be referred early to the appropriate community teams so planning for transfer back to the community can begin. Completion and actioning of the TCRA within the first contact with the patient, or within 24 hours will expedite this process.

**Planned day-only admission**

Transfer of care planning must also occur for patients having day-only procedures. Hospital facilities may nominate their own processes to ensure the Transfer of Care Risk Assessment is completed. Ideally this should occur prior to the day of the patient’s procedure.

**Pre-admission plan**

The following issues may need to be addressed in order to complete a pre-admission plan for a person with disability:

- Disclosure of information and the inclusion of others from the person’s support networks in the pre-admission and discharge planning process in line with the *NSW Health Privacy Manual for Health Information*
- Identification of whether the person is a participant of the NDIS or in the process of making an application to the Scheme
- Procedures for determining informed consent
- Information regarding medical history, social and functional skills
- Clarification of the role of parties involved in care of a person with disability during the hospital stay, including the role of hospital staff, carer / family and disability support staff
- Key community resource contacts, where community or disability service agencies are involved or may be available
- Transportation and mobility requirements
- Physical support needs including appropriate lifting and positioning
- Nutrition and diet requirements; eating and drinking techniques
- Hygiene assistance needs

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The person’s specific communication requirements. Hospital staff responsible for planning the admission should ensure that if required a person with disability can bring to hospital their communication resources or equipment such as augmentative communication devices, mobility or functional aids.

Management strategies for difficult or challenging behaviours. Consider involving Dementia Specialists e.g. Clinical Nurse Consultant Aged Care in a suitable management plan.

Consideration of usual care and activity routines to ensure that any medical intervention causes the minimal amount of disruption, confusion and stress to them.

Specific information on equipment that patients must bring to the hospital e.g. for pressure care, respiratory support, should also be discussed. Consider involving Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy in discussions regarding required equipment.

Hospital staff should ensure that space is provided for comfortable operation and safe storage of equipment, and that the equipment is readily available for use.

Patients who use an assistance animal, such as a guide dog, should not be separated unnecessarily from the animal, and space and care for the animal should be planned and made available.

Conflict resolution mechanisms.

Hospital complaints mechanisms and processes.

Planning for an extended hospital stay may need to include strategies to assist the person to maintain their skills and capacities such as:

- Hospital day passes to access day program and community services can assist in sustaining pre-hospital functional capacity.
- Patients, their carer and family, where the patient is an NDIS participant, should be consulted to acquire details of any education, home or day programs that they receive funding for and how those may be accessed.
- Where the patient is not an NDIS participant, they should be consulted to determine whether they are involved in any Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC), state/Commonwealth provided education, respite or day supports and how these are accessed.
- Where the patient is a long stay resident, the NDIA will need to be informed that the Hospital will temporarily assume the status as the clients’ place of residence and that all correspondence should be sent there.
- Patients with intellectual disability who underutilise their skills will risk losing those skills. In extended admissions, where possible, hospitals should seek input from their current disability supports and education services for their day-to-day care.
- Where practicable, enable children to continue their school education activities and have access to play therapy.

Engage with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)

When the person with disability has identified themselves as a participant of the NDIS, identify on what basis their plan is being managed:

- Self-managed – the person with disability will be able to discuss their plan components and, as the coordinator of supports, work with hospital staff to incorporate discharge and ongoing service needs into their budget.
- Plan Management Provider – appropriate client consent needs to be gathered and contact made with the plan management provider to ascertain the types of disability supports the client is funded by the NDIS for and discuss their future discharge needs.

Where the person with disability is not an NDIS participant, consideration should be given at the pre-admission stage as to whether they may be eligible for the NDIS. If the person with disability is understood to satisfy the access requirements then they should be supported with an application to the NDIA as early as possible. However this should not delay the planned hospitalisation unnecessarily.
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3.5 Admission

When a person with disability is admitted to hospital, health staff should ask the patient, what communication needs they have, whether they are in the NDIS, what existing home support networks they have in place and how their supports and care are coordinated at home. It should always be assumed that the patient is capable of providing consent unless there is evidence (legal or other) otherwise. See Appendix 2: Obtaining consent from a person who lacks capacity.

Planned admission

All planned admission patients should have their Transfer of Care Risk Assessment completed at presentation or before admission to hospital, such as at a pre-admission clinic or meeting. Completion of this assessment will allow the identification of transfer of care risks. Necessary referrals should be made before admission, where possible, and confirmed during the acute phase of care.

Emergency or direct admission

An emergency admission for a person with disability may result in a lack of optimal supports being readily available because of the absence of pre-admission planning.

Non-planned admissions through the Emergency Department or through direct admission should have a Transfer of Care Risk Assessment completed on the inpatient ward within the first 24 hours of admission.\[28\] This will ensure that all risks to the safety and wellbeing of the person while in hospital are identified, and appropriate arrangements made for the availability of supports needed by the person while they are in hospital. The risks identified and arrangements made should be documented in care plans, records and Transfer of Care Risk Assessment. This should be done as soon as practical either prior to transfer to the ward or once the person is settled in the ward.

People with disability admitted through the Emergency Department should be asked whether they are a NDIS participant. Refer to discussion under Engage with the National Disability Insurance Agency above for reasons and suggested action.

Where the patient has a known intellectual disability, the presence of a known person may reduce stress, reduce the risk of escalating challenging behaviours and improve overall health and safety outcomes for the health service and the person with disability alike.

Emergency admission to hospital from an Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) operated or funded supported accommodation

Reference should be made to NSW Health and Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) Joint Guideline supporting residents of ADHC operated and funded accommodation supported services who present to a NSW Public Hospital\[29\] NSW Health GL2013_001 (pages 9-10), which sets out what the disability support staff member who accompanies the person to hospital will do at presentation to the Emergency Department.

Emergency admission from non-government supported accommodation facilities and contracted accommodation providers under the NDIS.

LHDs / SHNs should consult with clients and their local non-government (NGO) supported accommodation providers, for example assisted boarding houses, to develop frameworks and protocols to establish arrangements for patients to be admitted through the Emergency Department from those facilities. Reference should be made to the Joint Guidelines for examples of issues for which there should be agreed frameworks and protocols between the LHD / SHN and the NGO. Refer to section 4.1 on NGO’s.

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3.6 During the hospital stay

All staff providing care must ensure that they are familiar with the specific care and communication needs of the person with disability throughout the duration of their hospitalisation.

Staff will need to recognise the individual needs that some patients with complex impairments may have and make additional time is available for discussion and treatment.

Staff and other resources may need to be available to enable patients to access usual care in activities such as eating, drinking, toileting and personal hygiene. Some patients with disability may also require frequent checks on their safety.

In some cases, simple techniques can be used to enable patients to access usual care – for example, letting a patient who is blind know that their meal has arrived, where it is, and where different parts of the meal are on a plate, acknowledging the patient when entering or leaving the room; obtaining the visual attention of a person who is deaf or hard of hearing prior to addressing or approaching them.

Additional staffing resources may be required to meet these needs. Refer to section 2.5 Reasonable adjustment.

Multidisciplinary Team meeting

Refer to Policy Directive PD2011_015 - Care Coordination: Planning from Admission to Transfer of Care in NSW Public Hospitals for policy requirements on:

- Conducting multi-disciplinary team meetings
- Estimated Date of Discharge (EDD).

Referrals and Liaison

In consultation with the patient, their carer, family, guardian and/or disability support staff, it is important to agree what services are required after transfer from hospital following an acute episode of care. Where the supports are not chronic or disease focused, the patient may be able to acquire supports through NDIS funding.

Each hospital is required to develop a referral structure to enable staff to easily contact relevant chronic condition or disease service providers. When the patient is in the NDIS, they will need to provide details of their current relevant service providers as well as their plan management provider and be ready to contact the NDIA about their plan.

Involvement of NDIA planners, during discharge planning by multidisciplinary teams, should be considered to ensure that health related components are represented in NDIS applicant’s plans and that a proper discharge timetable can be constructed.

Details for referrals should be recorded in one place in the patient’s medical record and on any relevant individual referrals, for example to the patient’s General Practitioner (GP) and other community based services. 30

Where a patient has given permission for Health staff to contact their community service provider, Community based staff who will be involved in providing out of hospital care and support should be encouraged to visit the patient while they are in hospital to assess their ongoing needs at home and discuss the patient’s needs with the Multidisciplinary Team.

Examples of out of hospital programs or services (non-NDIS) that may support transfer of patients from hospital, or patients in the community, are:

- Community Packages (Com Packs)
- Hospital outpatient department services
- Community nursing
- General Practitioners.

3.7 Transfer of care out of hospital

Clear communication between the patient, carer, family, guardian, hospital staff, community-based services and the person with disability’s support network is vital to an effective transfer of care process. Special information that should be noted and will assist in the completion of the Transfer of Care Risk Assessment and Transfer of Care Readiness Checklist, and identification of the Estimated Date of Transfer includes:

- Whether the person has capacity to consent to medical treatment, and, if not, what arrangements have been made for someone to make decisions on behalf of the person
- Clarification of the patients’ NDIS status and of the role of people already involved in providing supports and their contact details
- Mobility and transport requirements.

Information provided to patients, and where appropriate, to carers, family, and disability support staff who will be involved in their ongoing care should be in plain English and explained to the patient and those who will be involved in their care.

The transfer of care process for the person with disability must include:

- Determination of the suitability of existing home support systems or the patient’s NDIS plan components (if an NDIS client), when completing a Transfer of Care Risk Assessment. This should involve consultation with the patient, and, where appropriate, their carer, family, guardian, their advocate, and provider of supports to establish the level of care and support needs required. Environmental adjustments should be made as needed
- Referral to out of hospital, community-based health services, or specialist services as required by the patient:
  - Arrange appointments for post hospital services as required, examples:
    - Follow up appointments with medical specialists related to acute episode of care, and if needed, referrals for management of chronic conditions or disease
    - Allied Health services
    - Hospital outpatient department.
  - Refer the patient, if needed, to post hospital home visits by nursing services. For surgical admissions, post-surgery links with community health services (e.g. community nursing services). Referrals are to be made before transfer of care and service/s negotiated, including consideration if the patient’s care needs can be met on a short or long-term basis
  - Provide information about the appointments and arrangements to the patient and where appropriate to their carer and or family. If the person’s home is in supported accommodation this information should be provided to the disability support staff that provide support to the person
- Medication education / medical reconciliation: if the Multidisciplinary Team identifies the patient has a medication risk (as per Transfer of Care Risk Assessment) the patient should be prioritised for the pharmacist’s review over non-urgent cases
- Provide information and relevant education and training to the patient, and, where appropriate, their carer, family, guardian, and disability support staff. The information should include: post-hospital care and support the person needs, including: changes to or new medication/s or treatments reflecting any changes in care required as a result of the hospitalisation or treatment provided
- Explain the transfer of care plan to the patient, and where appropriate, to their carer, family, guardian, and disability support staff
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- In the case of a patient living in supported accommodation, the transfer of care plan needs to be developed in collaboration with the patient, and where appropriate their carer, family, guardian, and disability service provider/staff in a case conference.

- Notify, advise and confirm transfer date and time with carer, family, guardian and disability support staff.

It may not be feasible for the patient to return to their previous accommodation on leaving hospital, including people who were admitted from supported accommodation. For example, if a clinical event has changed their ongoing care needs the patient’s support arrangements may need to be altered. Early identification of the person’s care needs after the hospital stay and timely referrals to establish appropriate arrangements may minimise delay in transfer of care out of hospital. The person, their carer, family, and guardian should be involved in these discussions and supported while arrangements are made for alternative residential accommodation.

Progressively from June 2016 where a person with disability requires functional supports to be put in place in order to be safely transferred back to the community and they are not an NDIS participant, consideration should be given to an application being made to the NDIA. This should be done as soon as practical, ideally as a part of pre-admission planning or shortly after admission, in order for the NDIA to make a decision about eligibility and for an appropriate plan to be put in place.

**Transfer of care referral** (known as transfer of care summary or discharge summary)

The patient’s General Practitioner (GP) or Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service (ACCHS), and community nurse (where required) should receive a written transfer of care referral when the patient is transferred out of hospital or within 48 hours of the transfer.

The transfer of care referral should include:

- A summary of the person’s clinical episode of care
- A list of medications with information about changes to medications
- Follow up advice for the GP or ACCHS
- Details of community services involved or residential care arrangements
- Information on the person’s communication needs and preferences. Documentation should include: communication aids used by the patient, interpreting gestures, signs and behaviours which people may use to convey their needs and responses.

The transfer of care plan should be explained to the patient, and where appropriate, to their carer, family, guardian, and disability support staff.

In short stay services such as emergency departments, day only or planned day only services, a short stay referral summary may be utilised instead of a full transfer of care referral summary; as clinically appropriate.

4. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

4.1 Local working relationships

LHDs / SHNs should establish effective working relationships with local community based health and disability service providers to improve transfer of care for people with disability between public health facilities and community based service providers.

Examples of types of organisations include:

- National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)
- Plan Management Providers funded by the NDIA
- Community based medical practitioners, includes specialists and General Practitioners
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- Community based allied health services (private; non-government)
- Disability service providers
- Community organisations
- Supported accommodation providers
- Aged care providers
- Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS)
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service (ACCHS).

LHDs / SHNs should work collaboratively with community based service providers to establish effective referral pathways to ensure coordination of care around the needs of the person with disability.

Stakeholders

The phased implementation of the NDIS across NSW from July 2016 is likely to increase the number and diversity of non-government disability support services.

LHDs / SHNs should ensure that organisations representing people with disability, such as disability advocacy and carers organisations are consulted in implementing changes to health service systems to interface with the new disability service system that will result from the reforms.

4.2 Protocols between key agencies

LHDs / SHNs should develop and establish agreements and protocols with local disability support providers to apply in situations where disability support staff or disability support nurses provide disability supports in the hospital or acute care setting.

Section 2.5 Reasonable adjustment is relevant to this section.

Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) operated and funded accommodation support services

The NSW Health and Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) Joint Guideline: Supporting Residents of ADHC Operated and Funded Accommodation Support Services Who Present to a NSW Public Hospital, NSW Health GL2013_001 31 (Joint Guideline) aims to ensure staff in hospitals and disability accommodation services operated and funded by ADHC are aware of their respective roles and responsibilities for people with disability before, during and after transfer of care from hospital.

Reference should be made to the Joint Guideline in situations when a person with disability is admitted to hospital from an ADHC operated or funded facility, for guidance on:

- Roles and responsibilities of staff in hospitals, and disability accommodation support services before, during and after transfer of care from hospital
- Identifying areas of risk that could compromise a person with disability’s capacity to achieve the best health outcome and their safety and/ or dignity during their hospital stay
- Agreeing on what additional supports will be required to reduce identified risks
- Negotiating responsibility and resources for the provision of agreed additional support.

Non-government supported accommodation

People with disability living in non-government organisation (NGO) supported accommodation may receive support from disability support staff, which includes any of the following: residential care workers, assistants, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech pathologists, psychologists, social workers, nurses, case managers, and other support staff who are involved in the care or support of the person at the time of hospitalisation. Residential care workers are most likely support providers.

LHDs / SHNs should develop frameworks and protocols with NGO service providers in their district for the provision of supports and care to people with disability before, during and after transfer of care from hospital.

31 http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/gl/2013/GL2013_001.html The Joint Guideline was endorsed by ADHC and NSW Health, and was developed in consultation with key stakeholders across health and disability sectors. The Joint Guidelines notes some Local Health Districts and ADHC Regions have developed local protocols which provide the framework for effective support of ADHC clients during a hospital stay, and the Guideline aimed to facilitate a higher level of compliance with NSW Health and ADHC policies.
hospital for people who live in supported accommodation settings.

In some instances, disability support staff may assist with basic needs, but this should happen within the context of a protocol or agreement between the disability support provider and the hospital, with the respective roles clarified at pre-admission planning.

It is important at pre-admission that the expectations, roles and responsibilities of disability support staff are clarified within the context of a protocol or agreement between the disability agency and the LHDs / SHNs including who pays while disability support staff are providing support in hospitals.

The frameworks between the LHDs / SHNs and NGO service providers should address effective partnerships and provide a structure for protocols between local hospitals and the local community and/or disability services. Local protocols should:

- Address roles and responsibilities of disability support staff in the hospital or acute care setting including, work health and safety arrangements, workers compensation, professional indemnity, and public liability insurance
- Address what the disability support staff will do when accompanying a person to the Emergency Department. Refer to section 3.4.2 Admission
- Include a decision making escalation process for issues that cannot be negotiated at the level of Nurse Unit Manager with their counter-part representing the NGO service provider
- Include general principles and procedures to ensure that transfer of care between the hospital, community and disability services is articulated and coordinated clearly around the needs of people with disability. Section 3.4.3 on Transfer of care out of hospital is relevant here.

LHDs / SHNs may wish to use the Joint Guidelines as a reference for the range or types of issues that need to be jointly agreed across stages in the patient’s journey.

4.3 Existing resources

In addition to patient safety and quality monitoring systems, a range of resources are available to support staff to meet the needs of people with disability during hospitalisation.

- Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officers are an important resource for patients who identify as Aboriginal
- LHD / SHN Carer Support Services are available to provide staff with development and training, information, resources and advice on support for carers.32
- Courses and programs are offered by Health Education and Training Institute and Intellectual Disability Mental Health e-learning 33
- The NSW Health and Ageing, Disability and Home Care Joint Guideline supporting residents of ADHC operated and funded accommodation supported services who present to a NSW Public Hospital, NSW Health GL2013_00134
- TOP 5 Model is a simple process that encourages health professionals to engage with carers to gain valuable non-clinical information to help personalise care35
- Health Care Interpreting and Translating Services – Patients, carers, and family who do not speak English as a first language or who are deaf have a right to free confidential and professional interpreters when they use public health services. Policy Directive 2006_053 - Interpreters – Standard Procedures for Working with Health Care Interpreters is mandatory.36 Information about the five Health Care Interpreter Services in NSW – three metropolitan and two rural, and three

32 Information on:
   - NSW Health support for carers can be found here: http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/carers/Pages/default.aspx
   - Local Health District Carer Support Services can be found here: http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/carers/Pages/resources.aspx
34 http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/g1/2013/GL2013_001.html
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Translation Services can be found on the Health Care Interpreting and Translating Services website. 37

- Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) has developed resources that “relate to the care and health of people with intellectual disability across all ages, including acquired brain injuries by enhancing the capacity of primary and secondary health services.” The link to these resources is: http://www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/networks/intellectual-disability/resources 38

- NSW Health Carers (Recognition) Act and Carers Strategy Implementation Plan 2013-2016 39
- NSW Carers 3 2014-2019 40; factsheet 41 on NSW Health website has actions that Health staff can undertake to reflect the strategy.

4.4 In-service, education and training

It is important that hospital staff are familiar with developments including contemporary practice in the support of people with disability in the community.

Training must include information about appropriate communication with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (including people who are deaf) and people from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background.

LHDs / SHNs should support health staff to access to education and training on:

- Values and attitudes towards people with disability, their families and carer
- Skill development (e.g. communication and disability etiquette)
- Best practice in health provision for people with disability.

Organisations representing people with disability should also be consulted in the development of disability awareness training for staff.

4.5 Monitoring

An Implementation Checklist (Appendix 3) has been developed for use by LHDs / SHNs to assess their compliance with this policy directive. LHDs / SHNs can also use the checklist to monitor their implementation of the policy by undertaking assessments in different time periods or at stages of an implementation plan.

Safety and quality systems

In most LHDs / SHNs there are existing patient safety and quality monitoring processes that can be used to identify issues in the quality of health care provided to patients with disability and associated outcomes. These include:

- Incident Information Management System (IIMS)
- Complaints mechanisms
- Consumer, carer and patient satisfaction surveys and interviews
- Accreditation processes
- Periodic health record audits
- Length of stay reporting
- Monitoring of hospital readmissions.

Performance indicators, outcomes measures and patient experience

LHDs / SHNs should develop mechanisms to determine if there is a difference in outcomes for people with disability when compared to the general population. This information should be disaggregated by

38 The ACI Intellectual Disability Network works to improve the care and health of people with intellectual disability across all ages by providing clinical leadership, research and education to enhance the capacity of primary and secondary health services. Information about the network including on becoming a member can be found here: http://www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/networks/intellectual-disability/about
age, gender, type of disability, place of residence and cultural background. See Appendix 1 for examples of performance indicators and outcome measures.

The type of assessment described above could be undertaken in targeted projects or reviews of specific areas or service types of interest.

Systematic monitoring of people with disability’s access to health services, and comparing their outcomes against those of the general population requires data items to identify people with disability in data collection systems.

NSW Health is committed to enhancing services and building greater accountability by improving data collection and reporting on disability inclusion in Strategy 8 of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2016-2019 (DIAP):

- Action 8.1 The DIAP Governance Group to work closely with relevant partners to consider appropriate systems to identify people with disability to improve equity in access and measure health outcomes compared to the general population.

The NSW Ministry of Health will monitor changes in the sensitivity and adaptability of LHDs / SHNs staff to the needs of people with disability during hospitalisation through an annual report which will be prepared by the Bureau of Health Information and made publically available:

- Action 8.2 Produce a disability focused report on an annual basis of patient perspectives on the care people with disability receive through NSW Health.

APPENDIX 1: POTENTIAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND OUTCOMES MEASURES

The following are examples of performance indicators and outcomes measures that LHDs / SHNs may use to assess whether there is a difference in outcomes for people with disability when compared to the general population. Refer to section 4.5 Monitoring.

- Access by people with disability to health services (including hospitals) — how many seen; in what services; for what reasons

- Adherence to adjustments to meet the needs of people with disability — including audits of identified support needs/adjustments required and the adjustments made (and type of adjustment)

- Rates and trends over time for emergency department presentations, including:
  - Pathways to and from emergency department
  - Rates of ambulatory care sensitive presentations to emergency department for people with disability, disaggregated by disability type.

- Rates and trends over time for admitted patient data for people with disability, disaggregated by disability type and admission facility, including
  - Admission pathways
  - Diagnoses
  - Potentially avoidable admissions
  - Length of stay
  - Separation mode
  - 30-day readmission rates.

- Rates and trends over time for ambulatory care for people with disability, disaggregated by disability type and ambulatory care setting.

- Error rates for people with and without disability, disaggregated by disability type.

- Use of restraints (with examination of the identified support needs and the support provided)

- Inclusion in chronic disease management and other out-of-hospital programs.

- Inclusion in preventative health programs.

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APPENDIX 2: OBTAINING CONSENT FROM A PERSON WHO LACKS CAPACITY

If a health care practitioner has doubts or concerns about whether their patient has capacity to make a particular decision, then a capacity assessment may be needed.

Capacity is specific to the particular decision that needs to be made. In some circumstances, the law sets out what tests must be met for capacity to make the decision, for example in relation to medical treatment. The NSW Capacity Toolkit produced by the NSW Department Justice aims to assist people in correctly identifying whether an individual has the capacity to make their own decisions. It provides information generally about capacity, capacity assessments and the various legal tests of capacity in NSW although it does not specifically address the assessment of capacity in regard to consent to medical treatment. For further information refer:

Where a patient lacks capacity to consent – substitute decision makers

In circumstances where a patient lacks capacity to consent to medical or dental treatment, there are legislative and policy frameworks to assist health professionals identify a person who can make decisions on behalf of that patient.

The Responsible Person

The Guardianship Act 1987 requires the health care practitioner to seek consent from the patient’s ‘Person Responsible’ if the patient is not capable of consenting to their own treatment.

A Person Responsible may not necessarily be the patient's next of kin or carer. Section 33A(4) of the Guardianship Act 1987 sets out a hierarchy of people who can be the Person Responsible.


Enduring Guardian

An adult can appoint an Enduring Guardian to make personal and lifestyle decisions on their behalf if they lose capacity to make such decisions. If a person appoints an Enduring Guardian with authority to make medical treatment decisions then they will be their Person Responsible.

In addition to the usual authority of a Person Responsible, an Enduring Guardian may also have the authority to make decisions about a range of personal/lifestyle areas on behalf of the appointee, not just medical treatment decisions. Find out more about how to appoint an Enduring Guardian at http://planningaheadtools.com.au/appoint-an-enduring-guardian/

For more information see the Guardianship Division of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal at http://www.ncat.nsw.gov.au/Pages/guardianship/guardianship.aspx

Mental Health Act 2007

Under the Mental Health Act 2007, a patient who is either mentally ill or mentally disordered will be admitted or treated in a declared mental health facility as a voluntary or detained patient (including assessable patients, involuntary patients, correctional patients and forensic patients). This status determines how decisions should be made about their mental and physical health treatments and who has the legal authority to make them.

The Mental Health Act establishes obligations for health care practitioners to inform carers of patients being treated under the Mental Health Act depending on the category of patient and the medical treatment involved.
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The two types of carers are designated carers and principal care providers.

A designated carer of a person (the patient) is defined in the Act to be:

(a) the guardian of the patient; or
(b) the parent of a patient who is a child (subject to any nomination by a patient referred to in paragraph (c)); or
(c) if the patient is over the age of 14 years and is not a person under guardianship, a person nominated by the patient as a designated carer under the Act under a nomination that is in force; or
(d) if the patient is not a patient referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) or there is no nomination in force as referred to in paragraph (c);
   a. the spouse of the patient, if any, if the relationship between the patient and the spouse is close and continuing; or
   b. any individual who is primarily responsible for providing support or care to the patient (other than wholly or substantially on a commercial basis); or
   c. a close friend or relative of the patient.

A person may nominate up to two persons to be their designated carers.

A principal care provider of a person is defined in the Act to be the individual who is primarily responsible for providing support or care to the person (other than wholly or substantially on a commercial basis).

A principal care provider may also be the designated carer of a person.

Voluntary patients without capacity under the Mental Health Act

If a voluntary patient lacks capacity to consent (due to mental illness or otherwise) and requires medical treatment, the substitute decision making provisions of the Guardianship Act will generally apply (see above).

Refer to NSW Health Policy Directive PD2005_406 - Consent to Medical Treatment – Patient Information.

Assessable patients, involuntary patients, correctional patients and forensic patients

The Mental Health Act provides for a substitute decision to be made for detained patients without capacity. The decision maker may vary according to the category of patient and the type of medical treatment required as well as the urgency of the need for such treatment. These decision makers include:

- The Secretary of NSW Health
- Senior Officers within NSW Health who have been designated as authorised medical officers by the Secretary of NSW Health
- The Mental Health Review Tribunal.

Refer to:
- The NSW Health Policy Directive Consent to Medical Treatment – Patient Information, PD2005_406


To download APPENDIX 3: IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST And

APPENDIX 4: GLOSSARY please refer to the following link:

Responding to Needs of People with Disability during Hospitalisation PD2017_001.pdf
NSW DRUG AND ALCOHOL CLINICAL SUPERVISION GUIDELINES (GL2006_009)

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1. Executive summary

This document provides comprehensive guidance in relation to the implementation of clinical supervision programs within NSW Drug and Alcohol (D&A) services. In summary, the key messages contained within the Guidelines are:

- Participation in clinical supervision is expected of all staff in D&A services who provide direct services to clients, including medical and nursing staff, psychologists, social workers, D&A workers and D&A counsellors.
- It is advisable for D&A services to clearly articulate their requirements, arrangements and expectations in relation to clinical supervision in policies and procedures and to make staff aware of these.
- Managers and clinical leaders can play an important role in engendering a culture of support and acceptance for clinical supervision within the organisation.
- The purpose of clinical supervision is to provide a tool for workforce development, a mechanism for quality assurance and clinical safety, and a means of providing professional support and debriefing to staff.
- Clinical supervision sessions involve the review and discussion of a worker’s clinical practice with a clinical supervisor. The content of such discussions remains confidential, except in circumstances of serious concern related to the ethical or professional conduct of the worker, or the safety of a worker or client.
- Clinical supervision is not line management and the two processes ought to remain separate. It is generally inadvisable for line managers to act as clinical supervisors for their direct reports. However it should be noted that this might not apply in medical settings where traditionally the Clinical Medical Director provides both clinical supervision and line management to junior medical colleagues.
- Supervisors, supervisees and managers all have specific roles and responsibilities within the clinical supervision process, and all parties need to be clear about these. Ideally, roles and responsibilities will be articulated in contractual arrangements or service agreements.
- Organisations can elect to utilise clinical supervisors who are either internal (employed by the organisation) or external. Both models are in operation and have merit.
- Clinical supervision can be offered as either individual (one supervisor with one worker) or group (one supervisor to a small number of staff). Both models are in operation and have merit, although there are particular issues that need to be taken into account in group supervision models.
Supervisors need to be trained in clinical supervision, ensure that they operate within relevant ethical and professional codes of conduct, and provide supervision in line with the requirements of the service. Ideally, they will also access supervision for their clinical supervision practice.

Clinical supervisors should be appointed through appropriate recruitment and selection processes and there are generally agreed criteria applicable to the selection of appropriate supervisors.

Effective clinical supervision relies on the development of a strong alliance between supervisors and supervisees, and ideally there should be a degree of choice for workers in selection of a supervisor.

Clinical supervision programs need to remain flexible to ensure that they meet the needs of workers at all stages of their development and career path.

It is important for policies and procedures to spell out the appropriate mechanisms whereby staff, managers and supervisors can address any concerns they have about clinical supervision.

Organisations need to ensure they put in place appropriate infrastructure to support, coordinate and manage clinical supervision programs.

Monitoring and evaluation of clinical supervision programs is considered important to ensure that they are meeting objectives, to identify the benefits, determine effectiveness and levels of staff satisfaction, and to report on uptake and compliance across the organisation. Any such mechanisms should ensure that the content of clinical supervision sessions remains appropriately confidential.

All of the above issues are discussed comprehensively within the Guidelines.

2. Introduction and background

These Guidelines have been developed for the NSW Health Drug and Alcohol sector. This section outlines the impetus for and process of their development, their intended application and the policy context within which they operate.

2.1 Impetus for the guidelines

A number of key factors created the impetus for the NSW Drug and Alcohol Council to commission the development of NSW D&A Clinical Supervision Guidelines. Considerations were:

• A growing recognition of the value and importance of clinical supervision, and a desire to provide support to its broader implementation.

• Some concerns that the extent to which workers in D&A services were able to access clinical supervision was somewhat ad-hoc across the state.

• The need for a greater level of understanding about the purpose and benefits of clinical supervision.

• A desire to develop greater consistency in the implementation of clinical supervision programs within D&A services.

2.2 Policy context

The broad policy context within which the Guidelines sit is twofold. Firstly the NSW D&A Policy context, which is outlined in the NSW Drug Treatment Services Plan 2000-2005 and which states that:

Clinical treatment should reflect good practice identified in the current research literature and documented in clinical outcome studies. Programs need to be flexible, individualised and based on the best available evidence of effectiveness.27
Clinical supervision provides one mechanism whereby services can facilitate ‘good practice’ on the part of individual clinicians, because through supervision, clinical practice is subject to a process of professional enquiry that aims to ensure that services to clients remain within treatment modalities that are known to be the most effective.

The second important policy context is that of clinical governance, which places responsibility for the quality of care jointly on organisations and individuals. Clinical governance is defined as:

\[
\text{The framework through which health organisations are accountable for continuously improving the quality of their services and safeguarding high standards of care by creating an environment in which excellence in clinical care will flourish.}\]

Ensuring the ongoing clinical competence of individual clinicians is a cornerstone of clinical governance, and this is formalised in NSW Health’s Framework for Managing the Quality of Health Services in NSW and the supporting document The Clinician’s Toolkit, which identifies the need for transparent and accountable processes to be in place, including clinical supervision for all clinicians. Clinical supervision is one of a number of activities that are designed to manage, enhance and monitor the delivery of clinical services, and active participation in clinical supervision is one way in which clinicians can exercise their individual responsibilities for clinical governance.

In addition to the broad policy context described above, the majority of NSW Health D&A services already provide a level of clinical supervision for staff, and this is generally governed by local policies and procedures. As its name suggests, this document provides guidance, is not a policy, and is not intended to replace or take precedence over local policies and procedures, but rather to further inform local policies, and provide a framework for good practice that D&A services can refer to.

2.3 Intended application

The Guidelines are generic and intended to be applicable across disciplines to all workers in D&A services who have responsibility for the provision of direct services to clients, either individually or in groups. This includes medical staff, nursing staff, psychologists and social workers, as well as positions that are classified more generally as either D&A worker, or counsellor. At the outset, some comments related to scope and limitations of their application are warranted:

- The Guidelines are unlikely to be entirely appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers in D&A services. The scope of their development did not allow for extensive consultation and consideration of issues related to Indigenous staff; however, the indications are that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers may well have a particular need for clinical supervision given the complexities of their role, and because the potential for personal impact is greater, due to their dual responsibilities to organisation and community. Whilst these Guidelines provide a basis for good practice, they would require further review and adjustment to be appropriate. Any such review should occur in collaboration, for example with the NSW Health Aboriginal Workforce Development Branch.

- As indicated above, the Guidelines are intended to apply to medical staff working within D&A services. However, it is acknowledged that health services have historically experienced a level of difficulty in engaging all medical staff in the full range of quality assurance mechanisms expected of them. It is therefore worth noting at the outset that it is the intention that the Guidelines apply to medical staff and to stress the importance of services developing agreed pathways for clinical supervision for this key professional group.

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29 Clinical Governance and Clinical Supervision; working together to ensure safe and accountable practice; A Briefing Paper. Butterworth and Woods, The School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting, University of Manchester 1999.
There are specific requirements for clinical supervision associated with some professions, for example the requirements for psychologists seeking registration. These Guidelines are not intended to replace any such requirements, which clearly need to be adhered to as required, and negotiated on a case-by-case basis between workers and services.

The Guidelines are applicable to staff employed within D&A services, and are not intended to apply to students on placement who are not employees. Whilst students may well have clinical and/or other supervision requirements associated with their placement, these are not referred to in this document.

The intent of the Guidelines is to allow for flexibility. They are not prescriptive, but rather make suggestions about what constitutes good practice. Whilst the evidence related to clinical supervision is somewhat limited, there are themes in the literature about what is commonly considered to be sound or best practice, much of which is already reflected in some D&A clinical supervision programs. There is no single recommended model of clinical supervision, and there is a need for services to have flexibility to implement programs and processes appropriate to the local context, and within the available resources. The Guidelines are intended to provide a framework for, and support to local operations, and to encourage a degree of consistency across the state. In addition, the recent amalgamation of Area Health Services (AHSs) will potentially require the review of two existing approaches to clinical supervision and agreement about one Area-wide approach. It is anticipated that this document may assist with any such deliberations.

2.4 Development process

In June 2005 the CDA contracted an external consultant (Jacq Hackett Consulting) to develop the Guidelines and established an Advisory Group to provide oversight to the process. Membership of the Advisory Group is at Appendix 1. During the same timeframe, a related consultancy was commissioned for the development and delivery of Clinical Supervision Training for senior clinicians within NSW Health Drug and Alcohol Services. This project was undertaken by Access Macquarie Ltd, and work undertaken through this project also informed the development of the Guidelines.

Key steps in the development process were as follows:
• A review of current processes and policies for clinical supervision within D&A Services across the state.
• Broad consultation with stakeholders from AHSs including D&A Directors, Service Managers, clinicians, D&A workers, MERIT staff and internal and external providers of clinical supervision. In addition interviews were undertaken with staff from Justice Health, Odyssey House, NADA (Network of Alcohol and Drug Agencies), the CDA, the Centre for Aboriginal Health, Aboriginal Workforce Development Branch, NCETA (National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction), Relationships Australia and with the co-chairs of the D&A Nursing Advisory Committee and the D&A Allied Health Workers Advisory Committee.
• Review of findings from work undertaken by Access Macquarie Ltd as part of their training needs analysis, including an email survey of NSW D&A workers and a series of consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander D&A workers.
• A desktop review of relevant documentation and literature.
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- The development of a Discussion Paper that was distributed to all D&A Directors for comment and feedback.
- The development of Draft Guidelines, taking account of feedback from the Discussion Paper, also distributed to D&A Directors for comment and feedback.
- The development of Final Guidelines incorporating feedback on the Draft.
- Close collaboration and consultation with the Advisory Group at all key stages of the project.

3. Definition and purpose of Clinical Supervision

This section provides a working definition of clinical supervision as it applies throughout these Guidelines. It also outlines the common benefits of clinical supervision from the perspective of organisations and staff.

3.1 What is Clinical Supervision?

Agreeing a definition is never easy, and indeed the literature offers an extensive range of definitions for the term clinical supervision. In addition, the views of workers in the field about the meaning of clinical supervision are somewhat variable. However, there are some common themes, and three key purposes for clinical supervision emerge, it is a:

- **Tool for workforce development** - that is, through discussion of research findings and reflection on current practices, it provides an opportunity for the development of the worker’s professional identity, skills and knowledge, and awareness of the impact of personal attitudes and issues on clients.

- **Mechanism for quality assurance and clinical safety** - that is, it is part of a suite of activities designed to ensure that services to clients are appropriate, safe and effective, and to identify and address any concerns or breaches in a constructive manner, in an appropriately formal, but confidential setting.

- **Means of providing professional support and debriefing** - workers reportedly benefit from a formal forum where they can debrief aspects of their work and gain support to manage any personal impact. This can become even more necessary in the Drug and Alcohol field where the work can be particularly complex and demanding.

There is no single definition of clinical supervision that is more correct than any other, and D&A service policies already include definitions that are considered appropriate for the local context. Nonetheless it is important to include a definition in these Guidelines in order to engender a shared sense of meaning.

For the purposes of these Guidelines, clinical supervision is defined as:

_A formal and ongoing arrangement between one worker and a (generally) more experienced practitioner whereby the clinical practice of the worker is reviewed and discussed in confidence for the purposes of:_

- Further developing the worker’s professional identity and clinical practice skills and knowledge.
- Ensuring workers are operating within relevant clinical, organisational, ethical and professional boundaries.
- Monitoring and supporting the worker’s wellbeing and coping capacity in relation to their work._
3.2 Benefits of Clinical Supervision

As discussed earlier, the evidence based knowledge about the benefits of clinical supervision is somewhat limited, and comprehensive, reliable evaluation studies have yet to be undertaken in the field. Notwithstanding these limitations, the available evidence does suggest that clinical supervision:

- Is commonly valued by managers and practitioners.
- Can facilitate the acquisition of complex clinical skills.
- Is associated with higher levels of job satisfaction or morale, where it is perceived to be of high quality.
- Can support staff retention.

There is a wealth of anecdotal knowledge and theorising in the literature and resources pertaining to clinical supervision, and findings from these, and from the consultations held within NSW commonly suggest that the following benefits are likely:

For the organisation/service:
- It contributes to workforce development.
- It contributes to quality assurance and to maintaining clinical safety.
- It provides a mechanism for ensuring that professional boundaries and codes of ethics are being complied with in the delivery of services to clients.
- It ensures that individual workers are operating within agreed treatment modalities.
- It provides a level of assurance that new or inexperienced workers are receiving appropriate support, learning and guidance in developing their role.
- It provides a level of assurance that more experienced staff are being exposed to new ideas, reflecting on their current practices, and where appropriate, are being challenged and stretched in relation to their clinical practice.

For workers receiving clinical supervision:
- It provides a mechanism for support and debrief, and for managing workplace stress.
- It provides an opportunity for coaching and professional guidance, for enhancing skills, identifying new ways of working with clients, and identifying areas of further skill development.
- It provides a confidential mechanism through which they can reflect on and raise issues related to their practice.
- It can validate their work clinical skills and contribute to increasing confidence in their work with clients.
- It can prevent workers operating outside appropriate boundaries with clients.
- It can contribute to increased job satisfaction, reduced stress and prevention of burnout.

4. Key elements of Clinical Supervision

This section helps further clarify what we mean by clinical supervision by outlining its common characteristics, the key parties involved and the common structure and processes utilised in its implementation.
4.1 Common characteristics of Clinical Supervision

As outlined earlier, clinical supervision sits within an overall framework of clinical governance and as such, is one of a number of mechanisms that are put in place to facilitate clinical safety, and which workers are expected to participate in. Other examples include clinical case review meetings, clinical audits, mandatory training and critical incident debriefings. Whilst clinical supervision is not commonly mandated within NSW Health services, there is nonetheless an expectation that it will be organised and supported by management and that workers will participate.

Clinical supervision is a formal organisational arrangement, commonly governed by policies and/or procedures that set out its purpose, the administrative arrangements, and the expectations and responsibilities of the key parties. Whilst the content of clinical supervision sessions remains largely confidential, and can be tailored to the needs of individual workers, it is not a private arrangement. Rather, it is conducted as part and parcel of workplace activities, and in line with the needs and requirements of the organisation. As such, clinical supervision must reflect the goals of the organisation and support the agreed/endorsed organisational approaches and therapeutic modalities.

Clinical supervision sessions are formalised, have an agreed purpose, work towards outcomes and entail an element of rigour. It is expected that all three primary purposes of clinical supervision are addressed, namely issues relevant to clinical safety, skill and knowledge development, and support and debrief.

There are three parties involved in clinical supervision arrangements – the supervisee (worker), the supervisor and the organisation (manager). Whilst only the worker and supervisor actually participate in clinical supervision sessions, the organisation has a clear role in organising, managing and supporting the clinical supervision program. More information about the roles and responsibilities of the three parties can be found in section 5.

Clinical supervision is appropriate regardless of a staff member’s level of experience or their professional background. All staff can benefit from clinical supervision and it is appropriate for services to expect participation from all workers that fall within the parameters of their local policy.

Clinical supervision needs to be flexible to ensure it meets the needs of workers at all stages of their development. The supervision requirements of a novice worker are likely to be very different from that of a highly experienced worker, and this requires flexibility within the clinical supervision program to ensure workers at all levels of experience benefit.

The primary focus is the clinical practice of the worker. Whilst discussion of clients and their case management is an integral part of the supervision process, this is principally for the purpose of providing a tool for reviewing and discussing the clinical practice of the supervisee. The focus remains on developing the worker’s conceptualisations, skills and knowledge, rather than on providing indirect treatment of the client.

Effective clinical supervision relies on the development of a strong alliance between supervisors and supervisees. A successful alliance will involve the development of a bond between the two parties, the establishment of clear goals for the clinical supervision process, and an agreed set of tasks to achieve the goals.

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31 A small number of D&A service policies do state that participation in clinical supervision is mandatory for workers.
Ideally, there will be an element of choice on the part of the supervisee in selecting an appropriate supervisor. Clearly, achieving a ‘match’ between supervisee and supervisor is an important factor in ensuring a strong supervisory alliance, and having the flexibility for some negotiation on the part of the supervisee is likely to assist in achieving this. Notwithstanding this ideal, it is acknowledged that this may not always be possible, and there is a need for services to remain pragmatic in relation to this issue.

The content of clinical supervision is confidential, except in circumstances of serious concern related to the ethical or professional conduct of the worker, or the safety of a client. The intent is to allow for frank and open discussion about clinical practice, in a safe environment. Further discussion of confidentiality is discussed in section 6.

Clinical supervision is not line management and the two processes should remain separate. Whilst managers certainly have responsibilities in the clinical supervision program (see section 5.3), the purpose of clinical supervision is distinct from that of line management supervision. Overall clinical accountability for services to clients is an organisational and line management responsibility, whereas clinical supervisors are responsible for addressing only those matters raised within clinical supervision sessions, and only within the agreed parameters outlined in the clinical supervision policy.

It is strongly recommended that line managers do not also provide clinical supervision to staff that report directly to them. Whilst it is acknowledged that there are exceptional circumstances where this cannot be avoided, it should be considered a last resort, and will require careful attention to clear boundaries to ensure an appropriate separation of the two roles, and a high degree of trust and mutual respect between the two parties.

4.2 Structure of Clinical Supervision sessions

What is outlined here are the common structures and processes involved in clinical supervision. These are not set in concrete, are offered as a guide, and there is scope for D&A services to have some flexibility around local arrangements.

Clinical supervision is organised as individual sessions or appointments, commonly of one hour’s duration and held monthly. They involve a worker (or group of workers) and a supervisor working together in private and without interruption.

For novice workers or those with limited experience, a high degree of structure is common and the role of the supervisor tends to be somewhat directive, involving a high degree of guidance and modelling. For highly experienced workers, clinical supervision sessions are likely to have less need of such structure, and there is scope for more supervisee-led discussion and identification of relevant issues.

In newly establishing clinical supervision arrangements there is commonly a process at the outset whereby the goals of the supervisee are agreed, the boundaries of confidentiality are made clear, and there is discussion and agreement about how the two parties will work together. Commonly, such agreements are formalised in a written contract or agreement, and an example of a supervisor/supervisee agreement can be found at Appendix 3.
Clinical supervision sessions utilise a range of processes to achieve their agreed purpose. As outlined earlier, the focus of sessions is always on the role and clinical practice of the supervisee, and it is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that sessions are appropriately structured to engage the supervisee in discussion, reflection and appropriate disclosure. The most common method of generating discussion and identifying the pertinent issues is through case presentation or review, in which a worker presents a case they are currently working on, commonly utilising an agreed presentation format, and requiring a degree of preparation on the part of the supervisee prior to the clinical supervision session. Less common, but important processes used in clinical supervision sessions are direct supervisor observation of a worker with a client, video or audio recording of a client intervention, and review of case notes and documentation.

Regardless of what method is used, it is the intention of clinical supervision sessions to generate discussion and reflection on a broad range of issues directly related to clinical practice, including but not limited to:

- The methods and modalities of clinical practice.
- Concerns the worker has in relation to any aspect of a case or client.
- Difficulties or lack of progress with a client.
- Awareness of the potential impact of the worker’s personal values on their clinical practice.
- Identifying any negative impact on the worker from a case they are managing.
- Issues related to establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries with clients.
- Ethical and professional practice, and compliance with codes of conduct.
- Professional identity and role development.
- Skill and knowledge development.
- Issues related to workload management, team functioning and career development.

5. Roles and responsibilities

This section provides guidance about the roles and responsibilities of the three key parties involved in clinical supervision - supervisors, supervisees and managers. It also outlines the responsibilities of all three in upholding the ethical and professional codes of conduct that are applicable in the clinical supervision process.

5.1 Supervisors

The common responsibilities of supervisors are to:

- Ensure they are clear about the organisational goals, the supported treatment modalities of the D&A Service, and any relevant codes of conduct or ethical standards applicable to those they are supervising. Ensure that their supervision practice is in line with all of the above.
- Ensure that supervisees are clear at the outset about the purpose of supervision, what is expected of them, the role of the supervisor, the parameters of confidentiality, and the appropriate mechanisms for addressing any difficulties or concerns about the clinical supervision process.
- Work with supervisees to agree on goals for supervision sessions, and put in place processes for regular review of progress.
- Enter into any required formal contractual arrangements in relation to the provision of clinical supervision services, including with the organisation and with individual supervisees. Examples of contracts between services and supervisors can be found at Appendices 4 and 5.
- Facilitate a safe and trusting environment for clinical supervision sessions.
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- Ensure that clinical supervision sessions have structure, and work toward achievements in all three of the purpose areas identified earlier. This will require the initiation of processes whereby the supervisee can review and reflect on their clinical practice, identify areas of concern, explore new ways of working, identify development needs, and debrief issues of concern.
- Validate good practice and provide constructive feedback where appropriate.
- Challenge practice that is inappropriate, or which does not fit with the agreed treatment modalities of the Service, and facilitate the development of sound clinical skills and ethical practice.
- Work within the agreed boundaries of confidentiality and take responsibility for reporting any serious issues to line managers, and for informing supervisees when such a circumstance arises.
- Share their own knowledge, experience and skills with supervisees.
- Take responsibility for ensuring they provide clinical supervision only within the limits of their expertise.
- Participate in any agreed monitoring or reporting mechanisms related to the provision of clinical supervision.
- Contribute to evaluation of clinical supervision programs as required by the D&A service.
- For externally contracted supervisors, where general concerns arise in relation their clinical supervision (that is, not concerns related to individual supervisees) take steps to address these issues with the appropriate manager, not with supervisees. Examples of such concerns include issues related to the agreed clinical modalities or work practices of the service, or the contractual arrangements. In the event that an external supervisor considers their own professional views are inconsistent with those of the organisation, or in the event of any conflict of interest, take appropriate steps to terminate the contract.

5.2 Supervisees

In reality, workers have a range of different values and attitudes towards the idea of clinical supervision, along the spectrum from positive to negative, often related to their professional background, or their previous experience of clinical supervision. This inevitably results in some workers being willing, responsive participants, and others being reluctant or even resistant. Notwithstanding this, participation in clinical supervision is expected of all workers in D&A services and they also have responsibilities related to this.

The common responsibilities of supervisees include:
- Negotiate arrangements for clinical supervision, in line with organisational polices or procedures, and with line management approval.
- Ensure regular attendance as agreed with the organisation, and in line with local policies.
- Work with the supervisor to agree the goals of clinical supervision, and agree ways of working together.
- Undertake an appropriate level of preparation for clinical supervision sessions, for example preparation of case review material and completion of any agreed homework.
- Actively participate in all sessions.
- Take action in relation to any development needs identified through clinical supervision.
- Maintain any records related to clinical supervision sessions as set out in local policies or procedures.
- Resolve any difficulties or concerns with supervision through appropriate processes, for example in the first instance by discussing the matter with the supervisor, and if the matter remains unresolved, taking it up with the line manager and/or appropriate others within the service. In circumstances in which concerns have not been resolved through these processes, workers should refer to the applicable grievance or complaints procedure.
Contribute to evaluation of clinical supervision programs as required by the D&A service. For group supervision, comply with the parameters of confidentiality that are agreed by the group.

5.3 Managers

Because clinical supervision is a formal organisational arrangement, managers play a key role in its implementation. The common responsibilities of managers include:

- Ensure staff are aware of the D&A service’s policy and procedures related to clinical supervision, and the expectations of their participation.
- Ensure that all relevant staff can access clinical supervision. This includes making any changes in the workplace required to enable staff to attend, for example rostering arrangements, making transport available, establishing group supervision arrangements, making meeting rooms available etc.
- Where an external supervision model is in operation, recruit and arrange contracts with appropriate clinical supervisors and ensure attention to key issues such as insurance requirements and criminal record checks. Where internal supervision models operate, ensure compliance with any formal agreements.
- Ensure clinical supervisors are appropriately briefed. This will be particularly important for external supervisors to ensure they are oriented to the requirements of the D&A service, including the supported treatment modalities and any relevant codes of ethics or conduct. It may also be helpful for supervisors to be informed about any related policies and procedures, for example in relation to managing suicide risk, violent or intoxicated clients, guidelines for home visiting etc. Managers need to also keep supervisors informed of any changes in policies or treatment practices in a timely manner.
- Where an internal supervision model is in operation, ensure that staff are made aware of the processes for engaging a supervisor and undertake any necessary approval processes as prescribed in local policies/procedures.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that workers have an element of choice in selection of a clinical supervisor.
- Comply with any organisational reporting requirements in relation to clinical supervision, for example reporting attendance numbers and frequency, and associated costs and resources.
- Participate in and/or take responsibility for regular review and evaluation of clinical supervision programs.
- Take reasonable steps to resolve any concerns raised by supervisees in relation to their clinical supervision.

5.4 Ethical guidelines and codes of conduct

Managers, supervisees and supervisors all need to be aware of their common responsibilities in ensuring compliance with relevant codes of conduct, ethics and professional practice. Clinical supervision is one mechanism through which breaches of such codes can be identified, and concerns about inappropriate practice can be identified and addressed early, potentially preventing future breaches. (For example addressing the early signs of inappropriate boundaries with clients). What constitutes appropriate and sound clinical practice is outlined within a number of key documents, some of which apply to all workers, and some of which apply to workers within specific professions.
All workers must comply with the following:

- Mandatory reporting requirements under the *Children and Young Persons Care and Protection Act*, which requires them to report suspicion that a child is at risk of harm, as defined in the Act and which is clearly outlined in the NSW Health Frontline Procedures for the Protection of Children and Young People.

- The legal obligations outlined within the NSW Policy for Identifying and Responding to Domestic Violence; and which outline the obligations of AHSs to ensure appropriate response to individuals at risk of, or having experienced domestic violence across health settings.

- Their local Area Health Service Code of Conduct. Whilst there may be some variations in such Codes of Conduct, commonly they provide guidance about appropriate conduct in relation to conflicts of interest, the acceptance of gifts or benefits, bribery and corrupt conduct, the development of inappropriate personal relationships with clients (including social, sexual or financial relationships), acting with honesty and integrity, harassment and bullying and professional standards of behaviour.

Supervisors need to be familiar with all of the above documents and have a sound understanding of compliance as it relates directly to the provision of services within the D&A setting. Managers need to ensure that supervisors are provided with copies of all relevant documents.

In addition to the above requirements, there are also specific professional and ethical codes that apply to some individual professions, and supervisors also need to be aware of which of these additional codes apply to their supervisees. In summary, these codes are:

- The NSW Medical Board Code of Professional Conduct.
- Code of Ethics for Nurses in Australia (Developed under the auspices of Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council, Royal College of Nursing, Australia, and the Australian Nursing Federation).
- Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses in Australia (Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council).
- Australian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics.
- NSW Psychologists Registration Board Code of Professional Conduct.
- The Australian Psychological Society Code of Ethics.
- Australian Counselling Association Code of Conduct.

Further information related to ethical and professional codes of conduct, including web references to access the complete documents as listed above can be found at Appendix 2.

Supervisors also need to ensure that their own clinical supervision practices remain within ethical and professional parameters, and to ensure they take appropriate steps to protect themselves, the supervisee and the organisation, for example by ensuring that:

- Their clinical supervision practice remains within their level of competence and capabilities.
- They are appropriately trained to provide supervision.
- They operate with clear contractual arrangements in relation to their role and responsibilities with the organisation, and in relation to their work with supervisees.
- They operate within the agreed parameters of confidentiality.
- They do not develop inappropriate boundaries or relationships with supervisees.
6. Confidentiality

Issues related to the confidentiality of clinical supervision can be somewhat contentious. On the one hand there is a need to ensure the confidentiality of individual sessions in order to provide a safe and constructive learning environment, and to encourage a sufficient level of disclosure. On the other, given the role of clinical supervision as a mechanism for clinical quality and safety, there is a need to ensure that any sufficiently serious issues related to clinical practice are dealt with appropriately and transparently. To balance these two legitimate concerns, the parameters of confidentiality need to be clear, documented, and communicated to all participating parties.

These Guidelines propose that to ensure an appropriate measure of accountability for clinical supervision, confidentiality is ensured except in circumstances where there is:
- A breach of the code of conduct of the organisation.
- A breach of professional code of ethics.
- A breach of duty of care.
- Serious concern about the safety of the worker or a client.
- Issues identified that are subject to mandatory reporting requirements.

Adherence to these parameters requires that supervisors are sufficiently clear about the particular role of the worker, and are cognisant of the relevant codes of ethics, professional conduct, duty of care and mandatory reporting requirements.

In any of the circumstances outlined above, it is the responsibility of the clinical supervisor to inform the worker of their concerns and of the need to inform the line manager. Clinical supervisors need to take such concerns to managers as soon as is practical once they are identified.

7. Operational approaches to Clinical Supervision

This section of the Guidelines provides information about internal and external supervision approaches to clinical supervision, and about individual and group supervision approaches. All these approaches are appropriate and have merit, and D&A services commonly have to make decisions about which models to implement. The following information is intended to be of assistance to services in their decision-making, and to facilitate sound practice, whichever approach is in place.

7.1 Internal Clinical Supervision

In this approach to clinical supervision, supervisors are employees of the organisation, and take on clinical supervision as an adjunct to their primary role. This model is commonly selected by services because:
- The majority of resources required to provide clinical supervision can be found internally within the organisation, and therefore do not incur additional costs.
- It utilises and values existing expertise and experience.
- It can provide an opportunity for some staff to extend their role, skills and experience through taking on a clinical supervision role.
- There can be benefits where internal clinical supervisors have a greater understanding about the needs of the organisation, for example, the agreed treatment modalities, the working environment, and the specific complexities of the client group.
- It is often perceived to be more straightforward to organise and administer.
There are many different operational models of internal clinical supervision in place in D&A services, reportedly with varying degrees of success. Ideally, internal models of clinical supervision will take account of the following factors, which are considered to represent good or sound practice, and which will likely assist in ensuring the effectiveness of the clinical supervision program.32

**Appropriate and transparent processes for recruitment and selection of clinical supervisors.** Whilst more comprehensive guidance can be found in relation to this in section 8.2, it is important to stress that the need for such processes is a critical, yet sometimes overlooked factor in the implementation of programs that utilise internal supervisors. Whereas formal processes for recruitment and selection of external supervisions is common, they tend to be less rigorous for internal supervisors, and yet are equally important.

**The provision of training for selected supervisors** in the clinical supervision role. Ideally, the training will be conducted by an external individual or organisation with relevant expertise, with sufficient briefing about the particular organisational issues/requirements.

**The use of contracts or service agreements** to govern the clinical supervision work of staff that clearly outlines the expectations and parameters of the role. Again, this can tend to be overlooked when utilising internal clinical supervisors, when in fact, there is potentially a heightened need for transparency about the role, function and expectations.

**The establishment of a pool of clinical supervisors from which workers can choose.** Offering an element of choice on the part of the worker in selecting a clinical supervisor is always ideal; however, where internal clinical supervisors are utilised this becomes somewhat of an imperative. Internal supervisors inevitably have less objectivity than external supervisors, and the reality of organisations is that there is generally history and baggage between some staff. The literature confirms the importance of ‘match’ between supervisor and supervisee if the process is to be effective, and when using internal arrangements, choice is particularly important.

**The establishment of protocols for reaching agreement between a worker and a clinical supervisor to work together.** Workers require more than a list of names if they are to make an informed choice in relation to selecting a clinical supervisor. Clinical supervisors need to feel confident that they can work effectively with their supervisee, and also have an element of choice and decision-making. Suggested protocols include:

- Ready availability of relevant written information about the clinical supervisors in the organisational pool. For example information about their background, qualifications and experience, their particular strengths and areas of interest, and information about their preferred counselling or treatment modalities.
- A meeting to undertake a process of ‘mutual interview’ between worker and clinical supervisor to assess expectations and ‘fit’, prior to committing to any ongoing arrangements.
- Early review of the appropriateness of the arrangement and an understanding of ‘no blame’ or recourse if there is agreement to terminate.

**The need to ensure that the supervisors fully understand the boundaries of confidentiality** of clinical supervision sessions, and are provided with documentation that outlines the ethical and professional codes of conduct applicable to staff they will be supervising.

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32 Some of the factors outlined are also applicable for external supervision models, and whilst efforts are made to minimise repetition in these Guidelines, some repetition is unavoidable.
The establishment of mechanisms for accountability for internal clinical supervisors to ensure that their supervision practice remains sound over the longer term, and in line with the requirements of the organisation. Whilst section 8 provides further guidance about organisational issues, what is being stressed here is the need for mandatory participation on the part of internal clinical supervisors in a range of activities designed to bring a level of accountability to the clinical supervision program. For example, participation in supervision of their clinical supervision work, preferably from an external practitioner, attendance at clinical supervision network meetings, participation in ongoing training and development opportunities.

The use of formal written agreements between internal supervisors and supervisees, for example to agree the goals of supervision, the frequency and duration, the agreed processes and ways of working together. This is considered particularly important for novice or inexperienced workers and supervisors.

Flexibility to ensure that highly experienced senior staff have access to appropriate clinical supervision, which may mean offering exemption from the internal model. It is well acknowledged in the literature that accessing appropriate clinical supervision is generally more difficult for those staff with extensive experience, or who are considered to be the most senior staff within a service. Ideally, clinical supervision is provided by a more senior practitioner, and this may only be possible by going externally. Alternatively, peer supervision may be an appropriate option, and this may also require flexibility for this to be sought externally.

7.2 External Clinical Supervision

In this approach supervisors are external to the organisation and are contracted to provide an agreed level of clinical supervision services. Commonly in D&A services external clinical supervisors are registered clinical psychologists, and are paid on an hourly basis in line with the standard professional rate. This model is commonly selected by services because:

• It provides an opportunity to recruit from a broader field and potentially a greater capacity to be selective.
• External people can bring external ideas, views and perspectives, which are potentially helpful to the organisation.
• Contractual arrangements are required, and so there is generally a greater acceptance that the role, responsibilities, reporting requirements and circumstances under which the services will be terminated can be clearly stipulated (than with internal arrangements).
• External supervisors are more likely to bring a lack of bias or subjectivity, which is beneficial to the supervision process.
• There is potential for a more open and honest supervisory process than with some internal arrangements because staff are more confident about the confidential nature of the relationship and do not have to interact with the supervisor in other settings.
• Internal staff time, training and support is not required (for supervisors).

Ideally, external models of clinical supervision will take account of the following factors:

Appropriate and transparent processes for recruitment and selection of clinical supervisors. (See section 8.2.) In addition, recruitment processes will need to ensure that a criminal record check is undertaken.

The need to ensure that external clinical supervisors are fully cognisant of relevant organisational issues, for example:
The goals, priorities and agreed treatment modalities.
- Organisational structure.
- The role and responsibilities of staff they will be supervising.
- Intake and assessment procedures.
- Weekly operational structure.

The need to ensure that external supervisors fully understand the boundaries of confidentiality of clinical supervision sessions, and are provided with documentation that outlines the ethical and professional codes of conduct applicable to staff they will be supervising.

Appropriate briefing and orientation of external supervisors by managers, and regular monitoring and review of services provided.

The selection of supervisors whose professional values are sufficiently congruent with those required by the organisation. In particular it will be important to select supervisors who are able to support harm minimisation approaches common to the provision of treatment services within the NSW Health D&A environment.

Contractual arrangements are put in place that clearly specify all aspects of the clinical supervision arrangement, for example the responsibilities of the clinical supervisor, requirements for any documentation related to clinical supervision sessions, payment, term of the contract, reporting requirements.

**7.3 Individual and Group Supervision**

Another key consideration for D&A services is whether to provide group or individual supervision. Both are common and have merit. As it implies, individual clinical supervision is a one-to-one process between a clinical supervisor and an individual worker. In group supervision a number of workers get together with one clinical supervisor. Many D&A services opt for a group supervision approach primarily because of its cost effectiveness, however there are other benefits, including:

- It can be a less threatening approach for some people compared to individual clinical supervision.
- It can contribute to team building and cohesiveness.
- It can draw on the expertise and knowledge of other group members, which can be extremely valuable.

Not surprisingly, individual clinical supervision tends to be the more straightforward approach, and does have some advantages over group supervision, for example:

- It involves building one trusting relationship.
- Confidentiality can be more easily guaranteed.
- Workers tend to have a greater level of self-disclosure that can lead to increased insight.
- There is more time available to focus on each individual worker.

The supervisory role is more easily managed with one supervisee.

There is a greater capacity to find a good match between supervisor and supervisee.
Notwithstanding the above, group supervision is a common approach within D&A services currently, and because it can be less straightforward, and there are additional factors that need to be considered, this section provides some guidance in relation to this.

**Group clinical supervision** (as defined within these Guidelines) involves a clinical supervisor. This may seem an obvious point to make, however, peer supervision in groups does occur in health settings, and these Guidelines seek to draw a distinction between that and the approach intended here, where there is a designated role of supervisor, with responsibilities as outlined earlier in section 5.1.

If group supervision is to be effective, clinical supervisors must have skills and experience in facilitating groups. Generally, clinical supervision training does not include training in group work, and such expertise is usually developed over time through hands on experience working with groups. In selecting supervisors for group supervision, group work skills and experience need to be added to the essential selection criteria.

**As a general rule, small is better in terms of numbers.** Given the purpose of clinical supervision (to develop skills and knowledge, provide professional support and facilitate sound clinical practice) it is clear that there are limitations to how effective a group setting can be in achieving this if the numbers are high. As a general rule, three or four is considered ideal.

It will be helpful to have more than one clinical supervisor operating group supervision within the organisation, thereby allowing workers some element of choice. The importance of match has been referred to previously, and the issue of choice is obviously more difficult to achieve with group supervision; however, limited choice is preferable to none.

It is important to pay attention to the membership mix when establishing group supervision arrangements. The sessions need to offer all members an opportunity for learning and growth, and provide a safe and trusting environment in which disclosure and honesty are the norm. To achieve this, it is important that some planning takes place at the outset, rather than having groups either selected at random or completely self selected. Useful considerations are having workers who are at a similar level of experience and skill, similar professional backgrounds, and avoiding situations in which there are power differentials between members, for example by including a worker and their team leader in the same group. Inevitably in organisations there are also situations where negative history between workers make it inappropriate to have them join the same group, and this may require some sensitive management.

**Discipline specific and multidisciplinary groups can both be effective.** There are mixed views in the field about this issue, and a tendency for some workers to believe that they should only be in groups with others from the same profession. However, there is no evidence to support this approach exclusively and both models are in use and can work well.

**There are some inevitable limitations to group approaches to clinical supervision** compared with individual supervision. They are outlined below not to promote one approach in favour of another, but rather to provide useful additional information for consideration in implementation. Common limitations are:

- Some people are not sufficiently comfortable in a group setting to openly discuss and explore issues related to their work practices, or to debrief difficult issues. Where this is the case, those workers can tend to be low contributors, or can be so uncomfortable as to have a generally negative experience of clinical supervision (which essentially renders it ineffective).
- It can be more difficult to address issues or problems related to team functioning, which is a legitimate issue that clinical supervision can be helpful in addressing. Without skilled facilitation there can be a tendency for sessions to become simply a forum for complaints.
There are limitations in the extent to which workers are likely to disclose in relation to certain issues because they are with colleagues. In reality, group sessions cannot offer the same level of confidentiality as individual sessions, and this will impact on the extent to which workers are prepared to disclose. In turn, this can limit the depth of insight and learning that can occur as a result.

Where primarily group supervision is offered, it may be helpful for services to have the flexibility or discretion to offer individual supervision sessions to staff on an as needs basis, for example for a limited number of sessions if things have been particularly difficult or stressful for a worker, if a worker is just so uncomfortable with group settings that it is simply not helpful to require them to attend, or for very senior workers, for whom it would be difficult to have their needs met in a group with less experienced workers.

8. Organisational considerations

8.1 Developing a supportive environment

It is important for services to consider what strategies might be needed to engender a culture of support for clinical supervision. Commonly in D&A services the values of workers in relation to the concept of clinical supervision are variable, as is their degree of support for it. In addition, workers have varied experiences of clinical supervision, often related to their professional background. For example:

- Psychologists and social workers have generally participated in clinical supervision from the outset of their training and tend to value it highly.
- There is less consistency in the understanding and experiences of nurses in relation to clinical supervision, and their training has often included a quite different type of supervision focused on competency development. Where nurses have not accessed clinical supervision (as defined in these Guidelines) they can be wary or suspicious of it.
- Workers who do not have tertiary or formal qualifications can have limited understanding of, or experience in, clinical supervision and can also be wary or suspicious.
- There are wide variations in the extent to which medical staff have participated in clinical supervision, and historically there can be a measure of resistance from some individual clinicians to participation in such activities.
- Across all professional groups there are workers who believe that they do not need clinical supervision, usually because they consider themselves to be sufficiently experienced. There are also workers who do not want to participate due to a fear of having to change, or of being exposed as inadequate.

The comments above are clearly generalised, and are not intended to reflect negatively on any professional group or individual. Rather they are highlighted because in being aware of such differences, D&A services can consider how they might best work with these factors in building a climate of support for their clinical supervision program, increase staffs’ understanding about its purpose and benefits, and increase compliance in line with the service’s expectations of staff participation.

How clinical supervision is marketed or introduced to staff can be critical to the success of its uptake. Line managers and clinical leaders can play an important role in building support, and it is likely that where people in such positions present a positive and encouraging attitude, this will have a constructive effect. Conversely in organisations where managers and clinical leaders are not supportive, and make their views known either overtly or covertly, this can have a negative impact on the climate of support for and participation in clinical supervision.
In particular it is considered important for managers and clinical leaders to:

- Provide staff with clear information about what supervision is and take the necessary time to introduce the concept, and allow for discussion of their queries, concerns or issues.
- Be clear about what clinical supervision isn’t; make sure that staff understand that it is not a line management function, that it is not an opportunity simply to find fault with their work, and that it is not simply a mechanism for debriefing.
- Make sure that staff are provided with clear information about the boundaries of confidentiality that apply to supervision sessions.
- Highlight the benefits of supervision for staff, rather than simply focusing on its role in clinical quality. Staff should be made aware that it is a process put in place for their benefit and gain, for example to ensure they have an appropriate level of professional support for their work and to assist them in developing their clinical skills and expanding their experiences.
- Actively demonstrate their support for clinical supervision, for example by participating in their own clinical supervision, and through enabling staff to participate by arranging rostering to accommodate it, and assisting in their selection of clinical supervisors.

8.2 Recruitment and selection of supervisors

The success of clinical supervision is heavily dependent on having competent, appropriate and effective supervisors, and ensuring there are appropriate recruitment and selection processes in place for both internal and external supervisors is a key organisational consideration. There is a high level of constancy in the literature about appropriate criteria for the selection of supervisors. These are outlined below and are recommended as a basis for selection processes within D&A services.

Clinical supervisors will ideally have:

- Relevant formal qualifications.
- Extensive clinical experience, specifically a breadth of counselling and/or therapy experience, particularly with complex clients and behavioural therapies. In general it is considered ideal for the supervisor to have more experience than the supervisee, although this is obviously not possible for some very senior staff, for whom peer supervision is appropriate.
- A clear understanding of the role and function of clinical supervision.
- A demonstrated history of continued professional development and supervision of their own clinical supervision practices.
- A demonstrated interest in and ability to enhance the skills and abilities of others, particularly to provide constructive feedback and to ensure a safe environment for disclosure and challenge.
- Held in high respect within their field or specialty.
- An understanding of and respect for the particular role of the supervisee.
- If providing group supervision, supervisors need demonstrated facilitation, group work and mediation skills.
- The ability to remain impartial and balanced in their views.
- An empathetic and non-judgemental approach.
- An intellectual interest in their professional arena.
- If providing supervision to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers, they must have demonstrated cultural awareness, and previous experience working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers.

Selection processes for supervisors should be similar to those in place for recruitment to other positions, and in line with the organisation’s recruitment policy, for example the development of a duty statement outlining the role and responsibilities, submission of formal, written applications, the convening of a selection panel to make decisions, and the requirement for referee checks. Where external clinical supervisors are contracted, they should also undergo a criminal record check.
8.3 The importance of policy, procedures and record keeping

Ideally, clinical supervision within D&A services should be governed by a written policy, and currently this is common practice. Staff and supervisors should be made aware of the policy and any accompanying procedures. In addition, a degree of record-keeping and documentation is recommended, some of which can be kept confidential.

Records which are not considered confidential, and which are commonly provided to managers include summary information from supervisors about numbers of attendees, session times and general, de-identified reports summarising the conduct of clinical supervision over a period of time.

A level of confidential record keeping is also expected in most D&A services, and recommended in the literature, for example records kept by both supervisors and supervisees relating to the goals and expectations, plans for achieving agreed goals, summaries of what has been undertaken in individual clinical supervision sessions, and reports arising from regular review about goals and achievements. (Examples at Appendices 6 and 7). All such records would remain confidential except in the circumstances outlined in section 6, in which case they may be required for the purposes of any investigation arising from breaches of code of conduct or clinical safety, or in the event of any other formal investigation related to a worker.

Whilst there is room for flexibility in terms of record keeping, local policies need to make clear their expectations and requirements.

8.4 Infrastructure and support for Clinical Supervision

Clinical supervision programs, like any other initiative, require a degree of organisational support and infrastructure if they are to be effective and efficient. Most D&A services have a policy that provides some governance and this is considered essential. However, there are additional factors to consider, outlined below:

- The need to locate responsibility for clinical supervision within an appropriate organisational portfolio. Given its stated purpose, the two obvious fits are workforce development and clinical quality, and ensuring that some overarching responsibility and leadership is provided through one of these portfolios is recommended.
- Consideration of a staff member with designated responsibility for coordinating the clinical supervision program. The roles of the key parties (managers, supervisors and supervisees) have been outlined earlier; however, there is also merit in the organisation designating responsibility for overall coordination and management of the clinical supervision program. This is not to suggest that a full-time position is required, but rather that a staff member with an appropriate related role (for example Coordinator of Quality, Workforce Development Manager) could also take on responsibility for clinical supervision.
- Establishing a clinical supervision advisory committee (or similar) with appropriate membership and specific terms of reference to oversight the policy and its implementation.
- Where an internal supervision model is used, establishing a network of supervisors, with a designated coordinator. The aims of the network could include ongoing training and development, support and debriefing.
- Embedding the organisational requirements about clinical supervision in relevant job descriptions. This is applicable to staff who are expected to access supervision, and to staff who provide internal clinical supervision.
8.5 Resourcing Clinical Supervision

Like any other activity or program, clinical supervision requires human and financial resourcing. Contributing resourcing factors include the time and effort required to provide appropriate infrastructure and coordination functions, to provide training, support and external clinical supervision for internal supervisors, staff time to participate, costs associated with travel to attend, and payment for the use of external supervisors. If the implementation of clinical supervision programs is to be an expectation across the board in D&A services then Directors and managers will need to take account of this in budget and business planning. It is beyond the scope of these Guidelines to suggest or recommend any strategies related to budget, suffice to highlight that it is an important organisational consideration.

8.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

There has historically been a level of tension between the principle of confidentiality that applies to clinical supervision and the desire for organisations to have in place an appropriate level of monitoring and accountability for clinical supervision processes. The important distinction to highlight here is between performance management issues related to individuals, which need to be identified and addressed through other mechanisms, and mechanisms for quality assurance in relation to the overall clinical supervision program, which are appropriate and necessary.

Unless there are breaches of relevant codes of conduct, concerns for client or worker safety or breaches of duty of care (as outlined in section 6) the content of individual supervision sessions remains confidential, and issues related to the supervisee’s clinical practice do not enter into the public domain of the organisation. However, the organisation does have a responsibility to have a level of reporting in place in relation to clinical supervision, and to have mechanisms in place to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness. For example it is appropriate for organisations to have information related to:

- The extent of uptake of supervision, specifically, which staff are attending supervision and how often.
- Where internal supervisors are utilised, which staff are active and their clinical supervision caseload.
- The extent of human and financial resources being utilised for the provision of clinical supervision.
- The satisfaction levels of staff in relation to the clinical supervision that is provided.
- Any areas of concern about the current clinical supervision program.
- The effectiveness of individual clinical supervisors.
- The impact and benefits of clinical supervision from the perspectives of staff and managers.
- Where internal supervisors are used, information about their participation in any required or recommended quality assurance processes, for example supervision of supervisors, attendance at supervision network meetings, and participation in ongoing training and development opportunities related to their supervisory role.

Some of the above information can be collected by ensuring a basic level of record keeping and reporting on the part of supervisors and managers, for example in relation to attendance and numbers, and it is suggested that such information be collected and reported as a matter of course. To assess satisfaction, impact and effectiveness, formal evaluation tools will need to be utilised. Some of the key issues to consider in evaluating clinical supervision are:
• The importance of having a degree of independence when seeking staff feedback about clinical supervision processes, for example having someone in a neutral role coordinate the process, analyse and report on results.
• The importance of getting feedback from supervisees and supervisors. Both viewpoints will provide useful information in relation to perceptions of the quality of clinical supervision sessions, satisfaction levels, if and how it has been helpful, the degree of fit between supervisor and supervisee, and ideas about strengthening the current processes.
• The need to ensure that supervisees can provide anonymous feedback, which will be particularly important where supervisors are internal.
• Being able to identify individual supervisors in any evaluation process so that constructive feedback can be provided, areas of development identified, and any serious concerns can be addressed directly with the individual supervisor.
• Ensuring that supervisors and supervisees are informed from the outset of any monitoring or evaluation processes that may be implemented, including the expectations of their participation in formal evaluation.

Some D&A services have agreed proformas for monitoring and evaluation purposes and there are samples at Appendices 8, 9, and 10.

8.7 Managing difficulties

Difficulties can and do arise within clinical supervision programs, and it is wise for local policies to clearly identify the intended processes for dealing with problems or conflict. Examples of issues that can arise are:
• A staff member is not happy with their clinical supervisor.
• There are problems with the mix of membership of a clinical supervision group.
• Managers have concerns about a particular supervisor.
• There are breaches of confidentiality of clinical supervision sessions.
• A staff member consistently doesn’t attend their agreed clinical supervision.
• A staff member has been unable to resolve an issue with clinical supervision through their line manager.

Common principles for addressing these or similar issues are for the matter to be raised between the relevant parties in the first instance and attempts made to manage or resolve the issues. Where issues remain, it is generally recommended that they are taken to the line manager, or where appropriate, to a more senior staff member. Whilst this may seem an overly obvious approach, it is considered useful for local clinical supervision policies to highlight some of the common problems that may arise, and outline the expectations of how these will be managed so that all parties have a clear way forward. All AHSs have grievance procedures that should be followed when all other attempts at resolution have been unsuccessful.

A common concern for line managers can be the lack of information flow between clinical supervisors and managers about the performance of individual workers.

As a general rule, and for reasons outlined earlier related to the role, purpose and key characteristics of clinical supervision, it is recommended that services do not blur the boundaries between line management and clinical supervision, for example by managers approaching supervisors with concerns they have, or seeking comments or information about individual workers.
8.8 Issues for rural D&A services

There are particular issues in relation to implementing clinical supervision in rural D&A services. These include:

- Barriers associated with the provision of supervision to remote staff who were often isolated and therefore potentially in greater need of clinical supervision.
- The extent of time and travel required for staff to access face-to-face supervision.
- Difficulties in accessing appropriate supervisors. Internally, there may be insufficient professional distance between supervisees and supervisors. Externally there are often limitations or shortages in the number of private practitioners working in rural communities and there may not be appropriately skilled or senior staff available within the local community.

Rural D&A services need to consider alternative mechanisms to face-to-face clinical supervision such as telephone, email or videoconferencing, all of which have been utilised successfully for clinical supervision purposes. Studies in e-supervision have been undertaken and report both advantages and disadvantages, with the noted advantages being more relaxed communication styles, greater immediacy of responses, and greater mentoring capacity. Some of the noted challenges of electronic supervision are the need for increased time for planning supervisory sessions and the need for frequent and ongoing training for operating the required technology.

Useful resources and additional reading

This document provides guidance for D&A services in relation to the operation and management of clinical supervision programs, drawn from what is commonly considered sound practice in the literature, and within the NSW D&A field. It is not intended to be prescriptive, nor wholly comprehensive, and has been informed by a range of existing resources and previous work by other authors. This section provides a summary of additional sources of clinical supervision information and advice that D&A services will likely find valuable.

9.1 D&A specific resources

Three resources are worthy of particular note.

The first is the recently produced, and very comprehensive Clinical Supervision Resource Kit for the Alcohol and Other Drugs Field. Developed by the National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA) at Flinders University, this kit is intended to build capacity of the D&A workforce, and includes the following components:

- An Overview booklet that provides an overview of all the materials contained in the Resource Kit, as well as a sample one-day training program for clinical supervisors
- A comprehensive Practical Guide for the AOD field, which includes a review of the relevant literature and practical recommendations for establishing clinical supervision programs and conducting supervision sessions.
- A Clinical Supervision Training Demonstration on DVD which contains a 40 minute scripted demonstration of clinical supervision in four sessions, revealing the key process and content issues.
- A Training Demonstration Booklet, which is a supplement to the DVD and provides guidance about the DVD’s use for training purposes.

12. MEDICAL CARE

- A CD containing PDF versions of all the materials contained within the kit, as well as a set of 75 PowerPoint training slides.

Further information about the kit can be found at the NCETA website http://www.nceta.flinders.edu.au/

The second is the Workforce Development Resource Kit: A Guide to Workforce Development for Alcohol and Other Drugs Agencies. Produced by the Network of Alcohol and Other Drugs Agencies (NADA) this resource includes useful information about implementing clinical supervision programs in section 4.6, and includes relevant case studies. The Kit can be found on the NADA website http://www.nada.org.au/projects/workforce-development/

Finally, there is the considerable work that was conducted by Access Macquarie Ltd as part of their related project to develop and deliver a training package in clinical supervision for NSW Health D&A services. This work includes:

- Clinical Supervision training package, Final Report to the CDA, Daphne Hewson, Access Macquarie Ltd, November 2005. (Including appendices on Aboriginal Consultations, Interviews and the Email Survey.)

9.2 Useful Clinical Supervision references

In addition to the above resources, many other articles and references were reviewed, and the following is a summary of those that were considered particularly helpful or relevant in the development of the Guidelines.

- Butterworth and Woods, Clinical Governance and Clinical Supervision; working together to ensure safe and accountable practice; A Briefing Paper. The School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting, University of Manchester 1999.
- The Development of models of nursing supervision in the UK, and other documents and information contained on the website of Steve Cottrell and Georgina Smith at http://www.northwestsolutions.co.uk/resources.php
- Chris Shanley, Clinical Supervision – an untapped resource for the alcohol and other drug field, Centre for Education and Information on Drugs and Alcohol, NSW (CEIDA).
Appendix 1 - Membership of the advisory group

**Bob Batey**  
Director  
Drug and Alcohol  
Hunter and New England Area Health Service  
Clinical Advisor  
Centre for Drug and Alcohol  
NSW Health

**Nick Miles**  
Clinical Nurse Consultant  
Drug and Alcohol Services  
Northern Sydney and Central Coast Area Health Service

**Tonina Harvey**  
Director  
Drug and Alcohol Services  
Northern Sydney and Central Coast Area Health Service  
Co-Chair of Nursing Advisory Committee

**Dr James Guinan**  
Senior Clinical Psychologist  
Area Manager Community Drug and Alcohol Programs  
Northern Sydney Health

**Steve Childs**  
Assistant Director  
Counselling and Psychological Services  
Northern Sydney and Central Coast Area Health Service  
Co-Chair of Allied Health Workers Advisory Committee

**Debbie Kaplan**  
Centre For Drug and Alcohol  
NSW Health

**Thiagarajan Sitharthan**  
Director  
Clinical Programs  
Drug and Alcohol Services  
Sydney West Area Health Service

**Trish O’Riordan**  
Centre For Drug and Alcohol

**James Pitts**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Odyssey House

**Doug Smyth**  
Centre For Drug and Alcohol
Appendix 2 - Codes of conduct and professional practice

Attention to issues related to codes of conduct and ethical behaviour operate on two separate levels. Firstly there is a need for supervisors to ensure that their own clinical supervision practices are carried out within the parameters of relevant codes of conduct; and secondly there is a need for supervisors to be cognisant of the codes of conduct and ethical practice that apply to the staff they are supervising.

In relation to the first of these, namely the clinical supervision practices of supervisors, the following highlights the key issues that supervisors should be aware of:

• The potential for vicarious liability, whereby a supervisor can be held liable for the conduct of the supervisee, especially if the supervisee is not a fully licensed professional.
• The need to ensure that the limits of the confidentiality of supervision are clearly stated at the outset. Should it become necessary to disclose, only information that is necessary and sufficient to address the pertinent issue should be disclosed.
• Supervisors should not practice outside their area of competence or overextend themselves and they should ensure that supervisees do not practice outside their area of competence or overextend themselves.
• Supervisors have a duty to warn and to protect, and are responsible for ensuring that clients at risk (eg suicide risk) are protected and, when legally warranted, that others are warned if they are at risk from a client.
• Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that they and those they supervise conduct themselves within the ethical guidelines and codes of conduct of their profession, and their employing organisation. Particular attention should be paid to gaining relevant informed consent (eg from clinicians for degree of self-disclosure in supervision; from clients to receiving treatment from and intern/trainee).
• Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that neither they nor those they supervise have dual relationships (eg can’t be supervisor and therapist; no sexual relationships between supervisor and counsellors or counsellors and clients, etc). The dual relationship of Line-Manager and Supervisor is not ideal; and if it becomes necessary, extra care should be taken to create safe boundaries between the two roles.
• Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that the supervisee’s rights are addressed by providing a clear statement of the requirements of clinical supervision, and specific information about what will be evaluated, through the supervisory process and how.

In addition, the Australian Psychological Society has produced an ethical guidelines paper on clinical supervision. Whilst the paper is only available online to members, most D&A services will have staff who are members and will have access. The paper is entitled Australian Psychological Society Ethical Guidelines: Guidelines on Supervision, July 2003 and can be found at http://www.psychology.org.au/

Supervisors also need to ensure that they are familiar with the relevant ethical guidelines and codes of conduct that apply to staff they are supervising. A number of codes are likely to apply within D&A services as follows:

• Area Health Service Codes of Conduct.
• NSW Medical Board Code of Professional Conduct.
• Code of Ethics for Nurses in Australia (Developed under the auspices of Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council, Royal College of Nursing, Australia and the Australian Nursing Federation).
12. MEDICAL CARE

- Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses in Australia (Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council).
- Australian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics.
- NSW Psychologists Registration Board Code of Professional Conduct.
- The Australian Psychological Society Code of Ethics.
- Australian Counselling Association Code of Conduct.

Whilst a brief summary of information contained within the above codes is outlined below, it is strongly recommended that supervisors access the relevant codes in full to ensure they are clear about the full extent of ethical and professional parameters that apply.

In circumstances where a supervisor is unclear about the application or interpretation of a particular code, they are encouraged to seek advice from a senior staff member from within the same profession as the supervisee.

D&A Services Codes of Conduct

All Area Health Services have codes of conduct in place for staff and D&A services need to ensure that staff and supervisors are provided with copies of the relevant organisational policy documents. Notwithstanding the need for all parties to have a sound understanding of the particular ethical and professional guidelines, commonly AHS Codes of Conduct refer to the need for staff to comply as follows:

- To be aware of and avoid potential situations of conflict of interest, for example whereby they could be influenced or perceived to be influenced by a personal interest when carrying out their public duty.
- Staff must not accept gifts or benefits from clients which could in any way influence, or appear to influence, their official capacity.
- Staff must not submit or accept bribes or inducements from individuals or organisations.
- The requirement for staff to behave honestly and with integrity in the execution of their duties.
- Staff must not develop inappropriate personal relationships with clients, including social, sexual or financial relationships.
- Staff must not harass, bully or discriminate against others, including colleagues and clients.
- Staff must not use official resources for non-official purposes.
- Staff must not engage in corrupt conduct, as defined in sections 8 and 9 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act (1988), including in relation to official misconduct, bribery and blackmail, unauthorised use of confidential information, fraud and theft.

NSW Medical Board Code of Professional Conduct

There are four standards outlined in this code as follows:

**Standard 1**

You must possess and apply adequate knowledge and skill in the practice of medicine.

**Standard 2**

You must observe professional and ethical obligations. These include:
12. MEDICAL CARE

- Education, teaching and training responsibilities.
- Providing honest assessment of the performance of colleagues.
- Putting patients first while putting aside your own personal views.
- Maintaining trust with patients through your interaction with patients.
- Arranging appropriate alternative treatment when the doctor/patient relationship deteriorates.
- Disclosure of adverse events to appropriate authorities.
- Responding appropriately to situations in which a complaint is made about your treatment or where treatment is unsuccessful.
- Co-operating fully with the investigating authorities such as the HCCC and the NSW Medical Board in respect of adverse events.
- Dealing appropriately with the next of kin of deceased patients.
- Ensuring your professional position is not abused or compromised through improper financial or personal dealings with patients.
- Ensuring that your own health or that of another practitioner does not put patients at risk.
- Ensuring other practitioners do not place patients at risk through their health, conduct or performance.
- Providing factual information about your services.

Standard 3

You must ensure that you enjoy a good relationship with all colleagues in health care teams:

- Through treating colleagues with respect regardless of your personal views.
- By working constructively with health care teams.
- By ensuring patient treatment is covered during your own absence or unavailability.
- Ensuring that a patient’s care is co-ordinated.
- Ensuring appropriate delegation and referral of care of a patient.

Standard 4

You must display probity in your professional practice in respect of:

- Financial and commercial dealings.
- Financial interests in hospitals, nursing homes and other medical organisations.
- Not accepting gifts or other inducements.
- Not entering into financial agreements with patients which may compromise the therapeutic relationship.
- Ensuring that any documents signed by you are not false or misleading.
- Ensuring that research in which you are engaged is conducted ethically and according to protocol and that you report fraud or misconduct in research to the appropriate authority.

The full document can be found at: http://healthcpd.com.au/

Code of Ethics for Nurses in Australia

The Code of Ethics includes the following six key value statements. Nurses respect individuals’ needs, values, culture and vulnerability in the provision of nursing care.

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- Nurses accept the rights of individuals to make informed choices in relation to their care.
- Nurses promote and uphold the provision of quality nursing care for all people.
- Nurses hold in confidence any information obtained in a professional capacity, use professional judgement where there is a need to share information for the therapeutic benefit and safety of a person and ensure that privacy is safeguarded.
- Nurses fulfil the accountability and responsibility inherent in their roles.
- Nurses value environmental ethics and a social, economic and ecologically sustainable environment that promotes health and well-being.


Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses in Australia

The purpose of the Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses in Australia is to:

- Set an expected national standard of conduct for the nursing profession.
- Inform the community of the standards for professional conduct of nurses in Australia.
- Provide consumer, regulatory, employing and professional bodies with a basis for decisions regarding standards of professional conduct.

Under the code of professional conduct a nurse must:

- Practise in a safe and competent manner.
- Practise in accordance with the agreed standards of the profession.
- Not bring discredit upon the reputation of the nursing profession.
- Practise in accordance with laws relevant to the nurse’s area of practice.
- Respect the dignity, culture, values and beliefs of an individual and any significant other person.
- Support the health, well being and informed decision-making of an individual.
- Promote and preserve the trust that is inherent in the privileged relationship between a nurse and an individual, and respect both the person and property of that individual.
- Treat personal information obtained in a professional capacity as confidential.
- Refrain from engaging in exploitation, misinformation and misrepresentation in regard to health care products and nursing services.


Australian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics 1999

The purpose of the Code is to:

- Identify the values and principles which underpin ethical social work practice.
- Provide a guide and standard for ethical social work conduct and accountable service.
- Provide a foundation for ethical reflection and decision-making.
- Guide social workers when determining what demands they may legitimately make on their employers, colleagues and the AASW.
- Provide clarification of social workers’ actions in the context of industrial or legal disputes.
- Act as a basis for investigation and adjudication of formal complaints about unethical conduct.

The full document can be found at: http://www.aasw.asn.au/document/item/740
12. MEDICAL CARE

NSW Psychologists Registration Board Code of Professional Conduct

The Code of Professional Conduct provides principles and guidelines for observation by registered psychologists in their professional practice, and that guide the interpretations relevant to Part 4 of the Psychologists Act 2001 related to complaints and disciplinary proceedings). Under the code psychologists will:

- Demonstrate continuing competence in their practice of psychology that includes adequate knowledge, skill, judgment and care.
- Aim to maximise benefit and do no harm in their practice of psychology.
- Respect the dignity and welfare of individuals and groups with whom they have professional contact.
- Act ethically and properly and will promote accuracy, fairness and honesty in their practice of psychology.


The Australian Psychological Society Code of Ethics

The code outlines principles of ethics and professional practice for members of the Society which aim to safeguard the welfare of consumers of psychological services and the integrity of the profession. Its general principles state that:

- Members remain personally responsible for the professional decisions they make.
- Members shall bring and maintain appropriate skills and learning in their areas of professional practice.
- The welfare of clients and the public, and the integrity of the profession shall take precedence over a member’s self interest and over the interests of the member’s employer and colleagues.

The full document can be found at: http://www.psychology.org.au/about/ethics/#s1

Australian Counselling Association Code of Conduct

This code is intended to provide standards of professional conduct that can be applied by the ACA and by other bodies that chose to adopt them in Australia. Under the code, members will:

- Offer a non judgmental professional service, free from discrimination, honouring the individuality of the client.
- Establish the helping relationship in order to maintain the integrity and empowerment of the client without offering advice.
- Be committed to ongoing personal and professional development.
- Ensure client understanding of the purpose, process and boundaries of the counseling relationship.
- Offer a promise of confidentiality and explain the limits of duty of care.
- For the purpose of advocacy, receive written permission from the client before divulging any information or contacting other parties.
- Endeavour to make suitable referral where competent service cannot be provided.

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- Undertake regular supervision and debriefing to develop skills, monitor performance and sustain professional accountability.
- Be responsive to the needs of peers and provide a supportive environment for their professional development.
- Not act as or practice legal council on behalf of or to a client when practicing as a counsellor or act as an agent for a client.
- Not initiate, develop or pursue a relationship be it sexual or nonsexual with past or current clients, within 2 years of the last counselling session.
- Be responsible for your own updating and continued knowledge of theories, ethics and practices through journals, the association and other relevant bodies.
- Be committed to the above code of ethics and recognise that procedures for withdrawal of membership will be implemented for breaches.

Full document can be found at:
Appendix 3.
Clinical Supervision contract (example)

This proforma is an example of the kind of contract or agreement used between supervisor and supervisee in relation to the arrangements and processes for clinical supervision sessions. It is a sample only and D&A services need to ensure contracts meet their specific needs.

This agreement covers the clinical supervision arrangements between:

(Supervisee), and

(Supervisor)

Structure of sessions
We agree the structure of clinical supervision sessions will be as follows:

- Frequency __________________________
- Duration __________________________
- Time ________________________________
- Location ____________________________

Goals of clinical supervision for the agreed contract period:

____________________________________

____________________________________

____________________________________

Agreed strategies and methods of achieving these goals:

____________________________________

____________________________________

____________________________________

Agreed records to be kept in relation to clinical supervision:

____________________________________

____________________________________

____________________________________

We have read the D&A Service Clinical Supervision Policy and agree to operate in compliance with it.

Supervisors signature __________________________

Date ______/_____/______

Supervisees signature __________________________

Date ______/_____/______

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Appendix 4. External Clinical Supervisor contract 1 (example)

This proforma is one of two examples of the kind of contract or agreement used between the D&A service and an external clinical supervisor. It is a sample only and D&A services need to ensure contracts meet their specific needs.

**Parties to the contract**

This contract is between:

(D&A Service), and

(external Clinical Supervisor)

**The agreed terms of the contract are:**

Commencing date ______/_____/_____

Completion date ______/_____/_____

Renewal of Contract is subject to performance review and availability of funds.

**Services and remuneration**

The number of hours per month will be approximately ______ per hour plus GST.

Variations to be approved by Area Manager, Drug & Alcohol, as required.

Remuneration will be at Australian Psychological Society (APS) current standard rate currently ______ per hour plus GST.

Clinical supervision services will be provided in accordance with the D&A Service Clinical Supervision Policy and as per the attached schedule.

**Insurance**

The Provider shall also insure themselves and keep themselves insured during the period of the Contract for public liability and Professional Indemnity insurance in the amounts as follows:

$___________ Public liability insurance

$___________ Professional indemnity insurance

The Provider will supply the following information in relation to insurance:

- Name of insurance companies with whom cover is affected.
- Policy number of the Policies.
- The expiry date or currency of the policies.

**Termination of Contract**

The Contract shall be terminated:

a. Upon the expiry of the period for which it was made or on such earlier date and may be agreed between the Clinical Supervisor and the Health Service.

b. By one months' notice in writing given by either the Clinical Supervisor or the Health Service.

c. If the Clinical Supervisor ceases to be registered as a Psychologist in NSW.

d. If the Clinical Supervisor becomes permanently mentally or physically incapable of rendering services under the contract.

e. If the Clinical Supervisor commits serious and/or willful misconduct; or

f. If the Clinical Supervisor appointment is terminated by operation of any Act or Regulation.

On the termination of a contract, any amount due and payable to the Clinical Supervisor pursuant to the Contract shall be paid at the time of such termination or as soon thereafter as reasonably practicable.
Dispute Resolution Procedure
In the event that the Clinical Supervisor or Health Service is dissatisfied with any aspect of the operation of the Contract, the Clinical Supervisor or Health Service may give the other party notice in writing, identifying the matter or matters the subject of dispute. As soon as practicable after the giving of notice, Health Service staff and the Clinical Supervisor, who may be accompanied by an observer of his/her choice, shall meet to discuss the dispute and attempt to resolve it by a mutually agreed method.
Appendix 5. External Clinical Supervisor contract 2 (example)

This proforma is one of two examples of the kind of contract or agreement used between the D&A service and an external clinical supervisor. It is a sample only and D&A services need to ensure contracts meet their specific needs.

This contract is for a period of _________ months, starting __________/________/_______.

Payment for clinical supervision services provided will be $___________ per hour.

Supervision sessions contracted will be ________ hours per month.

As part of my role as an external supervisor, I agree to:

- Provide supervision, which is consistent with the services’ aims and objectives.
- Consult with supervisee(s) in order to prepare a supervision contract. The supervision contract includes negotiated goals for a specified supervision period, strategies and methods to be used for achieving those goals, an outline of the structure and process of supervision, and a review date.
- Consent to annual internal staff satisfaction surveys.
- Maintain an accurate log of supervision sessions in accordance with plans agreed to with supervisees, which include the date and duration of each session. This is submitted annually to the line manager.
- Provide documentation on past professional experience and professional qualifications to the service manager.
- Continue my own professional development and supervision.

- Provide the Director of Drug and Alcohol Services (or delegate) with access to the supervision log when requested.
- Address any difficulties arising from the supervision relationship in accordance with the supervision guidelines within Drug and Alcohol Services.
- Ensure appropriate client and supervisee confidentiality.
- Inform management and appropriate professional bodies where there is serious concerns about the client/patient health and safety due to the health status of the supervisee or non-adherence to professional codes of ethics and the Service’s code of conduct.
- Undergo a criminal record check.

I have read and understand the terms of this contract and the supervision guidelines for the Drug and Alcohol Service.

Signed __________________________

Date _________/________/_______

Date for Review _________/________/_______

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Appendix 6. Record of Clinical Supervision session (example)

This is a sample of the kind of record that can be kept by individual supervisees following each clinical supervision session.

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<th>Date</th>
<th>What was learnt?</th>
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<th>What was the contract for the session?</th>
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<th>What will I do differently in the future?</th>
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<th>Key issues identified during the session?</th>
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<th>Further agreements:</th>
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Appendix 7. Record of Clinical Supervision session (example)

This is a sample of the kind of record that can be kept by supervisors following each clinical supervision session.

Date _____/_____/_____

Supervisor ____________________________

Supervisee _____________________________

What was the contract for the session?

_________________________ __________________________

_________________________ __________________________

_________________________ __________________________

_________________________ __________________________

_________________________ __________________________

Key issues identified during the session:

_________________________ __________________________

_________________________ __________________________

_________________________ __________________________

_________________________ __________________________

_________________________ __________________________

Action taken:

_________________________ __________________________

_________________________ __________________________

_________________________ __________________________

_________________________ __________________________

_________________________ __________________________

What will be done differently and by whom?

_________________________ __________________________

_________________________ __________________________

_________________________ __________________________

_________________________ __________________________

_________________________ __________________________

Checklist:

☐ Issues identified

☐ Ethical practice/compliance with codes of conduct

☐ Increased learning

☐ Objectives met

Notes and evaluation:

_________________________ __________________________

_________________________ __________________________

_________________________ __________________________

_________________________ __________________________

_________________________ __________________________

Plans for next supervision session:

_________________________ __________________________

_________________________ __________________________

_________________________ __________________________

_________________________ __________________________

_________________________ __________________________
Appendix 8.
Annual evaluation form (example)

The following is an example of an annual evaluation form used by an external clinical supervisor to gather information from supervisees. **End of year clinical supervision evaluation.**

The following questionnaire has been designed to evaluate the clinical supervision sessions you have been receiving over the past year.

All responses are ANONYMOUS. Feel free to add any additional comments. Your responses will be provided to the Manager of your service for consideration for future clinical supervision in 2005.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How helpful has been clinical supervision been?</th>
<th>How has clinical supervision influenced your work with drug and alcohol clients?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not helpful at all</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very helpful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What have been the most helpful aspects of clinical supervision?**

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

**Has clinical supervision improved your understanding in working with drug and alcohol clients?**

- Great deal
- A little
- Not at all

**What have been the least helpful aspects of clinical supervision?**

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

**Has clinical supervision improved the way you work therapeutically with drug and alcohol clients?**

- Great deal
- A little
- Not at all

**Tick the areas you think your knowledge and skills have improved in:**

- Assessment
- Understanding the clients concerns
- Interviewing skills
- Dual diagnosis
- Intervention skills
- Problem solving
- Team issues
- Other areas (please state) __________________________
Appendix B: Annual evaluation form (example)

What recommendations do you have to improve clinical supervision in the future?

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

Other comments:

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

Many thanks for completing this form.

Acknowledgement for this evaluation format
to Christine Senedjak
Appendix 9. Annual report from Clinical Supervisors (example)

The following is an example of an annual report provided by clinical supervisors to service managers. Note whilst there is no detailed information about the content of clinical supervision sessions, there is summary information related to compliance with the policy and ethical practice.

CONFIDENTIAL

Annual Report

(Supervisee's name) has attended clinical supervision sessions with me on __________ occasions from __________ to __________.

Both supervisor and supervisee have signed records of these sessions.

The general goals of supervision as detailed in the Clinical Supervision Policy and the specific goals of the contracts agreed to during the period under review are designed to promote best practice. In my opinion, the supervisee is working towards these supervision goals.

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Comments:

From discussion during supervision it would appear that the supervisee is performing according to the service Code of Conduct and in line with appropriate Professional Codes of Ethics for the discipline.

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Comments:

Supervisors signature __________________________

Date ______/_____/_____

Supervisee's signature __________________________

Date ______/_____/_____

cc Manager
Appendix 10. Clinical Supervision evaluation format (example)

The following supervision questionnaire was developed by Ladany, Hill and Nutt (1966) as measure of supervisee perceptions of the quality and outcomes of supervision. The score is the sum of the items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Rating Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How would you rate the quality of the supervision you have received?</td>
<td>4 Excellent 3 Good 2 Fair 1 Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Did you get the kind of supervision you wanted?</td>
<td>1 No definitely not 2 No not really 3 Yes generally 4 Yes definitely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To what extent has this supervision fit your needs?</td>
<td>4 Almost all of my needs have been met 3 Most of my needs have been met 2 Only a few of my needs have been met 1 None of my needs have been met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. If a friend were in need of supervision, would you recommend this supervisor to him or her?</td>
<td>1 No definitely not 2 No I don’t think so 3 Yes I think so 4 Yes definitely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How satisfied are you with the amount of supervision you have received?</td>
<td>1 Very dissatisfied 2 Indifferent or mildly dissatisfied 3 Mostly satisfied 4 Very satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Has the supervision you received helped you to deal more effectively in your role as a counselor or therapist?</td>
<td>4 Yes definitely 3 Yes generally 2 No not really 1 No definitely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. In an overall, general sense, how satisfied are you with the supervision you have received?</td>
<td>4 Very satisfied 3 Mostly satisfied 2 Indifferent or mildly dissatisfied 1 Quite dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. If you were to seek supervision again, would you come back to this supervisor?</td>
<td>1 No definitely not 2 No I don’t think so 3 Yes I think so 4 Yes definitely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

58(12/06)
12. MEDICAL CARE

DRUG & ALCOHOL TREATMENT GUIDELINES FOR RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS (GL2007_014)

The aim of the Guidelines is to provide recommendations for residential treatment of people with drug or alcohol dependence. The intent of the Guidelines is to increase the effectiveness of treatment and to improve treatment outcomes. They are based as far as possible on the evidence reported in peer reviewed literature. The Guidelines differentiate between services which provide residential care and those which provide residential treatment and make a further distinction between residential treatment services and therapeutic communities.


DEMENTIA SERVICES FRAMEWORK 2010-2015 (GL2011_004)


PURPOSE

The NSW Dementia Services Framework 2010-2015 is a joint publication of the NSW Department of Health and NSW Department Ageing, Disability and Home Care that sets the direction for improving quality of life for people with dementia, their carers and families in NSW. It is underpinned by the following principles that emphasise quality dementia care is contingent on being responsive to the needs and experiences of people with dementia, their carers and families.

KEY PRINCIPLES

1) All people with dementia have access to competent and timely, multidisciplinary assessment, diagnosis, care management and support services.
2) People with dementia are valued and respected. Their right to dignity and quality of life is supported.
3) Carers and families are valued and supported. Carers are able to exercise choice in their role as a carer.
4) People with dementia, carers and families are central to making choices about care.
5) Services recognise that individuals vary in their symptoms, rates of progression and needs. Service responses should consider the person, the family and the context as well as the immediate concern irrespective of the service being provided.
6) All people with dementia, carers and families receive care and support that is sensitive to social, cultural or economic background, location and need.
7) A well-trained and supported workforce delivers quality dementia care.
8) Communities play an important role in quality of life for people with dementia, their carers and families.

USE OF THE GUIDELINE

The Framework is for services in health, community and residential care settings to assist with planning and development of dementia services and programs. It reviews service needs and makes recommendations along a dementia care service pathway from awareness through diagnosis, assessment, community, hospital and residential care.

Recommendations are practical and aim to improve access, diagnosis and continuing care.

It can be used as a checklist for reviewing the way services are currently provided and can encourage reflection on how services could be delivered differently to improve outcomes for people with dementia, carers and families.

A NSW implementation plan will be developed to provide further direction for action that aligns with NSW Health responsibilities.


120(10/03/11)
DRUG AND ALCOHOL WITHDRAWAL CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES - NSW (GL2008_011)

To provide the most up-to-date knowledge and current level of best practice for the treatment of withdrawal from alcohol and other drugs such as heroin, and other opioids, benzodiazepines, cannabis and psychostimulants.


PREVENTION OF VENOUS THROMBOEMBOLISM (PD2019_057)


PURPOSE

This Policy Directive outlines the mandatory requirements for an effective Venous Thromboembolism (VTE) Prevention Program and aims to ensure that systems are in place that support clinicians to undertake these requirements.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

- All NSW Public Health Organisations (PHOs) have a strategy to embed systems to comply with the actions summarised in the Prevention of Venous Thromboembolism Framework (Appendix 4.1 of this policy).
- The systems would enable risk assessments for VTE to be undertaken for:
  - All adult patients admitted to NSW public hospitals within 24 hours, and reassessed regularly as clinically appropriate (as a minimum every 7 days), if clinical condition changes and at transfers of care
  - All adult patients discharged home from the Emergency Department who, as a result of acute illness or injury, have significantly reduced mobility relative to normal state
  - All pregnant and postpartum women during the first comprehensive antenatal assessment; within 24 hours of any antenatal admission; when clinical situation alters; and during postpartum care, within 2 hours of birth (vaginal or caesarean section)
- The systems would also enable patients identified at risk of VTE to receive prophylaxis most appropriate to that risk and their clinical condition.
- All PHOs should make available decision support tools to guide prescription of prophylaxis appropriate for the patient's risk level.
- All PHOs are to have a strategy in place that includes regular monitoring of VTE prevention indicators to facilitate continuous improvement, and a system of communicating findings from review of VTE indicators.
- Clinicians are made aware of their role in undertaking routine VTE risk assessment, providing appropriate prophylaxis where patients are identified at risk of VTE, and to participate in their local public health organisation’s VTE prevention program.

IMPLEMENTATION

Clinical Excellence Commission
- Provide the tools to support PHOs in the implementation of this Policy.

Chief Executives of Local Health Districts and Specialty Health Networks
- Assign leadership responsibility and resources to support implementation and compliance with this Policy.
**Director of Clinical Governance**

- Ensure that a local monitoring and evaluation program is in place that includes regular review of VTE prevention indicators, assess the effectiveness of VTE prevention strategies and assist with identifying areas that require focused attention.
- Regularly report on VTE prevention indicators to local quality committees, the Clinical Excellence Commission and other relevant State committees.

**Director of Clinical Operations, Hospital, Facility and Clinical Network Managers**

- Ensure all relevant staff receive education regarding VTE prophylaxis.
- Distribute VTE risk assessment and prophylaxis decision support tools to all clinical units.
- Ensure formulary management includes availability of medications recommended for VTE prophylaxis.
- Ensure clinical speciality protocols include VTE prophylaxis where appropriate.
- Participate and contribute to the PHO’s monitoring and evaluation program for VTE prevention and include compliance review in routine clinical audit programs.
- Ensure data on indicators for VTE prevention processes are collected at clinical audit and provided, as required to, the Clinical Excellence Commission to enable and support quality improvement initiatives at a state level, the NSW Ministry of Health for state wide performance and compliance monitoring, and Clinical Department Heads to communicate findings from review of VTE indicators to clinical staff and support local improvement strategies.
- Ensure case review of patients developing a VTE that occurs during, or as a result of, a hospital admission.
- Ensure each clinical unit regularly reviews their VTE data and develops strategies towards improving prophylaxis where required.

**Attending Medical Officer (or Delegate)**

- Actively participate in their local public health organisation’s VTE prevention program.
- Are aware of undertaking VTE risk assessment on all eligible patients (as noted above).
- Review the patient’s related bleeding risk and based on that assessment, ensure prescription and administration of appropriate prophylaxis as required.
- Partner with patients and their carers to have an active role in preventing VTE by discussing the reason for treatment, risks and consequences of VTE prophylaxis on admission and on transfer to community or home care where required.
- Document outcome of VTE risk assessment, prophylaxis treatment; and other significant information, including any relevant dosage adjustment in the patient’s health care record, approved risk assessment tools, or other locally approved forms.
- Confirm appropriate peri-operative prescription of both pharmacological and mechanical prophylaxis where indicated.
- Regularly review VTE risk during the patient care episode, particularly as clinical condition changes, and that prophylaxis is monitored and adjusted accordingly.
Prevention of Venous Thromboembolism Procedures

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 About this document

Venous thromboembolism (VTE) is a significant preventable adverse event for hospitalised patients. The incidence of developing a VTE has been shown to be 100 times greater among hospitalised patients than those in community. Serious adverse outcomes resulting from VTE may occur, including an increased risk of recurrent thrombosis, morbidity from post-thrombotic syndrome or death.

Effective prevention of VTE is achieved through assessment of risk factors and the provision of appropriate prophylaxis.

This Procedure describes the system processes required to be embedded into standard workflow and clinical practice, to reduce a patient’s risk of developing VTE. These include:

- Identifying patients who should be assessed for VTE risk
- Assessing VTE risk
- Prescribing appropriate prophylaxis
- Reassessing VTE risk during care
- Engaging the patient
- Monitoring performance and practice, to assess compliance and to facilitate continuous improvement.

This Policy requires:

- All public health organisations (PHOs) to have a strategy to embed systems to support clinicians assess and manage VTE risk in patients.
  The Prevention of Venous Thromboembolism Framework (Appendix 4.1) provides a summary of the required actions for NSW public hospitals and health services.
- Attending Medical Officers and their medical teams to review all adult patients that require assessment for risk of VTE and, based on that assessment in correlation with evidence-based guidelines, prescribe prophylaxis accordingly.
  Assessment outcome must be noted in the patient health care record or other approved form, and the rationale behind decision to prescribe or withhold prophylaxis should also be noted.
- Nursing staff, midwives, pharmacists and other relevant allied health staff to be aware of VTE risk and assist in ensuring the processes for prevention are implemented.

To support the implementation of this Policy, the Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC) has developed tools to support clinicians to undertake VTE risk assessments. NSW VTE risk assessment tools and other resources can be found on the CEC website(http://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/patient-safety-programs/adult-patient-safety/vte-prevention).

The use of these VTE risk assessment tools is NOT mandatory. Where not used, a similar tool meeting the requirements set out in this Procedure document must be implemented.

The CEC will continue to work with PHOs to facilitate VTE prevention strategies across NSW public hospitals.
12. MEDICAL CARE

1.2 Related Documents

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the following NSW Health Policies:
- High-Risk Medicines Management
- Clinical Handover
- Incident Management

1.3 Key definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Anticoagulant</strong></th>
<th>Any agent used to prevent the formation of blood clots. These include oral agents, such as warfarin, dabigatran, rivaroxaban and apixaban, and others which are injected into the vein or under the skin, such as unfractionated heparin and low molecular weight heparin e.g. enoxaparin sodium.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attending Medical Officer (AMO)</strong></td>
<td>The Attending Medical Officer (AMO) is the senior medical practitioner who has primary responsibility for the patient during admission. This AMO is a consultant who may be a visiting medical officer or a staff specialist. The AMO may lead a team that includes related medical officers and this team plays a critical role in the assessment and prevention of VTE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC)</strong></td>
<td>The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care is a government agency that leads and coordinates national improvements in safety and quality in health care across Australia.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)** | A blood clot that occurs in the “deep veins” in the legs, thighs or pelvis.  
- *Asymptomatic deep vein thrombosis* is defined as painless DVT detected only by ultrasound, or ascending venography and is often confined to the distal veins.  
- *Symptomatic deep vein thrombosis* results from occlusion of a major leg vein and results in leg pain or swelling. It requires specific investigation and treatment which in hospitalised patients may delay discharge, or require readmission to hospital. |
| **Family of Measures** | There are three types of measures.  
**Outcome measures:**  
- Refer to the ‘voice of the customer or user’  
- Define how the system is performing  
- Broadly speaking describe what the result is.  
**Process measures:**  
- Refer to the ‘voice of the workings of the system’  
- Serve to answer process questions i.e. are the parts and/or steps in the system performing as planned?  
**Balancing measures:**  
- Reflect on what happened to the system as we improved the outcome and process measures (e.g. unanticipated consequences, other factors influencing outcome). |
| **Health Information Exchange (HIE)** | HIE data is coded data based on the medical record. The quality of this information depends on the quality of the medical records, currency and accuracy of coding. |
## 12. MEDICAL CARE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mechanical Prophylaxis</strong></td>
<td>VTE prophylaxis in the form of a Graduated Compression Stocking, anti-embolic stocking, Intermittent Pneumatic Compression or Foot Impulse Device.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Must</strong></td>
<td>Indicates a mandatory action requiring compliance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Postpartum Period</strong></td>
<td>Period beginning immediately after the birth of a child and extending for about six weeks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PowerPlan</strong></td>
<td>An electronic order set listing pharmacological and mechanical options based on protocols, grouped for faster electronic order entry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prescriber</strong></td>
<td>A health professional legally entitled to prescribe medicines according to prevailing NSW Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 and Regulations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pulmonary embolism (PE)</strong></td>
<td>A blood clot that breaks off from the deep veins and travels around the circulation to block the pulmonary arteries (arteries in the lung). Most deaths arising from deep vein thrombosis are caused by pulmonary emboli. (Plural = pulmonary emboli)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Health Organisation (PHO)</strong></td>
<td>Under the Health Services Act 1997 (NSW), a local health district, statutory health corporation or affiliated health organisation in respect of its recognised establishments and recognised services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality Audit Reporting System (QARS)</strong></td>
<td>The QARS has been developed by the CEC to provide local health districts (LHDs) and speciality networks (SNs), and their facilities with a tool to conduct quality audits to provide evidence for the accreditation process, evaluate performance and initiate relevant action plans. The QARS allows evaluation at LHD, facility or ward levels. Benchmarking against the NSW average and peer groups is also available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality Improvement Data System (QIDS)</strong></td>
<td>The QIDS is a system that takes data and presents in charts for quality improvement. It was designed for unit level managers and clinicians to have easy access to information to improve their services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Should</strong></td>
<td>Indicates a recommended action that is best followed unless there are sound reasons for taking a different course of action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Significantly Reduced Mobility Relative to Normal State</strong></td>
<td>Refers to patients who are bedbound, or likely to spend a substantial proportion of the day in bed or in a chair due to the clinical condition for which they are being treated, or unable to walk unaided due to injury such as severe lower leg injury (e.g. fracture, dislocation, complete tendon rupture), requiring rigid immobilisation, or non-weight bearing status. The change in mobility should be assessed in relation to the patient’s normal state of functioning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transfer of Care</strong></td>
<td>Transfer of care involves transferring professional responsibility and accountability for the care of a patient to another person or professional or a combination of professionals. It includes discharge from an acute inpatient setting to the community setting, subacute care or non-acute care. It can also include transfer between hospitals, or transfer between attending teams and/or units within a hospital.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thromboprophylaxis</strong></td>
<td>Measures taken to assist in reduction of the risk of thrombosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Venous thromboembolism (VTE)</strong></td>
<td>The blocking of a blood vessel by a blood clot. Includes both deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. MEDICAL CARE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VTE Risk Outcome</th>
<th>The decision reached after a risk assessment is carried out to evaluate the likelihood of a patient developing a VTE due to existing risk factors. The patients risk outcome can fall under one of three categories.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower Risk:</td>
<td>Patient has a lower risk of developing a VTE and requires no active treatment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Risk:</td>
<td>Patient is at risk of developing a VTE and requires treatment with pharmacological prophylaxis (where no contraindications exist) and mechanical prophylaxis should be used where pharmacological therapy is contraindicated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Risk:</td>
<td>Patient is at a relatively higher risk of developing a VTE and requires combination treatment (where no contraindications exist) with both pharmacological AND mechanical prophylaxis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 VENOUS THROMBOEMBOLISM PREVENTION

2.1 Identifying Patients for Assessment

All PHOs must have systems in place to support clinicians to assess and manage VTE risk in patients. The following patient groups must be identified and undergo a VTE risk assessment.

2.1.1 Patients in the Emergency Department

Adult patients (>16 years) to be discharged home from an Emergency Department who, as a result of their acute illness or injury (including interventions such as leg casts/braces), have significantly reduced mobility relative to normal state. They should undergo VTE risk assessment and be prescribed appropriate prophylaxis by an Emergency Department clinician prior to leaving the Emergency Department.

All other patients to be discharged home from an Emergency Department do not need to be assessed for VTE risk.

PHOs need to have systems in place that ensure adult patients being admitted to an inpatient ward or unit from an Emergency Department undergo a VTE risk assessment and be prescribed appropriate prophylaxis within 24 hours of presentation.

2.1.2 Admitted Patients

All adult patients (>16 years) admitted to a NSW public hospital or health service should undergo a VTE risk assessment within 24 hours of admission and, if appropriate, be prescribed prophylaxis.

This includes patients admitted to an inpatient ward (medical or surgical), or a unit such as a mental health unit or sub-acute facility (such as rehabilitation or palliative care).

Although, VTE prevention processes within the mental health setting are currently not as robust as in the general population, there is growing evidence to suggest that atypical antipsychotics (particularly clozapine) increase VTE risk. Additionally, reduced mobility is a strong risk factor for VTE and should be considered in the context of mental health patients, particularly in catatonia, neuroleptic malignant syndrome, over-sedation, use of physical restraints, severe depression, bed rest in anorexia nervosa and other acute states of reduced activity.

It should also be noted that while palliative care patients are required to undergo VTE risk assessment, patients in the terminal stage of life may not require VTE prophylaxis and therefore may not need to undergo assessment. This decision should be aligned with the goals of care, which are to be considered in consultation with the patient and their family and/or carers.
12. MEDICAL CARE

2.1.3 Pregnant and Postpartum Women

All pregnant and postpartum women should undergo VTE risk assessment:
- During the first comprehensive antenatal assessment
- Within 24 hours of admission into a non-obstetric setting for a non-pregnancy related complaint
- Within 24 hours of admission into an obstetric setting for a pregnancy or non-pregnancy related complaint
- During postpartum care, within 2 hours of birth (vaginal or caesarean section)

2.1.4 Planned Admission and Day Surgery

Patients undergoing planned surgical and invasive interventions and/or imaging guided invasive interventions are required to be assessed by a medical officer to determine the risks and benefits of stopping pre-existing, established anticoagulation or anti-platelet therapy before discontinuing these therapies.

- Prophylaxis should be considered for day surgery patients based on evidence in situations of significantly reduced mobility relative to normal state, prolonged and/or general anaesthesia and for patients demonstrating one or more other risk factors.

Day surgery or procedure patients who receive only local anaesthesia without any reduction in mobility relative to normal state, do not require routine VTE assessment, unless otherwise clinically appropriate.

2.2 Risk Assessment

Systems introduced by PHOs should support clinicians to complete a VTE risk assessment for the identified target patient groups. Standardised, approved risk assessment tools are to be made available to all clinical staff. The risk assessment tool must ensure the following steps are undertaken during the assessment.

---

**Step 1. Assess risk**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intrinsic Risk:</th>
<th>Extrinsic Risk:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual patient risk factors i.e. age, prior history of VTE</td>
<td>Risks posed by hospitalisation or illness i.e. significantly reduced mobility relative to normal state, surgical intervention, mechanical/chemical restraint</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Step 2. Assess contraindications**

- a. Assess risk of bleeding or contraindication to pharmacological prophylaxis
- b. Assess any contraindication to mechanical prophylaxis

**Step 3. Formulate overall risk assessment outcome**

(Consider risk of prophylaxis against benefit)

- Decide if VTE prophylaxis is required

**Step 4. Select the form of prophylaxis to be used based on the risk assessment**

- Inform patient/carer of the VTE prophylaxis measures to be undertaken

**Step 5. Reassess regularly [at least every 7 days], if condition changes, and at transfer of care**
12. MEDICAL CARE

2.2.1 Assessing VTE Risk in Admitted Patients

Systems introduced by PHOs should support Attending Medical Officers (and delegates) to complete a VTE risk assessment for all adult patients admitted to NSW public hospitals within 24 hours.


2.2.2 Assessing VTE Risk in Pregnant and Postpartum Women

Systems introduced by PHOs should support midwives and medical officers to complete a VTE risk assessment. Where a midwife completes the assessment, systems need to ensure that the outcome of the assessment is referred to the attending medical officer (or delegate).

Any standard risk assessment tool used within the PHO must identify all pregnant and postpartum women to be at risk of VTE. These women should then be referred to an obstetrics consultant/team for risk assessment and decision to commence pharmacological and/or mechanical prophylaxis.

A pregnant woman admitted into a non-obstetric setting for a non-pregnancy related complaint can initially be assessed using a standard risk assessment tool given it complies with the requirements highlighted above.

A dedicated obstetric VTE risk assessment tool should be used to assess pregnant and postpartum women in an obstetrics setting. It should identify risk factors, contraindications and evidence-based treatment options that are unique to this target group.

A NSW Maternity Venous Thromboembolism Risk Assessment Tool has been developed to support implementation. See the CEC website for a copy of the tool (http://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/patient-safety-programs/adult-patient-safety/vte-prevention/maternity).

2.2.3 Documenting VTE Risk

Systems introduced by PHOs should support clinicians to document:

- That a risk assessment has been completed
- The outcome of the risk assessment.

When in use, clinicians are to document once a risk assessment has been completed on the dedicated VTE section of the acute National Inpatient Medication Chart (NIMC) (not included on the long-stay version).

Additional areas for documentation may include:

- Electronic medical record
- The patients’ health care record
- Approved risk assessment tools
- Maternal antenatal hand-held record
- Other locally approved forms, such as patient care plans.

2.2.4 Additional Prevention Strategies

Irrespective of a patient’s VTE risk outcome, the following prevention strategies should be considered and promoted.

- Patients remain adequately hydrated (unless contraindicated due to their clinical condition e.g. fluid restriction due to chronic heart failure) and must be encouraged to mobilise as soon as possible and to continue being mobile post discharge.2
- A plan for early mobilisation should be developed by a multidisciplinary team with the patient and their family/carer.
Prescribing and Administration of Appropriate Prophylaxis

If pharmacological and/or mechanical prophylaxis is required and appropriate, prophylaxis should be prescribed and administered as early as possible during the patient’s admission or as scheduled after the commencement of care and risk assessment is carried out. The choice of pharmacological and mechanical prophylaxis must be informed by evidence. PHOs should ensure that systems are in place to provide clinicians with access to evidenced-based guidelines, a clinical specialty protocol, as well as reference to drugs available on the hospital formulary. Pharmacological prophylaxis in this setting is in the form of an anticoagulant, and should be managed in accordance with the NSW Health High-Risk Medicines Management Policy Directive.

The standardised risk assessment tool made available should provide clinical decision support for Attending Medical Officers or other authorised prescribers such as Nurse Practitioners, when prescribing prophylaxis. This procedure should be read in conjunction with clinical guidelines on VTE Prophylaxis. These include (but not limited to):

- Venous thromboembolism in over 16s: reducing the risk of hospital-acquired deep vein thrombosis or pulmonary embolism VTE: Reducing the Risk for Patients in Hospital, NICE guideline [NG89], Mar 2018
- VTE Prophylaxis, BMJ Best Practice, July 2018
- Prevention and Treatment of VTE, International Consensus Statement, International Angiology, April 2013

### 2.3.1 Documentation of Prophylaxis

- Where electronic prescribing systems are in use, Attending Medical Officers or other authorised prescribers such as Nurse Practitioners should prescribe pharmacological and/or mechanical prophylaxis as per local protocol. Where available, prescribing via a VTE PowerPlan (or similar) is encouraged and to be promoted.

  - The regular NIMC (acute), contains a dedicated VTE section. Where this chart is used, the Attending Medical Officer (or delegate) or other authorised prescribers such as Nurse Practitioners, must prescribe pharmacological and/or mechanical prophylaxis within the dedicated section. Prescribing outside of this section may lead to duplication of orders and risk of patient harm.

Where other versions of the NIMC without this section are in use, such as the long-stay chart, prescribing should be completed within the normal sections.

Checks associated with mechanical prophylaxis must also be documented at least twice daily by nursing staff/midwives. Checks should be documented on the NIMC (acute) or in an electronic medical record, where mechanical prophylaxis has been prescribed.

- For pregnant women, prescribed prophylaxis is also to be noted on the Antenatal hand held record, and electronic antenatal record where in use.

### 2.3.2 Contraindications and other considerations with Prophylaxis

- The risk of bleeding is a significant complication of pharmacological prophylaxis, particularly in surgical patients. The decision to commence pharmacological prophylaxis should be made after considering the benefits of treatment i.e. reducing VTE risk, against the risk associated with treatment (bleeding and other contraindications).
To support clinicians select the most appropriate prophylaxis for their patients, the standardised risk assessment tool should promote consideration of absolute or relative contraindications to pharmacological prophylaxis before a patient is prescribed therapy. Where an absolute contraindication exists (e.g. bleeding disorders, active bleeding), the use of pharmacological prophylaxis should be avoided due to life-threatening risk, while relative contraindications require caution to be exercised and the benefits of therapy to be weighed against the risk. Where pharmacological prophylaxis is contraindicated, mechanical prophylaxis remains an option and should be considered, as indicated, until the patient is mobile.

- Prescribers should refer to the current product information to select a safe dose for individual patients. Some agents are contraindicated or may require a reduction of dose i.e. in elderly patients or those with renal impairment.
- Prescribers should take care to select the dose recommended for prophylaxis and not the dose recommended for therapeutic anticoagulation.

- In certain clinical scenarios where there is limited evidence and guidance available, careful consideration of individual patient risks and specialist advice may be required. This includes the following scenarios:
  - Peri-operative and peri-procedural management with anticoagulants
  - Cessation of oestrogen-containing oral contraceptives or hormone replacement therapy, if clinically appropriate.
  - Selecting an appropriate dose for extremes of total body weight (<50kg or >120kg or body mass index ≥35kg/m²).

**Anaesthesia and VTE**

It is recommended that clinicians follow the advice provided in Section 5.9 of the Acute pain management: scientific evidence guidelines produced by the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists and Faculty of Pain Management (2015)³

For a practical guide on how to appropriately manage pregnant women receiving pharmacological prophylaxis requiring anaesthesia, clinicians may refer to the published consensus statement by the Society for Obstetric Anaesthesia and Perinatology (SOAP)⁴

2.4 Partnering with Patients

Systems introduced by PHOs should support clinicians to partner with patients and their carers in managing their risks and to have an active role in preventing VTE. Systems are in place for clinicians to provide patients information about VTE to enable shared-decision making regarding their VTE prevention plan.

Patients, carers and their families should be informed about:

- What a VTE is
- Signs and symptoms of VTE
- Risk factors specific to the patient’s condition
- Effective interventions to reduce the risk of VTE developing
- Any pharmacological and/or mechanical prophylaxis they are receiving
- VTE prevention discharge plans (where required).

Written information should accompany any counselling points. Patient information highlighting the risk of developing a VTE in hospital should be available, and patient leaflets summarising key points should be provided. Resources are available at:
12. MEDICAL CARE


2.4.1 Documenting Patient Information

When a treatment decision has been made, clinicians should document that the patient has received an explanation of risks and benefits of prophylaxis, including the provision of additional information regarding VTE prevention. This should be recorded within the patients’ health care record and/ or other approved form or tool.

2.5 Reassessing VTE Risk

Systems are in place for clinicians to undertake a reassessment of patient’s VTE and bleeding risks:

- Regularly as clinically appropriate, as a minimum every 7 days
- When clinical condition changes (e.g. unplanned surgery, changes in mobility)
- At transfer of care.²
- Pregnant and Postpartum Women with a protracted antenatal admission should be reassessed every 7 days, as a minimum

Reassessment is required to:

- ensure that appropriate methods of VTE prophylaxis are used
- ensure that VTE prophylaxis is being used correctly
- identify adverse events resulting from VTE prophylaxis or its absence.

2.5.1 Reassessing Risk at Discharge and Continuity of Care

Systems should enable clinicians to reassess patients identified at risk at the point of discharge. Consideration should be made regarding the need for extended prophylaxis.

Attending Medical Officers are to ensure the development of a prospective action plan for patients requiring continuation of pharmacological and/ or mechanical prophylaxis on transfer home or to another care level. The plan is to be communicated in a timely manner to the patient’s primary healthcare provider and explained to the patient/carer/family. This is particularly important when patients are transferred into community or residential aged care.

Clinicians must comply with key principles for transition of care and clinical handover with special regard to VTE prophylaxis treatment. This should occur at all transition points including transfer home or to another care service. Key principles are outlined in the Venous Thromboembolism Prevention Clinical Care Standard and the NSW Health Clinical Handover Policy Directive.

On transfer to home or another care service, a patient’s supply of prophylactic medication should be arranged to enable uninterrupted treatment. Referral to another care model should be arranged including assurance of follow-up and continuity of supply as needed. Patients should be informed of the reason for ongoing treatment and the anticipated timeframe for discontinuation of the treatment. Patients must receive education on the administration of treatment as needed and be encouraged to mobilise (unless instructions for mobility restriction are in place).
PHOs must ensure they have in place a monitoring and evaluation program that includes regular review of VTE prevention indicators to monitor performance, assess the effectiveness of VTE prevention strategies and assist with identifying areas that may require focused attention.

PHOs are required to regularly report on VTE prevention indicators to local governing quality committees and other relevant State committees.

As a minimum, the following indicators are required to be included in the monitoring and evaluation framework:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Type of Measure</th>
<th>Suggested Data Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Rate of Hospital Acquired VTE events where prophylaxis was not prescribed appropriate to the level of risk in accordance with guidelines or local protocols. Numerator = Hospital-acquired VTE events where appropriate prophylaxis was not prescribed Denominator = All hospital-acquired VTE events | Outcome | • Clinical Audit  
• Non-Fatal VTE Incident Tool  
• Incident Investigations i.e. RCAs |
| 2. Hospital Acquired VTE (rate per 1000 separations). | Outcome | • HIE  
• QIDS |
| 3.1. Rate of documented VTE risk assessment completion within 24 hours for all adult inpatient admissions. | Process | • Clinical Audit (QARS question ID 7110)  
• eMaternity |
| 3.2. Rate of documented VTE risk assessment completion on the first comprehensive antenatal assessment (for Maternity patients) | Process | • Clinical Audit (QARS)  
• eMaternity |
| 3.3. Rate of documented VTE risk assessment completion during postpartum care, within 2 hours of birth (vaginal or caesarean section) (for Maternity patients). | Process | • Clinical Audit (QARS)  
• eMaternity |
| 3.4. Rate of documented VTE risk assessment completion for adult patients discharged from ED with isolated lower limb injury requiring temporary lower limb mobilisation (for ED patients). | Process | • Clinical Audit (QARS) |
| 4. Rate of VTE prophylaxis appropriate to the level of risk in accordance with Guidelines or local protocols. | Process | • Clinical Audit (QARS question ID 7115) |

2.6.1 Clinical Audit

Regular clinical auditing is required to capture the necessary data to inform PHOs on VTE prevention indicators i.e. process measures relating to compliance with risk assessment completion and the prescription of appropriate prophylaxis.

For the purpose of monitoring performance for assurance, PHOs must review VTE indicator data from regular clinical auditing. As a guide, clinical audit should occur at least annually if the system is considered to be in a reliable state and more frequently i.e. quarterly to biannually where compliance is considered unreliable.

As well as providing assurance for local VTE prevention performance, data collection by clinical auditing and feedback play an important role in driving improvement.

Measurement for improvement generally require smaller sample sizes and short timeframes for data collection, to allow it to be repeated frequently for trending changes over time.
A simple VTE Prevention questionnaire is available within Quality Audit Reporting System (QARS) to assist PHOs to conduct clinical audit to capture data on VTE process measures and assessing compliance with the Prevention of Venous Thromboembolism Policy Directive. The questionnaire can be modified by adding or removing questions to suit local needs. However, the following questions must be included in any locally adapted QARS questionnaires:

- Rate of documented VTE risk assessment completion within 24 hours for all adult inpatient admissions. (question ID 7110)
- Rate of VTE prophylaxis appropriate to the level of risk in accordance with Guidelines or local protocols. (question ID 7115).


The following audit tools and metrics are also available to assist with review of clinical processes and outcome. These include:

- National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (NSQIP). Hospitals participating in the Agency for Clinical Innovation’s NSQIP Collaborative may have access to data presenting performance against VTE metrics relating to preventable surgical complications.

### 2.6.2 Incident Reporting

All patients who present on admission with a VTE resulting from a previous hospitalisation (within 90 days of discharge) or who develop a VTE during hospitalisation must have the incident documented in the patient’s health care record and recorded into the incident monitoring system.

Any significant unexpected change in a patient’s condition relating to VTE prophylaxis including embolism and bleeding, must be considered an adverse event and be recorded in the incident monitoring system with the appropriate level of investigation initiated as per the requirements outlined in the *NSW Health Incident Management* Policy Directive.

### 2.6.3 Feedback to Clinical Staff

The PHO’s VTE prevention monitoring and evaluation program must include a system of communicating VTE indicator data to clinicians in a timely manner to enable practice and quality improvement.

VTE incidents are to be reviewed with other clinical indicators and to be included as part of the existing hospital morbidity and mortality review process. Apart from PHO’s Safety and Quality Committees, Morbidity and Mortality meetings should be considered as a forum to present data on VTE indicators.

### 2.6.4 Staff Education

Clinical staff should be provided with education on VTE prevention strategies.

Training resources can be found at:

- *Electronic Venous Thromboembolism (VTE) Risk Assessment Tool for Adult Inpatients’ My Health Learning (Course Code: 212082420)*
12. MEDICAL CARE


3 REFERENCES


315(03/12/19)
## Prevention of Venous Thromboembolism Framework

### To Prevent VTE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify Patients</th>
<th>What this means for Patients</th>
<th>Actions Required by NSW Hospitals and Health Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patients with a potential to be at risk of VTE are identified</td>
<td>1. All patients admitted to a ward or unit will undergo VTE risk assessment. 2. All patients discharged from Emergency Departments with significantly reduced mobility relative to normal state will undergo VTE risk assessment. 3. All pregnant and postpartum women will undergo appropriate VTE risk assessment during the first comprehensive antenatal assessment, any antenatal admission (including for non-pregnancy related complaints) and during postpartum care, within 2 hours of birth (vaginal or caesarean section).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Assess and Document VTE Risk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VTE assessment is promptly completed. Risk vs. benefit of treatment is considered. The outcome of the assessment is clearly documented and easily accessible by health care providers.</td>
<td>2.1 VTE risk assessments are completed within 24 hours of patient admission. 2.2 A standardised, approved risk assessment tool should be made available to all clinical staff. 2.3 The risk assessment tool enables clinicians to weigh the risk of clotting against the risk of bleeding. 2.4 Outcome of the risk assessment is clearly documented in an approved record such as: (i) Electronic medical record (ii) National Inpatient Medication Chart (NIMC) (iii) Patient health care record (iv) Approved risk assessment tool (v) Mater melt antenatal hand-hold record (vi) Other locally approved form.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Prescribe Appropriate Prophylaxis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treatment is based on the best clinical knowledge and evidence. Prophylactic therapy is clearly documented and easily accessible by health care providers.</td>
<td>3.1 Clinical decision support is available for all clinicians, and encourages review of risk vs. benefit of prophylactic treatment. 3.2 Clinical decision support is based on evidence-based guidelines. 3.3 Access to a range of antithrombotic agents is available on the formulary. 3.4 Where the regular NIMC is used, prescribing of both pharmacological and mechanical prophylaxis is included in the dedicated VTE section.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Engage the Patient

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decisions actively involve patient/carers. Patients/carers are aware of the risks and symptoms of VTE.</td>
<td>4.1 Patients/carers are informed of VTE risks and treatment options. 4.2 Patients/carers are involved in treatment plans. 4.3 A standardised patient information leaflet is available for clinicians to provide to patients.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Reassess

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patients are regularly reassessed for VTE throughout admission. Prevention of VTE continues after discharge if required.</td>
<td>5.1 VTE risk is reassessed regularly (at least every 7 days) OR as clinical condition changes. 5.2 Pregnant and postpartum women with a protracted admission should be reassessed every 7 days as a minimum. 5.3 Clinicians are prompted at discharge to assess the need for prolonged prophylaxis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Monitor Practice

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Actions Required by NSW Hospitals and Health Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hospitals monitor performance and strive to improve processes. Health professionals are updated and aware of requirements.</td>
<td>6.1 Rates of risk assessment completion are audited periodically (at least annually, or more frequently if compliance is poor). 6.2 Rate of provision of appropriate prophylaxis are audited periodically. 6.3 Results of audit and review are reported back to clinicians to drive change. 6.4 Clinicians are educated on the need for VTE prevention measures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. MEDICAL CARE

TERM CHANGEOVER – ENSURING AN EFFECTIVE HANDOVER OF PATIENT CARE
(GL2008_015)

Guidelines to ensure that patient care and patient flow are maintained by clinical teams during end of
term changeover for junior medical staff and registrars.


USING RESUSCITATION PLANS IN END OF LIFE DECISIONS (PD2014_030)


PURPOSE

This policy directive supersedes GL2008_018 Decisions relating to No Cardio-Pulmonary
Resuscitation (CPR) Orders.

Planning care for patients who are approaching end of life will generally involve a shift in the focus of
care away from aggressive medical intervention and towards a palliative approach, opting out of
Rapid Response Systems and/or initiating palliative care.

Making a Resuscitation Plan is one important step in this process of planning quality end of life care.
A Resuscitation Plan is a medically authorised order to use or withhold resuscitation measures and
which documents other aspects of treatment relevant at end of life.

This document describes the standards and principles relating to appropriate use of Resuscitation
Plans by NSW Public Health Organisations for patients 29 days and older. Standardisation of
documents in this aspect of end of life planning will assist quality care delivery.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Development of standardised Resuscitation Plans and implementation policy is required by the NSW
Health Advance Planning for Quality Care at End of Life: Action Plan 2013-2014 (Action 2.1, 2.2).
Standardisation of documents in this aspect of end of life planning will assist quality care delivery.

This policy directive will commence two weeks after release when the state Resuscitation Plans (adult
and paediatric) are available.

All Public Health Organisations must:
• Adopt the state Resuscitation Plans (adult and paediatric). These should replace similar
existing LHD forms (e.g. No CPR Orders, Not for Resuscitation Orders).
• Incorporate evaluation of whether Resuscitation Plans were completed into death audit
protocols.

NSW Health Resuscitation Plans are not valid for community patients under the medical care of a
doctor who is not a NSW Health staff member. General Practitioners with admitting rights are
considered NSW Health staff.
IMPLEMENTATION

Roles and Responsibilities

NSW Ministry of Health
• Significant developments regarding end of life planning and care are underway in NSW Health that impact use of Resuscitation Plans. These include death audit standards, development of clinical triggers for end of life planning and targeted education for health professionals. However, as these broader implementation measures are still under development, this Policy Directive has been confined in scope to principles and standards related to usage of the Resuscitation Plan.
• Provide current policy to support use of Resuscitation Plans. A guideline will be developed in 18 months addressing how Resuscitation Plans integrate with other state level projects and programs. The Ministry will also evaluate the Resuscitation Plan forms in two years to assess whether they are meeting clinical need given rapid changes in End of Life care in NSW.
• Establish an end of life education strategy in partnership with the pillar agencies, that includes best practice approaches to training health professionals in having end of life conversations (relevant to Resuscitation Plans).
• Develop an appropriate service measure for Resuscitation Plans in readiness for the 2015/16 Service Level Agreements.

LHD and Specialty Network Chief Executives
• Identify an appropriate Executive Sponsor for this policy.
• Establish means of identifying the Person Responsible as a routine part of procedures for all admissions.
• Integrate Resuscitation Plans into the electronic Medical Record.
• Include assessment of whether Resuscitation Plans have been completed prior to in-hospital deaths as part of death audit standards.

Ambulance Service NSW
• Incorporate Resuscitation Plans into relevant protocols.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Purpose

This policy directive supersedes GL2008_018 Decisions relating to No Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Orders.

This document describes the standards and principles relating to appropriate use of Resuscitation Plans by NSW Public Health Organisations for patients 29 days and older. A Resuscitation Plan is a medically authorised order to use or withhold resuscitation measures and which documents other aspects of treatment relevant at end of life.

Development of standardised adult and paediatric Resuscitation Plans and implementation policy is required by the NSW Health Advance Planning for Quality Care at End of Life: Action Plan 2013-2018 (Action 2.1 and 2.2).
12. MEDICAL CARE

Standardisation of documents in this aspect of end of life planning will assist quality care delivery.

Key terms used in this document are defined in the Glossary.

1.2 Mandatory Requirements

All Public Health Organisations must adopt the NSW Health Resuscitation Plans (adult and paediatric). Resuscitation Plans are intended for use in all NSW Public Health Organisations, including acute facilities, sub-acute facilities, ambulatory and community settings, and NSW Ambulance for patients 29 days and older.

NSW Health Resuscitation Plans are not valid for community patients under the medical care of a doctor that is not a NSW Health staff member. General Practitioners with admitting rights are considered NSW Health staff.

1.3 Legal and legislative framework

The Resuscitation Plan – state forms included in this Policy Directive are legally enforceable medical orders and must be followed by staff.

Interdisciplinary disputes should be managed in accordance with GL2005_057 End-of-Life Care and Decision-Making - Guidelines.

The existing legal framework in NSW supports end of life decisions, including Resuscitation Plans and permits:

• Refusal of any and all life-sustaining treatments by a person with decision making capacity at the end of life.
• Advance refusal for a time of future incapacity.
• Decisions made by a doctor, in consultation with and preferably agreement of the Person Responsible, where a person has no decision-making capacity to withhold or withdraw life-sustaining measures so as to focus primarily on palliative care. (Advance Planning for Quality Care at End of Life: Action Plan 2013-2018).

A Resuscitation Plan must be made:

• With reference to pre-planning by patients (such as Advance Care Plans or Directives).
• In consultation with the patient/Person Responsible.
• Taking into account the current clinical status, prognosis, wishes of the patient, and goals of care.

In NSW, common law governs many aspects of end of life decision-making, including use of Advance Care Directives and these must be adhered to when valid. In NSW an Advance Care Directive must be adhered to provided that it is made voluntarily by a capable adult; was made without undue influence; and it is clear and unambiguous in applying to the circumstances at hand.

The NSW Guardianship Act 1987 governs the legal standards for substitute decision-making i.e. regarding roles and responsibilities of the Person Responsible.

See also web-resource End of life decisions, the law and clinical practice: legal considerations for health care practitioners in NSW (2014).
2. WHEN RESUSCITATION PLANS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED

Planning care for patients who are approaching end of life will generally include a shift in the focus of care away from aggressive medical intervention and towards a palliative approach; opting out of Rapid Response Systems; initiating palliative care; and/or making arrangements to facilitate dying in place of choice. Making a Resuscitation Plan is one important step in this process of planning. (See Figure 1)

Improved end of life care will be achieved, in part, if conversations between doctors, patients and families about changing goals of care and appropriate use of life-sustaining measures as end of life approaches are undertaken earlier than currently occurs.

Patients and their families should be genuinely reassured that quality, individualised care consistent with the ongoing goals of treatment will continue to be provided to the patient, regardless of whether or not resuscitation is appropriate.

Decisions to withhold CPR and other resuscitation measures seek to avoid unwanted, excessively burdensome or insufficiently beneficial interventions for patients at the end of life. At some point in the course of life-limiting illness, a shift in the focus of care away from aggressive intervention and towards a palliative approach is often the agreed outcome.

2.1 Triggers for discussing a Resuscitation Plan

Resuscitation Planning is one component of Advance Care Planning and End of Life care (see Figure 1).

Discussing a Resuscitation Plan should be undertaken:

- If the patient’s recovery is uncertain.
- If the treating clinician asks him or herself, ‘Would I be surprised if this patient were to die in 6-12 months?’ (so-called ‘surprise question’) and the answer is ‘No’.
- If a patient clinically deteriorates requiring activation of a Rapid Response System, or is anticipated to do so.
- If the patient’s condition is considered high risk, for example recurrent admission to hospital with severe chronic illness; a diagnosis of metastatic cancer; steady deterioration of a chronic respiratory, cardiac, liver or neurological illness; and other progressive advanced life limiting illnesses e.g. severe end stage dementia or frailty.

2.2 Rationale for withholding resuscitation

In general, the rationales for not instituting CPR are:

2.2.1 Where there is a clearly stated, adequately informed and properly documented or verbally expressed refusal by a person with decision-making capacity.

- Such a person has a lawful right to refuse any medical interventions, including resuscitation and other emergency interventions, even where that refusal will predictably result in death. This decision legally takes precedence over the contrary wishes of family or treating doctors; or
2.2.2 Where the person has no capacity to make this decision, there is an adequately informed and properly documented decision to withhold resuscitation by the Attending Medical Officer in consultation with the Person Responsible.

- This should be based on any known previous refusal of resuscitation or, in the absence of such refusal, a decision that resuscitation would not be in the patient’s best interests. The Attending Medical Officer must also document a reason for overriding a documented decision such as an Advance Care Directive, for example that it does not adequately apply to the clinical situation at hand; or

2.2.3 Where the Attending Medical Officer judges that resuscitation offers no benefit or where the benefits are small and overwhelmed by the burden to the patient.

- Given that judgments about the benefits or otherwise of a therapy ultimately reflect the values, beliefs and hopes/goals of the patient, any decision to withhold resuscitation on clinical grounds alone must be carefully considered, properly justified and documented.
- Focussing on patient comfort also entails withholding life-sustaining measures sometimes considered to be of negligible benefit (for example, where the ability to restore spontaneous rhythm or circulation with CPR is highly unlikely).
- A medical practitioner does not need to obtain agreement from the patient or family to withhold interventions considered to be of negligible benefit, but it is still good clinical practice to discuss why these are not being offered in the context of broader end of life goals of care conversation. This includes scenarios that may present at an Emergency Department. If consent is not sought, the reasons why should be documented in the patient record. It is also the case that engaging patients in such discussion does not obligate the treating team to provide treatments that they believe are considered to be of negligible benefit.

2.3 Disagreement about end of life decisions

- Planning end-of-life care is an iterative or cyclic process based on assessment, disclosure, discussion and consensus building with the patient and/or their family and the treatment team. Disagreement within families of patients without decision-making capacity, or between families and the health care team about whether resuscitation is appropriate can generate significant impediments to good patient care planning.
- Use a Resuscitation Plan to record agreement. Efforts to reach consensus and/or resolve disagreement within a family or between the family and the treating team about appropriate use of life-sustaining measures should precede this.
- Where a patient, family or Person Responsible requests a second medical opinion as to the predicted outcome with, or without resuscitation, such requests should always be respected and facilitated.

3. USE OF THE RESUSCITATION PLAN FORMS

The following section addresses the technical requirements, rationales and related clinical process when completing Resuscitation Plans. These are presented so as to complement the structure of the Resuscitation Plans and the clinical process they are used in.
3.1 Is there evidence of any prior planning?

- Check if the patient has previously prepared an Advance Care Plan (ACP) or Advance Care Directive (ACD). The ACD/ACP reflects the patient’s preferences/wishes, often including those relevant to resuscitation. An ACP often becomes a synopsis of previous discussions which will be useful in completing the ‘goals of care’ section. Where one exists, this must inform decisions recorded in the Resuscitation Plan. This ‘translation’ or bridging step is critical if patients’ prior wishes are to effectively determine how health professionals practically respond to clinical deterioration, most importantly as death approaches.

- If the ACD/ACP is ambiguous or it is unclear if it applies to the situation at hand, conversation should be revisited with the patient and/or Person Responsible, as appropriate.

- Identify the patient’s Person Responsible irrespective of whether the patient now has decision capacity. An informed Person Responsible is important to support decision-making where the patient does not have capacity at many times throughout illness, including but not limited to end of life.

3.2 Capacity and participation

- Doctors prescribing medical orders, including ‘Resuscitation Plans’, hold responsibility for reaching those decisions, in consultation with patients.

- Where the patient does not have decision-making capacity, a consensus building approach to end-of-life decision-making that considers the patient’s best interests as paramount is recommended. The patient, Person Responsible and/or family should be informed about the nature of CPR; the likely effects of resuscitation, including CPR, in this particular circumstance; and its possible adverse outcomes e.g. broken ribs; and the consequences of not instituting CPR. These should be discussed in the context of broader goals of care applicable at that time. As part of such discussions it may be helpful to seek advice from other health professionals who may have been involved in the care of the patient and had conversations about end of life care, such as the patient’s General Practitioner. The Attending Medical Officer should recommend a course of action when discussing resuscitation in the context of goals of care with the patient, Person Responsible or family.

3.2.1 Where the patient wishes to discuss resuscitation

- Where the patient has decision capacity and is willing to discuss resuscitation and treatment goals, they should be asked who (if anyone) they would like to be involved in discussions.

- Patients and families from culturally and linguistically diverse groups may have preferences for different decision-making styles, other than involving solely the patient and their doctor. These should be explored and cultural differences respected. For Aboriginal patients, the involvement of an Aboriginal Liaison Officer, where available, is advised.

3.2.2 Where the patient does not wish to discuss resuscitation

- Discussion about diagnosis, prognosis and preferences for care should be encouraged, but not forced. A patient’s desire not to discuss resuscitation, or the possibility of his or her own death, should always be respected and emotional support provided, for example through social work or chaplaincy as appropriate.

- In situations where the patient does not want to discuss or decide on resuscitation, the health care professional should establish whether the patient would prefer to have others make resuscitation planning decisions on their behalf.

3.2.3 Where the patient does not have decision-making capacity

- Where decision-making capacity is impaired, reasonable efforts should be considered to maximise his or her capacity to participate in decisions regarding resuscitation.

- If there is any doubt that the patient has sufficient decision-making capacity, their decision-making capacity should be assessed and documented in the patient’s records. See Capacity Toolkit:

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Where the patient lacks decision-making capacity, the Attending Medical Officer or their delegate should identify the Enduring Guardian (or other category of Person Responsible). Enduring Guardians can refuse life sustaining measures if they have been expressly given such a power in their appointment.

### 3.2.4 Where the person’s wishes regarding resuscitation are unknown

- Cardiorespiratory arrest may occur before there has been sufficient time to hold discussions regarding resuscitation. Health professionals still need to decide about use of resuscitation without knowing the person’s wishes in some circumstances. This is addressed in PD2005_406 Consent to Medical Treatment - Patient Information in providing medical treatment in emergency situations.
- Not having a Resuscitation Plan does not necessarily mean that resuscitation is a default action that must be applied in all situations. Clinical judgement should be used where resuscitation is manifestly inappropriate and/or the patient is deceased.

### 3.2.5 Withholding resuscitation without explicit discussion

Where there is time to plan end of life care and to make decisions regarding resuscitation, then the discussion should be had. There are some exceptions to the general requirement to discuss a Resuscitation Plan with the patient, or Person Responsible, or family:

- The patient (Person Responsible/Enduring Guardian/or family) does not wish to discuss resuscitation. Decisions may then be undertaken by the Attending Medical Officer.
- The patient is aware they are dying and has already expressed a desire for palliative care.
- The health care facility does not provide resuscitation as a matter of course, consistent with the values and practices relevant to their patient population, such as hospices, and this has been made clear to the patient and their family when the facility assumes care; or
- The patient has had a prior therapeutic relationship with a doctor other than the Attending Medical Officer and prior discussion has made the patient’s views regarding resuscitation apparent.

### 3.3 Clinical interventions and monitoring

- Vital sign monitoring should be (re)considered if the patient is in their last days and this should be consistent with monitoring frequency prescribed on the Standard Adult General Observation chart, or equivalent standard observation chart.
- Implantable devices such as defibrillators or pacemakers may need to be deactivated in patients at end of life.
- Nurses may call for medical review of unrelieved symptoms associated with dying, even where activating an urgent Clinical Review call has been considered unnecessary. A plan for monitoring and managing symptoms associated with dying should be put in place if this is the case.

### 3.4 Referral/Transfer

- ‘Referral to palliative care’ means referral for specialist palliative care review.
- ‘Referral home’ may be applicable in some scenarios where discharge to supported care may be feasible and appropriate.
- Careful consideration should be given to the need for, and appropriateness of transfer of an individual with a ‘Resuscitation Plan’ in place where there is possible need for resuscitation en route, for example if the individual is pre-terminal.
- NSW Health Resuscitation Plans are valid for use by NSW Ambulance staff in all situations involving patient contact.

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• A hard copy of the Resuscitation Plan should accompany the patient on inter-facility transfer.
• Where a patient is transferred to a non-NSW Health facility, the receiving medical practitioner should be encouraged to review the Resuscitation Plan’s contents and consider whether they authorise a consistent Plan (according to that facility’s documentation protocol). Immediate repeat conversation with the patient or family about the decision to use a local Resuscitation Plan is not necessarily required.

3.5 Authorising and Signing the Resuscitation Plan
• Every patient who is admitted to a public hospital is admitted under the bed care of a doctor (Attending Medical Officer) who has medico-legal responsibility for that patient. As part of the AMO’s responsibility, it is incumbent that they or their delegate clarify with others including the health practitioners who may have known that patient for many years (such as the patient’s General Practitioner), about the patient’s background, ongoing management and resuscitation or advance care plans.
• Discussion with the patient/Person Responsible about resuscitation should generally be undertaken by the most experienced clinician.
• Neither the patient, nor their Person Responsible, is required to sign the Resuscitation Plan.
• The ‘delegated signatory Medical Officer’ e.g. registrar who is not the Attending Medical Officer may undertake the conversation with the patient/Person Responsible and complete and sign the Resuscitation Plan. However, this must be authorised by the responsible Attending Medical Officer at the earliest opportunity.
• Delegation to a junior medical officer should only occur with adequate training, supervision and support. If a junior medical officer is required to discuss and document a Resuscitation Plan (e.g. out of hours) this must be discussed with the Attending Medical Officer at the earliest opportunity.
• Both sides of the form must be completed and signed.
• Consistent with PD2005_406, other health care professionals (including nurses) cannot be delegated the task of informing patients or obtaining consent for resuscitation planning. When requested by a patient, they are permitted to provide information and should document this in the medical record.
• A copy of the form may be provided to the patient or Person Responsible.

3.6 Reviewing the Resuscitation Plan
• A fixed frequency for review is not appropriate for all scenarios. Generally, a Resuscitation Plan needs to be clarified from one acute admission to the next where a change in prognosis is likely.
• A Resuscitation Plan may be valid for up to 3 months for frequent and routine ‘admissions’ e.g. renal dialysis.
• A Resuscitation Plan should be reviewed prior to elective minor procedures.
• A Resuscitation Plan may be compatible with palliative surgical procedures, and potentially time and goal limited ICU support in some cases.
• Where surgery is planned for someone with a Resuscitation Plan, this should be reviewed in consultation with the patient, Person Responsible, anaesthetist and surgeon as to whether it is appropriate to suspend it during the intra- or post-operative period. This decision should be clearly documented in the medical record.

3.7 Revoking or amending the Resuscitation Plan
• The procedure for revoking the Resuscitation Plan is to rule a diagonal line through both sides, then print and sign your name and date on the line.
• For significant amendments (for example, a change to the CPR order), the Resuscitation Plan must be revoked and a new Plan completed.
For less significant amendments (for example, a change to the intervention section), the Resuscitation Plan can be amended and initialled. This should be documented in the medical record. It should be noted that this option may not exist if the form is included in an Electronic Medical Record. If this is the case, the Resuscitation Plan must be revoked and reissued – documentation in the medical notes alone is not sufficient.

### 3.8 Storage of Resuscitation Plans
- The current Resuscitation Plan must be made readily accessible to attending health professionals. It is preferable that multiple copies are not made because of the potential for confusion.
- It is recommended that the current hard copy should be kept at the front of the patient’s health record. Details of the Resuscitation Plan should be included in handover between shifts.
- Resuscitation Plans must be integrated into electronic health record systems in appropriate forms e.g. alerts/orders;
- Resuscitation Plans should be incorporated into hospital discharge summaries, where possible.

### 4. USE OF RESUSCITATION PLANS IN CHILDREN
- The general principles and process guiding the completion of a Resuscitation Plan are the same for children as for adults, with a focus on communication and exploration of goals of care with the person/s responsible, and where appropriate, the child.
- The Paediatric Resuscitation Plan is not intended for use in Neonates (patients under 29 days), although it may be used to guide discussions.
- The Paediatric Resuscitation Plan should be used for patients older than 29 days and up to and including the age of 17 years. The Adult Plan should be used for patients aged 18 years and over.
- Decisions to withhold resuscitation may also be required where a child is in care of the state. The Minister for Family and Community Services is required by the Children and Young Person’s Care and Protection Act to be responsible for this kind of medical decision. It is the Minister’s delegate (the Director-General, NSW Family and Community Services) who authorises a Resuscitation Plan where the Attending Medical Officer considers resuscitation limitation appropriate.
- Refer to PD2005_406 Consent to Medical Treatment - Patient Information for information regarding the potentially complex consent issues for children (persons aged under 16 years) and young people (persons aged 16 or 17).

### 5. GLOSSARY

**Attending Medical Officer**
The Attending Medical Officer (AMO) is the senior medical practitioner who has primary responsibility for the patient during admission. This medical officer is a consultant who may be a visiting medical officer or a staff specialist. The AMO may lead a team that includes related medical staff. This team plays a critical role in the clinical review of the patient.

**Advance Care Directive**
An Advance Care Directive is a type of advance planning tool that can only be completed by a person with decision capacity. These were formerly known, in particular in the US, as “living wills”. They should inform a Resuscitation Plan.
Advance Care Plan
An Advance Care Plan is the outcome of an Advance Care Planning process. Like an Advance Care Directive, an Advance Care Plan also records preferences about health and personal care and treatment goals. However, it may be completed by discussion or in writing and it may be made by, with, or for the individual. It should inform a Resuscitation Plan.

Capacity
In broad terms, when a person has capacity to make a particular decision they can:
• Understand the facts and the choices involved
• Weigh up the consequences
• Communicate the decision.

Clinical review
This is a patient review undertaken within 30 minutes by the attending medical team. Depending on local protocol, the review may be undertaken by a medical officer on call or an appropriately experienced Registered Nurse/Midwife, preferably First Line Emergency Care accredited or with post graduate qualifications in emergency/critical care nursing or other relevant qualifications.

Enduring Guardian
An Enduring Guardian is someone appointed by a person to make personal (including medical) or lifestyle decisions on their behalf when they are not capable of doing so for themselves. Enduring Guardians and those appointed by the Guardianship Tribunal may make end of life decisions on the person’s behalf. The appointment of an Enduring Guardian comes into effect when the appointing individual loses capacity to make personal or lifestyle decisions. People can choose which decisions (called functions) they want their Enduring Guardian to make. These functions are governed by the NSW Guardianship Act 1987

Goals of care
The general goal of medical treatment is the health and wellbeing of the patient. The specific goal of medical treatment may, in the circumstances, be cure of an illness, relief of the symptoms of an illness, stabilisation of the patient in a satisfactory condition, improvement in the way the patient dies, etc.

Person Responsible
The NSW Guardianship Act 1987 establishes who can give valid consent for medical treatment to an incompetent patient aged 16 years and over. The Act establishes a hierarchy for determination of who is the Person Responsible as follows:
• The patient’s lawfully appointed guardian (including an Enduring Guardian) but only if the order or instrument appointing the guardian extends to medical treatment.
• If there is no guardian, a spouse including a de facto spouse and same sex partner with whom the person has a close continuing relationship.
• If there is no such person, a person who has the care of the patient (otherwise than for fee and reward).
• If there is no such person, a close friend or relative.

Currently in NSW a Person Responsible who has not been appointed as Enduring Guardian or by the Tribunal does not have the same decision authority in end of life decisions. Guardians (including Enduring Guardians) can consent to treatment being withheld or withdrawn if they have been expressly given such a power in their appointment.
Rapid response
This refers to an immediate review undertaken by an individual or multidisciplinary team of healthcare professionals who have been trained and assessed to hold an advanced level of competence in resuscitation and stabilisation of patients. A Rapid Response call must be made if a patient’s observations fall into the ‘Red Zone’ of NSW Health Standard Observation Charts.

Resuscitation
Resuscitation encompasses a spectrum of emergency interventions such as supplemental oxygen, intravenous fluids and non-invasive ventilation. It is not limited to cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

Resuscitation Plan
A Resuscitation Plan is a medically authorised order to use or withhold resuscitation measures and document other time critical clinical decisions related to end of life. These were formerly called No CPR Orders. A Resuscitation Plan is made:
• With reference to pre-planning by patients (such as Advance Care Plans or directives)
• In consultation with patients/families
• Taking account of the current clinical status, as well as the wishes and goals of the patient.

Standard observation charts
Observation Charts approved for use by NSW Health System e.g. the Standard Adult General Observation (SAGO) Chart, Standard Paediatric Observation Chart (SPOC), Standard Maternity Observation Chart (SMOC), Adult and Paediatric Emergency Department Observation Charts.
## MEDICAL CARE

### Attachment 1: Resuscitation Plan – Adult (SMR020.056)

#### Patient Information
- **Name**: [redacted]
- **Gender**: Male
- **D.O.B**: [redacted]
- **Address**: [redacted]

#### Resuscitation Plan - Adult

For patients aged 18 years and over

Refer to PD2014_030

The Plan was discussed with and authorised by the Attending Medical Officer.

**Location/Room**

COMPLETE ALL DETAILS OR AFFIX PATIENT LABEL HERE

---

**Diagnosis**

[Blank space for diagnosis details]

---

Planning for end of life does not indicate a withdrawal of care, but the provision of symptom management, psychosocial and spiritual support after a compassionate discussion to allow appropriate care in the location of the patient or Person Responsible’s choice.

**Roe of Care**

[Blank space for Roe of Care details]

---

**Respiratory Support**

- **Intubation**
  - Yes
  - No

**Non-invasive ventilation**

- Yes
- No

**Bag & mask ventilation**

- Yes
- No

**Supplemental oxygen**

- Yes
- No

**Additional details**

[Blank space for additional details]

---

**Clinical Review Call are to be activated**

**Rapid Response Call are to be activated**

---

**In the event of cardiopulmonary arrest:**

- CPR
- No CPR

---

**Delegated signatory Medical Officer**

[Blank space for Medical Officer details]

---

**Print Name**

[Blank space for name]

**Designation**

[Blank space for designation]

**Time**

[Blank space for time]

---

**PAGER/PHONE**

[Blank space for phone number]

**DATE**

[Blank space for date]

**Signature**

[Blank space for signature]

---

To revoke this Resuscitation Plan, use a diagonal line through both sides. Print & sign your name & date on the line.
12. MEDICAL CARE

RESUSCITATION PLAN - ADULT
For patients aged 18 years and over
Refer to PD2014_030

Capacity and Participation:

Good practice involves consulting with the family. The patient and/or Person Responsible* have been advised they can revisit these decisions at any time.

This Plan was discussed with the patient and/or Person Responsible* (circle which one applies) on __________/_________/_________ (date).

- An interpreter (if required) was present
  - Yes ☐
  - No ☐
  - N/A ☐

If no to any of the above, or the patient and/or Person Responsible* has not been involved in discussions, record details in the patient's health care record.

Name of the Person Responsible* ________________________________ (PRINT)

Relationship to patient ________________________________ Phone number(s) ________________________________

*The NSW Guardianship Act establishes the Person Responsible who can give valid consents for medical treatment to an incompetent patient aged 18 years and over according to this hierarchy:
1. The patient's lawfully appointed guardian (including an enduring guardian) but only if the order or instrument appointing the guardian extends to medical treatment.
2. If there is no guardian, a spouse including a de facto spouse and same sex partner with whom the person has a close continuing relationship.
3. If there is no such person, a person who has the care of the patient (other than for tax and reward).
4. If there is no such person, a close friend or relative.

Rationale for withholding CPR:

- Withholding CPR complies with the competent patient's verbally expressed wishes.
- Withholding CPR complies with the patient's applicable Advance Care Directive.
- The patient's Enduring Guardian agrees that withholding CPR is consistent with the patient's wishes.
- The patient's condition is such that CPR is likely to result in negligible clinical benefit.

Referral/Transfer/EMR Alert: (tick as appropriate)

- Referral to Palliative Care Specialist/Team/Facility
- Transfer to other facility (specify)
- Transfer home (if patient/family choice)
- Has the EMR clinical alert 'Check Resuscitation Plan' been activated?

This Resuscitation Plan remains valid:

- Until a change in prognosis warrants medical review
- Until the patient and/or Person Responsible* request a change
- For this admission only (including inter-facility Ambulance transfers)
- For up to 3 months for frequent and routine admissions (e.g. dialysis)
- Until review date at __________/_________/_________ and/or time at ________

Delegated signatory Medical Officer (must have discussed the decision with the AMU)

PRINT NAME ________________________________ DESIGNATION ________________ TIME ________________

PAGER/PHONE ________________________________ DATE ________________ SIGNATURE ________________________________

Completes and signs both front and back pages. A copy must accompany the patient on all transfers & be included in discharge summary.

To revoke this Resuscitation Plan, rule a diagonal line through both sides. Print and sign your name and date on the line.

Page 2 of 2

NO WRITING

223(11/09/14)
12. MEDICAL CARE

Attachment 2: Resuscitation Plan – Paediatric (SMR020.055)

For patients aged between 20 days and 18 years
Refer to PD2014_030

This Plan was discussed with and authorized by the Attending Medical Officer

Patient Name: __________________________________________ (PRINT)

Date: __________/________/________ (DATE)

Diagnoses: ____________________________________________

Planning for end of life does not indicate a withdrawal of care, but the provision of symptom management, psychosocial and spiritual support after a compassionate discussion to allow appropriate care in the location of the patient / patients / guardian’s choice.

Are the patient’s advance care directive been considered in completing this form? Yes ☐ No ☐

The Goals of Care negotiated through conversations with the doctor/patient/family/guardians

Aside from an intense focus on comfort, in the event of deterioration the following may be appropriate:

- Respiratory Support:
  - Pharyngeal suction: Yes ☐ No ☐
  - Supplemental oxygen: Yes ☐ No ☐
  - Non-invasive ventilation: Yes ☐ No ☐

- Referral to ICU:
  - Yes ☐ No ☐

- Are other non-urgent interventions appropriate?: Yes ☐ No ☐

- (e.g. Vascular access, blood products, antibiotics, NG naso/oral feeds/fluids, imaging, Pathology, IV fluids.) Detail in patient record.

Clinical Review Calls are to be activated: Yes ☐ No ☐

Rapid Response Call are to be activated: Yes ☐ No ☐

In the event of cardiopulmonary arrest:

CPR ☐ No CPR ☐

(see rationale overleaf)

Delegated signatory Medical Officer (the AMO must authorize this decision)

PRINT NAME: ___________________________ DESIGNATION: ___________________________ TIME: ___________________________

PAGER/PHONE: ___________________________ DATE: ___________________________ SIGNATURE: ___________________________

Complete and sign both front and back pages. A copy must accompany the patient on all transfers & be included in discharge summary.

To revoke this Resuscitation Plan, rule a diagonal line through both sides. Print and sign your name and date on the line.

NSW HEALTH RESUSCITATION PLAN PAEDIATRIC (SMR020.055)

223(11/09/14)
RESUSCITATION PLAN - PAEDIATRIC
For patients aged between 28 days and 18 years
Refer to PD2014_030

Capacity and Participation:
Use this Resuscitation Plan for minors aged from 28 days up to and including 17 years. For 18 years and above use the Adult Resuscitation Plan.

Good practice involves consulting with the family. The patient / parents / guardian have been advised they can revisit these decisions at any time.

This Plan was discussed with the patient / parents / guardians (circle which one/s apply)

on / / / (date), include the family in discussions where possible.

• An interpreter (if required) was present. Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐

If no to any of the above, or the patient / parents / guardians have not been involved in discussions, record details in the patient’s health care record.

Name of the parents / guardians / family members: (PRINT)

Relationship to patient: Phone number/s:

When a child is under the parental responsibility of the Minister, only the Director General of FaCS has the delegated authority to authorize a Resuscitation Plan. Phone the Child Protection Unit 133 627 available 24/7.

Rationale for withholding CPR:
• Following consensus with the patient / parents / guardians, resuscitation is inappropriate. ☐
• The patient’s condition is such that CPR is likely to result in negligible clinical benefit. ☐

Referral/Transfer/eMR Alert: (tick as appropriate)
• Referral to Palliative Care Specialist/Team / Facility ☐
• Transfer to other facility (specify) ☐
• Transfer home (if patient/family choice) ☐
• Has the eMR clinical alert “Check Resuscitation Plan” been activated ☐

This Resuscitation Plan remains valid:
• Until a change in prognosis warrants medical review ☐
• Until the patient / parents / guardians request a change ☐
• For this admission only (including inter-facility Ambulance transfers). ☐
• For up to 3 months for frequent and routine admissions (e.g. regular immunoglobulin infusions) ☐
• Until review date at / / / and/or time at. ☐

Delegated signatory Medical Officer (the AM0 must authorize this decision)

PRINT NAME: DESIGNATION: TIME:

PAGER/PHONE: DATE: SIGNATURE:

Complete and sign both front and back pages. A copy must accompany the patient on all transfers & be included in discharge summary.

To revoke this Resuscitation Plan, rule a diagonal line through both sides. Print and sign your name and date on the line.
Attachment 3: Figure 1: Resuscitation Plans in the context of Advance Care Planning and End of Life

Outcomes of Advance Care Planning

Goals of care conversations

Diagnosis
Good Health
Chronic Illness
Clinical Signal events
Approaching End of Life
Clinical Signal events
Weeks
Days
DEATH
& Bereavement

Appointments of Enduring Guardianship

Advance Care Plans

Patient’s Values Profile

Correctly identified and engaged Persons Responsible

Resuscitation Plans

Recognition of Uncertain Recovery - eg. AMBER Care Bundle

TRIGGERS

Surprise question
Recovery uncertain
Recurrent admissions with severe chronic disease
Progressive advanced illness
Rapid response system activated or anticipated

+/−Advance Care Directives

/+−Last days of life care plans enacted
USE OF FINE BORE NASOGASTRIC FEEDING TUBES FOR ADULTS (PD2009_019)

Purpose

To provide appropriate and safe strategies to reduce risks associated with the use of fine bore nasogastric tubes for adult patients.

The strategies and process outlined in this policy are to be incorporated into health facility procedures in relation to fine bore nasogastric tubes.

Roles and responsibilities

Every person has responsibility for the health and welfare of our patients. To ensure our standard and commitment are delivered, the following responsibilities are assigned:

Chief Executives
• Assign responsibility and resources to promote the policy standard for the use of fine bore nasogastric feeding tubes.

Directors of Clinical Governance
• Promote safe fine bore nasogastric tube insertion and post insertion care.
• Promote the policy for the use of fine bore nasogastric feeding tubes within health services.
• Ensure successful implementation of the standard within their organisation.

Director of Clinical Operations, Hospital, facility and clinical stream managers:
• Distribute fine bore nasogastric tube insertion and placement decision support tools to all clinicians.
• Provide education and training on the correct and safe insertion and removal of fine bore nasogastric tubes.
• Ensure equipment such as pH indicator strips are available to ensure clinicians can assess fine bore nasogastric feeding tube placement.
• Ensure that any incorrect insertion and/or placement of fine bore nasogastric tubes are discussed at appropriate patient safety and clinical review meetings.

Clinicians:
• Complete education and training to ensure knowledge and practical skill for fine bore nasogastric tube insertion and care.
• Assess every patient for their increased risk of nasogastric tube complications.
• Correctly insert fine bore nasogastric tubes according to the patient’s risk.
• Reassess fine bore nasogastric tube placement as outlined in the standard.
• Document the correct insertion and placement of the fine bore nasogastric tube in the patient’s health care record.

About this standard

This document outlines strategies to reduce risks associated with the use of a fine-bore nasogastric tube in the adult patient. Descriptions of how to insert a nasogastric tube, when and how to test for placement of the tube are provided, with a flowchart outlining the steps to take when testing placement of newly inserted and in situ tubes.
The strategies and processes outlined in this document are to be incorporated into health facility procedures in relation to fine bore nasogastric tubes.

**Definition of fine bore nasogastric tubes**

A fine bore nasogastric tube is a narrow bore tube passed into the stomach via the nose as a means of meeting a patient’s nutritional needs when they are unable to maintain adequate oral intake. Fine bore nasogastric tubes are long term devices that can remain in situ up to six (6) weeks and can come with or without a guidewire.

**Scope**

**Who must use this standard?**

All clinical staff involved in the medical or surgical management of adults must be aware of these standards for use of nasogastric feeding tubes in adults.

**All clinical staff must:**

Complete education and training to ensure knowledge and practical skill for fine bore nasogastric tube insertion and care before undertaking an insertion of fine bore nasogastric tubes.

**Patient Population:**

This policy standard relates to the insertion and care of nasogastric tubes in adults only.

**Related Documents**

Fine Bore Nasogastric Feeding Tubes for Paediatric Patients Policy *(in development).*

**Risks - Incorrect insertion and placement of nasogastric feeding tubes**

Poor technique or using the incorrect procedure to insert or check tube placement can result in adverse patient outcomes including:

- Trauma to surrounding tissues;
- Pneumothorax;
- Aspiration associated with tube dislodgement;
- Pneumonitis from nasogastric feeds being deposited into the lungs;
- Misplacement of the tube into the lungs or rarely, in patients with cribriform plate disruption, intracranial insertion.

**BE AWARE THAT…**

- Critically ill patients may be at increased risk of nasogastric tube complications e.g. patients with neurological deficits.
- Insertion a fine bore nasogastric tube into a patient with no or diminished reflexes may cause accidental insertion into other anatomical structures.
- Caution is required when inserting fine bore nasogastric tubes in patients on anticoagulants or who have impaired blood clotting.
- Caution is required when inserting fine bore nasogastric tubes in patients with a tracheostomy because of the risk in inadvertent tracheal intubation (particularly patient’s with un-cuffed tracheostomy tubes).
- A fine bore nasogastric tube may cause gastric contents to leak from the stomach causing oesophageal erosions in patient with gastro-oesophageal reflux.
DO NOT....

☒ Reinsert the guidewire after tube insertion or to advance tube at anytime.
☒ Refrigerate fine bore nasogastric tubes prior to insertion.

**Do not insert nasogastric tubes for patients who:**

☒ Have oesophageal varices or signs of long standing alcohol abuse including hepatomegaly, Wernicke-Korsakoff’s syndrome, telangiectasia - patients are at higher risk of damage to the oesophageal wall causing veins to bleed uncontrollably.

☒ Have had upper gastrointestinal stricture/obstruction - perforation of the gastrointestinal tract may occur by the tube being pushed through the walls.

☒ Are post gastrectomy/oesophagectomy - may cause trauma to the anastomosis.

☒ Are post oesophageal/head and neck surgery - may damage or create orifices/fistula around surgery site. Inadvertent insertion of tube into other anatomical structures may occur.

☒ Have severe maxillary trauma/nasal injuries/possible base of skull fractures - tube may be incorrectly inserted into other anatomical structures e.g. intracranial or tracheopulmonary. Use an orogastric tube instead.

☒ Have had plastics reconstruction to mouth, nose or orophagus due to changes in the anatomy.

☒ Have a suspected spinal injury - tube normally requires hyperflexion of the neck which may lead to permanent damage.

* In extenuating circumstances, there may be a need to perform insertion of fine bore nasogastric tube in the above conditions. In this instance only a Medical Officer experienced in the insertion of fine bore nasogastric tube may perform the procedure.

**Strategies to reduce risk**

DO....

☒ Ensure that insertion of a tube is ordered by a medical officer, with the order and the rationale for insertion of the tube documented in the patient’s health care record.

☒ The patient must be assessed that they do not have a contraindication or potential complications for insertion of a fine bore nasogastric tube.

☒ Check the patient’s allergies, including allergies to Lidnocaine and to tape.

☒ Use feeding tubes that are opaque with markings to enable accurate measurement, identification and documentation of tube position.

☒ Undertake patient observations pre and post insertion of the nasogastric tube. Observations must include temperature, pulse, blood pressure, respiratory rate and oxygen saturation; and be documented in patient’s health care record.

☒ Confirm the position of the nasogastric tube radiologically after insertion if pH is inadequate to ascertain gastric placement i.e. pH < or equal to 5.

☒ Consider referring the patient to radiology for insertion of the nasogastric tube under imaging if the patient is known to have oesophageal varices, strictures or severe coagulopathy.
TIPS

- This procedure can be uncomfortable. Consider prescribing and administering a small amount of Lidnocaine gel in the nostril, and/or a spray of Lidnocaine to the back of the throat.²
- For patients with a dry mouth but impaired gag reflex moisten the mouth with a moist cotton bud prior to requesting them to swallow or ask them to sniff to lift the soft palate.²

Procedure for insertion of nasogastric tube²

1. Perform baseline observations - temperature, pulse, blood pressure, respiratory rate and oxygen saturation.
2. Read the manufacturer’s instructions and gather equipment required.
3. Explain procedure and equipment to the patient.
5. Preferably, sit patient upright with neck flexed for optimal neck/stomach alignment and to assist insertion.

Note: Spinal and some neurological patients must be positioned according to the treating medical team instructions throughout the procedure.

6. Examine nostrils for deformity/obstructions to determine best side for insertion. Ask the patient if they have any problems with one side of the nose more than others, e.g. sinusitis can increase irritation from the nasogastric tube.
7. Measure tubing from the tip of the nose to earlobe, then xiphisternum (point halfway between the end of the sternum and the navel). Note the cm marking on the tube at this measurement point.
8. If present, lubricate the end of the nasogastric tube as per manufacturer’s guidelines (usually with water flush) and ensure guidewire placement is locked within the tubing.
9. Lubricate the distal 5-10 cm of tube (with lubricant such as KY gel® if not self lubricating).
10. Pass tube via a nostril posteriorly and inferiorly. Ask the patient to sniff to ease passage from nose to oropharynx. Pause at this time and ensure the patient is not coughing.
11. Instruct patient to swallow and advance the tube as the patient swallows. Coincide advancement with the swallow, evidenced by elevation of the laryngeal cartilage; advance the tube into the oesophagus. For patients with intact gag reflex swallowing small sips of water or ice may enhance passage of tube into oesophagus.
   If resistance is met withdraw the tube 1 - 2cm and rotate it slowly with downward advancement toward closest ear. Do not force the nasogastric tube.
12. Withdraw tube immediately if the patient exhibits signs of distress, changes occur in patient’s respiratory status, if tube coils in mouth, if the patient begins to cough or changes colour.
13. Advance tube until mark is reached. Tape in place at this point before the tube moves and do not remove guidewire until the X-ray has been attended and reviewed or the tube placement has been confirmed.
12. MEDICAL CARE

14. Attach syringe or oral/enteral dispenser to the free end of the tube, aspirate sample of gastric contents (as described in flowchart below).

15. Test pH of the aspirate using indicator strips.

16. The pH must be < or equal to 5. If pH is not < or equal to 5, obtain an X-ray to verify placement before instilling any feedings/medications, or if you have concerns about the placement of the tube.

Note: This test is not useful in the presence of acid suppression therapy and an X-ray must be used confirm placement.

17. Perform observations - temperature, pulse, blood pressure, respiratory rate and oxygen saturation and compare with pre-procedure observations. Notify the medical team or medical officer on call if there is significant deviation from baseline observations or if change in condition.

18. Document in patient’s medical record reason for the tube insertion, nostril used, type and size of tube, the insertion distance and note the external length of the tube, the nature and amount of aspirate, and the effectiveness of the intervention. Document all observations.

Procedure for testing position of a nasogastric tube

It is recognised that the best method of determining nasogastric tube location is provided by reliably obtained and interpreted X-ray that visualises the entire course of the tube.\(^1\,^3\)

However, many factors, including exposure to radiation, delay in obtaining and interpreting radiographs, risk of tube misplacement while moving the patient, and the cost to the patient, contribute to the need for other reliable methods for confirming tube placement. Therefore:

DO:

- Follow the steps set out in the attached flowchart 1.
- Use radiography to check placement of tube if pH is not < or equal to 5.\(^1\)
- Test pH of aspirate using pH indicator strips. Indicator strips with 0.5 gradations or paper with a range of 0 to 6 or 1 to 11 is recommended.
- Check exit-point mark at nose for signs of any tube migration.

NOTE: While pH testing is helpful in evaluating tube placement on initial placement or before intermittent feeding, it’s of little use with regard to continuous feeding because most tube-feeding formulas have a pH value close to 6.6 and therefore tend to neutralise gastrointestinal pH.\(^1\)
DO NOT:

- Use auscultation of air insufflated through the feeding tube (‘whoosh’ test). There are many reports on the ineffectiveness of this method.\(^3,4,5,6\)

- Use absence of respiratory distress as an indicator of correct positioning. Observing for signs of respiratory distress is often ineffective in detecting a misplaced tube.\(^7,8\) Tubes can enter the respiratory tract without resulting in observable symptoms\(^8\), particularly if the patient is unconscious.\(^9\)

- Commence feed if aspirate pH > or equal to 6 (may occur with respiratory or oesophageal placement\(^15\)) or if in doubt about the position of the nasogastric tube.

- Use blue litmus paper to test the acidity/alkalinity of aspirate. It is not sufficiently sensitive to distinguish bronchial from gastric secretions.\(^11\)

- Rely on observations of bubbling at the proximal end of the tube. This method is unreliable because the stomach contains air and could falsely indicate respiratory placement.\(^12\)

- Rely on the appearance of the feeding tube aspirate to rule out misplacement. This method is unreliable because gastric contents can look similar to respiratory secretions.\(^13,14\)

**When to re-check the nasogastric tube position?**

- Following initial insertion
- Before administering each feed and/or giving medication.
- At least once per shift during continuous feeds.
- Following episodes of respiratory distress vomiting, retching or coughing. Note: the absence of coughing does not rule out misplacement or migration.
- If suspicion of tube displacement, e.g. poor tolerance to feed, reflux of feed into the throat, discomfort in the throat, change in tube length is suspected.
- If the patient has been transferred from one clinical area to another.
Flowchart 1 - Procedure for testing placement of the nasogastric tube

NEW Nasogastric Tube Placement
1. Measure tube length
2. Insert tube (see Insertion of nasogastric tube instructions)
3. Check if patient on acid inhibiting medication
4. Aspirate using gentle suction

Nasogastric Tube in situ
1. Check position for tube displacement
2. Reposition* or repass tube if required
3. Check if patient on acid inhibiting medication
4. Aspirate using gentle suction

0.5 – 1 ml aspirate obtained?

YES

Test aspirate pH on strip
NB: test may not be accurate in the presence of acid suppression therapy or if patient has been on enteral feeds previously

Is pH < or equal to 5?

YES

NO

DO NOT FEED
1. If possible turn adult onto side
2. Inject 10 – 20 ml of air into tube using syringe
3. Attempt aspiration again

NO

DO NOT FEED
1. Advance tube 10 – 20 cm
2. Attempt aspiration again

0.5 – 1 ml aspirate obtained?

YES

NO

DO NOT FEED
1. Call for advice
2. Consider repassing tube & repeating steps

Check position by X-ray

Proceed to feed

Is tube in position?

YES

NO

Replace nasogastric tube as per protocol
12. MEDICAL CARE

Standards for Administration of Enteral Feeds/Medications via Fine Bore Nasogastric Tubes

- Fine bore nasogastric tube placement is confirmed prior to commencing and administering enteral feed or medications.
- Use equipment specified for the purpose of enteral feeding/administration of medications and complies with the manufacturer’s instructions for use unless otherwise clinically contraindicated.
- Decanted feeds must not be hung for more than 10 hours.
- Patients are regularly observed for correct position of tube and tolerance of enteral feed/medications e.g. vomiting, nausea, coughing.
- If the patient has a tracheostomy or endotracheal tube insitu, check if the cuff requires inflating prior to administering enteral feed/medications.
- Feeds are ceased immediately if aspiration is suspected and medical staff are notified.
- Medication and enteral feed compatibility, drug solubility and stability are confirmed by pharmacists.
- Infection control standards are maintained during preparation and administration of enteral feeds/medication.

Removal of nasogastric tubes

1. Confirm need for removal of the nasogastric tube.
2. Explain procedure and equipment to the patient.
3. Don personal protection equipment. Including non-sterile gloves, eye protection and apron/gown.
4. Positions patient upright with the patient’s head supported on pillows where possible.

Note: Spinal and some neurological patients must be positioned according to the treating medical team instructions throughout the procedure.
5. Turn off the feeding apparatus to decrease the risk of aspiration.
6. Spigot or cap the nasogastric tube using either the cap provided or a spigot to prevent backflow and aspiration.
7. Remove the securing tape. An adhesive remover may be required to promote patient comfort.
8. Remove the tube in a slow continuous movement to promote patient comfort and prevent trauma.
9. Dispose of equipment adhering to occupational health and safety requirements.
10. Document in the patient’s medical record the reason for tube removal.
11. Observe that patient for complications or any changes in the patient’s condition.
12. MEDICAL CARE

References


5 Hand RW, Kempster M, Levy JH, Rogol PR, Spiri P. Inadvertent transbronchial insertion of narrow-bore feeding tubes into the pleural space. JAMA 1984; 251(18):2396-7


12 MHRA Notice MHRS/MS/2004/026


### ACTION PLANNER FOR:
Chief Executives, Health Service Executives, Managers, Directors of Clinical Governance

| Responsibility and personnel to implement The Use of Fine Bore Nasogastric Feeding Tube for Adults Policy not assigned | Comments/Actions: |
| Support to line managers to mandate The Use of Fine Bore Nasogastric Feeding Tube for Adults Policy in their areas not provided | Comments/Actions: |
| Compliance with The Use of Fine Bore Nasogastric Feeding Tube for Adults Policy not reported to NSW Department of Health | Comments/Actions: |

### IMPLEMENTATION STANDARD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current compliance status (✓)</th>
<th>Actions Required</th>
<th>Assigned to</th>
<th>Target Completion Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Started</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially Completed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Assign responsibility and personnel to implement The Use of Fine Bore Nasogastric Feeding Tube for Adults Policy
- Support provided to line managers to mandate The Use of Fine Bore Nasogastric Feeding Tube for Adults Policy standard in their areas
- Ensure equipment is available to support the implementation of The Use of Fine Bore Nasogastric Feeding Tube for Adults Policy within clinical areas

### COMPLIANCE STANDARD

- The Use of Fine Bore Nasogastric Feeding Tube for Adults Policy promoted across the Health Service
- The Use of Fine Bore Nasogastric Feeding Tube for Adults Policy is successfully implemented within organisations
- Facility wide auditing of staff hand hygiene practices as per NSW Department of Health compliance program
- The Use of Fine Bore Nasogastric Feeding Tube for Adults Policy compliance reported to the NSW Department of Health
- Staff not complying with The Use of Fine Bore Nasogastric Feeding Tube for Adults Policy are managed in accordance with NSW Health policy directives for staff performance management

### LEADERSHIP STANDARD

- Sets The Use of Fine Bore Nasogastric Feeding Tube for Adults Policy as an institutional standard
- Provides routine feedback to staff on compliance with The Use of Fine Bore Nasogastric Feeding Tube for Adults Policy

**NB: This action planner is NOT mandatory – it is a tool to monitor the implementation of this policy**
YOUR HEALTH RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (PD2011_022)

PD2011_022 rescinds PD2009_053.

PURPOSE

*Your Health Rights and Responsibilities* policy directive outlines the rights and responsibilities of NSW Health services and staff, and patients and carers. Basic rights are detailed in the policy, including: Access, Safety, Respect, Communication, Participation, Privacy, and the right to Comment. The Policy Directive has been produced to set out NSW Health’s Public Patients’ Hospital Charter and Commitment to Service. The publication incorporates the principles of the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights and is consistent with the National Healthcare Agreement (NHCA) 2009.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

All health professionals delivering healthcare services within NSW Health must be made aware of the detailed rights and responsibilities outlined in this publication.

IMPLEMENTATION

Chief Executives must ensure:

- that information about patients’ rights and responsibilities is provided to health professionals and stakeholder agencies concerned with treatment and healthcare provision;
- associated documents are displayed and available to healthcare professionals, consumers, carers, and visitors.

Purpos

The purpose of this policy is to enhance patient safety by ensuring systems and processes are in place to provide a consistent approach to clinical handover. The policy outlines key principles designed to guide and direct NSW Health staff to implement a minimum standard for conducting patient care handovers. Health services must demonstrate the engagement of patients and family/carer as key participants. This policy applies to all staff involved in the delivery of health care to patients in the NSW Public Health System.

Mandatory Requirements

NSW Health Local Health Districts/ Specialty Health Networks must have a governance structure in place to support all elements of clinical handover and demonstrate systems are in place to:

• Ensure a documented, consistent approach to clinical handover
• Apply the seven (7) key principles outlined in this policy for all types of clinical handover
• Partner with patients and family/carer during clinical handover
• Monitor the effectiveness of clinical handover and documentation processes
• Develop an action plan for continuous quality improvement, based on the outcomes of monitoring.

Implementation

Clinical Excellence Commission

• Work with clinical staff and Executive Sponsors to support implementation of this policy across NSW Health.
• Provide tools to support implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

eHealth and local Information and Communication Technology

• Collaborate with local teams to ensure tools based on the key principles are available in a responsive manner.
• Collaborate with clinical staff to identify digital solution needs in relation to this policy.

Chief Executive of Local Health Districts/ Specialty Health Networks

• Assign leadership responsibility, personnel and resources to implement and monitor this policy.

Directors of Clinical Governance

• Ensure that the policy is communicated to all managers and health workers.
• Ensure local monitoring and reporting processes are in place.
• Address system issues relating to compliance with this policy.
• Take responsibility for the oversight of continuous quality improvement and the development of action plans.

Hospital, facility, clinical stream and unit managers

• Set the expectation that clinical handover is valued and an essential part of patient care and safety.
• Develop a documented process for clinical handover based on this policy maximising consistency across all settings.
• Ensure sufficient resources and staff training opportunities are available to support clinical handover.
• Demonstrate continuous quality improvement activity, through action plan development based on lessons learned during monitoring processes.
• Address performance issues relating to compliance with this policy.

Clinical staff

• Ensure their work practices are consistent with the key principles for clinical handover.
Clinical Handover: Procedures.

BACKGROUND

About this document

Clinical handover is the effective transfer of professional responsibility and accountability for some or all aspects of care for a patient/s to another person or professional group on a temporary or permanent basis.

Clinical handover does not just happen at the change of shift. It happens within and between teams constantly and is considered a time of risk for patients, where gaps in information transfer can impact patient safety. Examples include:

- Escalation of the deteriorating patient
- Patient transfers:
  - to another unit/clinic or facility
  - for a test, procedure or appointment
  - to, from and within Community settings, including Residential Aged Care
  - involving other teams (e.g. Ambulance, patient transport)
- Shift to shift change over
- Multidisciplinary team handover

Key definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patient/family/carer</th>
<th>Includes guardian or those nominated to advocate on the patients behalf</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journey board</td>
<td>Indicates a board or portal that provides information about patients which directly relates to care coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briefing</td>
<td>A tool, which can be used before or after clinical handover, for teams to summarise the key concerns, anticipate changes and to assign accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huddle</td>
<td>A tool which, when used in this context serves the same function as a briefing and can be scheduled before or after clinical handover</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR SAFE AND EFFECTIVE CLINICAL HANDOVER

The seven (7) key principles provide a framework to guide the structure and process for safe clinical handover.

Patient/Family/Carer involvement

- Emphasise a culture where patients and their family/ carer are partners in care.
- Support patients and their family/ carer to be involved in clinical handover, in line with the wishes of the patient (e.g. patient/ family/ carer is given the opportunity to lead their clinical handover where appropriate).
- Establish the patient’s care goals, preferences and needs regarding their admission/presentation/illness.
12. **MEDICAL CARE**

- Ensure there is a system for the early identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and a process in place for including the Aboriginal Liaison Support Officer or Aboriginal Health Worker (where appropriate).
- Identify individual patient needs for example, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) patients or those with communication challenges such as hearing or vision impairment.

**Leadership**

- Nominate a leader at each clinical handover.

**Handover participants**

- Handover is attended by relevant members of the multidisciplinary team who:
  - When handing over, arrive prepared with current information and knowledge of the patient’s clinical situation.
  - Are provided the opportunity to ask questions and to seek clarity.

**Handover time**

- Schedule an agreed time and duration for clinical handover to occur.
- Ensure the clinical handover process remains interruption free (with the exception of emergencies).
- Have in place strategies to reinforce punctuality.
- Provide sufficient time for family/carer involvement by notifying them of clinical handover times.

**Handover place**

- Set an agreed location for clinical handover aiming for minimal interruption.
- Ensure access to all clinical results and healthcare records.
- Occurs in the patient’s presence where possible.

  Face-to-face handover is preferred, although it is recognised that many handovers involve telephone or telehealth communication, especially in community or clinic settings. Any written information is to be supplementary only, that is, it must not replace verbal handover. Voice recorded handover is never permitted. When handover occurs and the patient is not present, processes must ensure that the patient/family/carer is aware of who will be taking over their care.

**Handover process**

Include tools such as electronic clinical communication tools, flow charts and scripts to help keep clinical handover relevant, succinct and consistent. A documented and approved approach must include:

- A ‘journey board’ meeting, huddle or briefing is held prior to or after bedside handover
- Introduction of team members and their roles and the patient/ family/ carer
- Confirmation of the patient’s identity using at least three (3) approved patient identifiers
- Summary of relevant clinical history and current clinical situation, including infectious status, diet/fluid/supervision requirements, invasive or implanted devices and medications

315(07/07/19)
- Review of the most recent recorded set of observations noting any trends, recent clinical review and/or rapid response calls and resultant management plans

- Assessment of recent test results which require follow-up, for example, scans, x-rays and blood tests

- Identification of timeframes and requirements for transition of care/discharge

- Cross-check information in the patient’s health care record/s including medications and observations to support the handover communication

- Respond to patient/family/carer concerns

- Acceptance of responsibility for the care of the patient by the clinician receiving handover.

**Documentation**

- Document findings and include changes in clinical condition and feedback from patient/family/carer regarding ongoing care requirements; update management/care plans.

  Cross-check documentation has occurred in the electronic medical record and on paper when using hybrid systems.

**EVALUATION**

All Public Health Organisations must collect and monitor data to evaluate the implementation of clinical handover based on the key principles. The results of data analysis will be provided to clinical units, facility, Local Health District/ Speciality Network quality and safety committees in a timely manner.

Scheduled reviews of clinical handover audit results and incidents should form the basis of the organisation’s evaluation plan. Although not exhaustive, examples of supplementary data, to complement the scheduled audits, are outlined below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>What to look for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Incident Management data/Root Cause Analysis review/other case review protocols | - Readmissions due to gaps in handover of care  
- Medication incidents due to gaps in communication  
- Number of complaints/compliments about clinical handover  
- Number of RCAs where clinical handover was identified as a contributing factor |
| HIE data                                        | - Readmissions where patients were not able to be cared for at home or care was impacted by ineffective clinical handover |
| Mortality and Morbidity meetings/mortality review | - Readmissions that were due to inability to be cared for at home, according to patient/family/carer wishes, during the last days of life, where clinical handover was identified as a contributing factor |
| Patient Experience Survey                       | - Review the results in relation to how patients/family/carer perceive the communication between themselves and the multi-disciplinary team (MDT) and between members of the MDT |
APPENDIX 1: OBSERVATION AUDIT

- Observational clinical handover audits must occur annually, as a minimum, or more frequently as clinical incidents relating to clinical handover are identified, and based on audit outcomes.
- Audits must be completed at the point-of-care, in real time, and be undertaken by a clinician with a good understanding of the clinical handover policy.
- The following audit/criteria has been developed in line with the key principles of the policy
- It can be adapted to reflect care settings and patient cohorts.

Select type (including format) of clinical handover being observed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Shift-to-shift in a hospital setting (record start times in the spaces below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Intra-facility - the handover of care from one area to another within a facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Other (please specify) (for example; telephone, telehealth)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For shift-to-shift clinical handover

Record *planned* start time of clinical handover __:__

Record *actual* start time of clinical handover __:__

Multidisciplinary team members in attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nursing/Midwifery Staff</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical staff</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing Unit Manager/Midwifery Unit Manager/Nurse/Midwife in Charge</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allied Health Staff</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management/Executive</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-clinical staff</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (provide details)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Preparation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a nominated leader</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A briefing or huddle is held prior to or after bedside handover</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patients/family/carer from CALD background or with communication challenges (such as hearing or vision impairment) are identified and information needs met</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Liaison Support Officer or Aboriginal Health Worker services involved for patients who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Document here if the service is not available.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Handover – Key Principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patient present at the handover (if No or N/A, state reason in space below)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the commencement of clinical handover the patient/family/carer is introduced to staff taking over their care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The patient/family/carer is invited to be involved in clinical handover (e.g., asked to repeat back or contribute to relevant information)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The patient is given the opportunity to lead their clinical handover, where appropriate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least three (3) approved patient identifiers are used to confirm the patient’s identity (e.g. patient name, MRN, DOB)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involve Patient/family/carer in the patient identification process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allergies are noted and confirmed with the patient/family/carer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An approved, documented, standardised tool is used to guide clinical handover</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant clinical history is provided, such as: infectious status, invasive or implanted devices, medications, most recent observations and test results</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A summary of the clinical assessment including care needs (e.g. cultural, linguistic, diet/fluid/supervision requirement) and risks (e.g. falls, pressure injury, vulnerability, sexual safety) is provided</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The patient’s risk factors for suicide attempts are included where applicable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The patient’s risk factors for violence are included where applicable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At conclusion of clinical handover the patient/family/carer is provided the opportunity to ask questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Process**

**Indicate if there were any interruptions during the clinical handover (tick all that apply)**

- [ ] None
- [ ] Patient’s hygiene needs
- [ ] Procedures and/or observations
- [ ] Staff member/s moves away to discuss other patients’ issues
- [ ] Ward rounds/other clinical staff review of the patient
- [ ] Other (please provide details)

Details:

**Record actual finish time of clinical handover**

__ : __

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Handover occurred within the agreed time-frame</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care record reflects that clinical handover and transfer of responsibility/accountability of care has occurred with all findings and changes in the patient’s clinical condition documented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NSW PALLIATIVE CARE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK (PD2010_003)

PURPOSE

The NSW Palliative Care Strategic Framework builds on and replaces the NSW Palliative Care Framework (2001).

The Strategic Framework is aligned with the goals of the National Palliative Care Strategy. The Strategic Framework sets out five priority areas for strengthening palliative care services in NSW.

The Statewide Centre for Improvement of Palliative Care (SCIP) has been established to provide leadership for palliative care service planning and to support the implementation of the Strategic Framework. This work will be aided by the Palliative Care Service Development Officer Network (SDO). A Service Development Officer position has been established in each AHS. These positions were approved in 2006 with recurrent funding.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

The Strategic Framework sets out the priority areas for strengthening palliative care services in NSW. The values and operating statements articulate the way forward, and are supported by five planning priorities.
Priority 1: Improving NSW palliative care service planning & delivery
Priority 2: Implementing the Standards for Providing Quality Palliative Care for all Australians
Priority 3: Improving the palliative care workforce capacity
Priority 4: Improving palliative care data
Priority 5: Strengthening evidence based practice

Area Health Services are required to develop Palliative Care Service Plans, with support and guidance from SCIP. Each Area Palliative Care Service Plan should reflect the priorities of the NSW Palliative Care Strategic Framework. Areas must lodge their plans with SCIP, which will review them as necessary in partnership with the Department of Health to ensure they align with the Strategic Framework.

SCIP will also take a lead role in developing the NSW Palliative Care Service Development Plan and work in partnership with the Children’s Hospital at Westmead on the NSW Paediatric Palliative Care Service Development Plan. The NSW Palliative Care Service Development Plan for paediatric and non paediatric patients will also be used to align Area Health Service Palliative Care Service Plans.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Strategic Framework will be implemented through the NSW Palliative Care Service Development Plan and the NSW Paediatric Palliative Care Service Development Plan. Strategies from these plans will be incorporated into NSW Area Health Service Palliative Care Service Plans. Implementation at an AHS level is being supported by the Palliative Care Service Development Officer Network.

The Palliative Care Advisory Group (PCAG) will provide advice during the implementation process, and the Palliative Care Strategic Framework will be reviewed in 2013.


75(14/01/10)
SAME GENDER ACCOMMODATION (PD2015_018)

PD2015_018 rescinds PD2010_005.

PURPOSE

This policy statement and the associated procedures are intended to ensure that:
(a) The privacy and dignity of NSW Health patients is respected at all times during their healthcare experience.
(b) Patients who are staying overnight in a NSW Public Health Organisation do not have to sleep in the same room or ward bay, use mixed bathroom facilities or pass through opposite gender areas to reach their own facilities (except when considered clinically appropriate)\(^{34}\).

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

There are no exemptions from the need to ensure that the privacy and dignity of all NSW Health patients is respected at all times during their health care experience. This applies to all areas.

There are some exceptional circumstances\(^{35}\) (i.e. when patients need very specialised or urgent care), where providing fast safe effective care may take priority over ensuring same gender specific accommodation. When this does occur it must be in the interest of all the patients affected.

For the purpose of this policy Public Health Organisations and Public Health System are used in accordance with section 7 of the \textit{Health Services Act (1997)}. Under this Act, Local Health Districts, statutory health corporations, such as the Children’s Hospital Westmead and affiliated health organisations in respect of its recognised establishments and recognised services (such as Tresillian and other third schedule establishments) are called “Public Health Organisations” (PHOs).

For the purpose of this policy Health worker refers to any person working within a PHO.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with PD2011_022 Your Health Rights and Responsibilities.

IMPLEMENTATION

PHO executives are to ensure:
• 100\% of all patients that are staying overnight in a NSW PHO will be in a gender specific bed within 24 hours.
• In the longer term, designing out mixed gender accommodation will be the focus.
• The \textit{Patient Flow Systems Program}\(^{36}\) is made available to all NSW Public Hospitals.
• The \textit{Respecting Patient Privacy and Dignity in NSW Health Survey}\(^{37}\) is used as an audit tool on a regular basis in every NSW PHO excluding those wards/units that are operating under the \textit{clinically inappropriate} or exceptional circumstances (section 1.2 and section 3 of procedures).

\(^{34}\) Clinically appropriate and exceptional circumstances for providing Gender Specific Accommodation is provided in the attached procedures at section 1.2 and section 3

\(^{36}\) The \textit{Patient Flow Systems Program} information is provided in the attached procedures at section 1.2

\(^{37}\) The \textit{Respecting Patient Privacy and Dignity in NSW Health: 8 ways to make a difference staff handbook} information is provided in the attached procedures at section 1.2
1. BACKGROUND

1.1 About this document

Throughout NSW in 2013/14 there were around 948,500 acute patients that spent a night or more in a NSW Public Hospital.

For the majority of inpatients their hospital stay is a positive one. The results of the NSW Health Annual Patient Experience Survey and patient interview process demonstrate this; we also know from these results that the staff of NSW Health are providing excellent care to our patients despite increasing demand.

Patients who are treated by NSW Health expect and generally receive excellent clinical care, although there are always ways in which we can improve their experience.

The January to June 2013 Adult Admitted Patient Survey noted that 85% of surveyed patients report that they were “always treated with respect and dignity” and 86% of patient identified that they were “given enough privacy when being treated”.

In November 2008 the Special Commission of Inquiry into Acute Care Services in NSW Public Hospitals that was conducted by Commissioner Garling recommended “the policy which authorises, and the practice which gives effect to, using inpatient wards (except Intensive Care Units, High Dependency Units and Emergency Departments) to house both men and women in the same room, or separate ward space ought to cease forthwith”.

From 2011 NSW Health has set the target of 100% of all patients that are staying overnight in a NSW Public Health Organisation (PHO) will be in a same gender room or ward bay within 24 hours. In the longer term, designing out mixed gender accommodation will also be the focus.

Respecting patient privacy and dignity is “everyone’s responsibility”. Each of us play our part in this and must work together to meet these important expectations of patients and carers.

1.2 Key definitions

Clinically appropriate or exceptional circumstances are when providing rapid safe and effective care may take priority over ensuring gender specific accommodation. This is only applicable in critical care environments or short stay environments, where patients need very specialised or urgent care.

Children and Adolescents are any person under the age of 16 years, for the purpose of this policy. It should be recognised that the borderline between childhood and adulthood is not distinct and clinical need and stage of development will take precedence in determining accommodation needs.

Critical Care Environments refers to Intensive Care Units (ICUs), Coronary Care Units (CCUs), High Dependency Units (HDUs), Neuro High Dependency Units (NHDUs), Emergency Departments (EDs) and Recovery Units.

Same Gender Accommodation is when both men and women who are staying overnight in a NSW PHO DO NOT share the same room or ward bay, use mixed bathroom facilities or pass through opposite gender areas to reach their own facilities.

Health worker refers to any person working within a Public Health Organisation (PHO).

Patient Flow Systems Program is a whole of hospital approach to managing patient flow. This approach will enable PHO to identify and resolve delays within their current system to create capacity. For more information please access the NSW Health website http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/pfs/Pages/default.aspx or contact the MoH Patient Flow Portal team at patientflow@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

Public Health Organisations and Public Health System are used in accordance with section 7 of the Health Services Act 1997. Under this Act, Local Health Districts, statutory health corporations, such as the Children’s Hospital Westmead and affiliated health organisations in respect of their recognised establishments and recognised services (such as Tresillian and other third schedule establishments) are called “Public Health Organisations” (PHOs).

‘Respecting Patient Privacy and Dignity in NSW Health: 8 ways to make a difference’ is a staff booklet that is to be provided to all frontline NSW Health workers, and readily available to all other NSW Health workers.

Short Stay Units refers to both Emergency Department short stay units and in-patient short stay units. Examples of Emergency Department Short Stay Units are Emergency Department Short Stay Units (EDSSUs) and Emergency Pregnancy Units (EPUs). Examples of in-patient short stay units are Psychiatric Emergency Care Centres (PECC), Extended Day Only (EDO) Units (also known as 23hr units) and Medical Assessment Units (MAUs), Acute Assessment Units (AAUs), Stroke Units, Close Observation Units and Falls Risk rooms.

2. RESPECTING PATIENT PRIVACY AND DIGNITY IN NSW HEALTH

2.1 The eight areas of focus

In order to deliver better patient experiences we are focusing on eight areas that need the most attention to ensure that the privacy and dignity of our patients are respects at all times during their health care experience. These eight areas include:

1. Make patients and carers welcome
2. Communicate more often with patients and carers
3. Protect privacy during consultations and treatment
4. Respect the special needs of dying patients and their carers
5. Respect culture and beliefs
6. Manage noise for patient comfort
7. Avoid mixed gender rooms and ward bays
8. Provide same gender bathrooms

3. SAME GENDER ACCOMMODATION

There are no exemptions from the need to ensure that patient’s privacy and dignity is respected at all times during their health care experience. This applies to all areas.

Respecting patient privacy and dignity at all times during their health care experience requires men and women do not have to sleep in the same room or ward bay, use mixed bathroom facilities or pass through opposite gender areas to reach their own facilities.
3.1 When Same Gender Rooms and Ward Bays cannot be provided in the short term

Patient admissions cannot be deferred simply because same gender rooms or ward bays cannot be immediately provided. In such cases, every reasonable effort must be made to rectify the situation as soon as possible and staff must take extra care to ensure the patients’ privacy and dignity is maintained, particularly in sleeping areas and bathroom facilities. **Patients and carers must be informed if this does occur**, they must also be told what is being done to address the situation and must be informed when a same gender room or ward bay will be provided.

Staff must make it clear to patients and carers that NSW Health considers mixed gender rooms and ward bays to be the exception, never the normal practice. When mixed gender rooms and ward bays are unavoidable, transfer to a same gender room or ward bay should be effected as soon as possible. Only in the most exceptional circumstances should this exceed 24 hours.

**Transgender Patients**

All PHOs should consider the needs of transgender patients and their specific requirements, including allowing transgender people to dress and use the amenities in their preferred gender including sleeping in same gender rooms and using same gender bathroom facilities.

3.2 When providing Mixed Gender Rooms or Ward Bays is considered Clinically Appropriate

There are some exceptional circumstances (i.e. when patients need very specialised or urgent care), where providing rapid safe effective care may take priority over ensuring same gender rooms or ward bays. When this does occur it must be in the interest of all the patients affected.

In the cases where mixed gender rooms or ward bays is clinically appropriate, these decisions must be based on the needs of each individual patient, not the constraints of the environment, or the convenience of staff. Furthermore, the mixing must be justifiable for **ALL** patients in the room.

This is only applicable in **critical care environments and short stay units** (for definitions see section 1.2), where patients need very specialised, rapid or urgent care.

3.3 Delivering Same Gender Rooms or Ward bays in Critical Care and Short Stay Environments

In critical care environments, we recognise that mixed gender rooms or ward bays may be considered clinically appropriate. These decisions must be based on the needs of each individual patient, not the constraints of the environment, or the convenience of staff. Furthermore, the mixing must be justifiable for **ALL** patients in the room.

In short stay units, we recognise that same gender rooms or ward bays may be sometimes unachievable due to the specialised and rapid care received in these units. Every effort must be made to provide patients with same gender rooms or ward bays. If same gender rooms cannot be provided in the short term, **patients and carers must be informed**, patient preference must be sought, recorded and respected. These decisions must be based on the needs of each individual patient, not the constraints of the environment, or the convenience of staff. Furthermore, the mixing must be justifiable for **ALL** patients in the room.
3.3.1 Guiding Principles for delivering gender specific accommodation in critical care areas and short stay units

- Decisions are to be made on the needs of each individual patient whilst in critical care and short stay environments, and their clinical needs must take priority.
- Decisions are to be reviewed as the patient’s condition improves and should not be based on the constraints of the environment, or the convenience of staff.
- The risk of clinical deterioration associated with moving patients within critical care environments to facilitate segregation must be assessed.
- Where mixed gender accommodation does occur, greater protection needs to be provided where patients are unable to preserve their own modesty. Each patient must have their modesty constantly maintained by nursing staff. This may mean a constant nurse presence within the room or bay.
- Where possible patient preference should be sought, recorded and where possible respected. Ideally, this should be done in conjunction with carers and relatives.

3.3.2 Implications for delivering same gender rooms and ward bays in critical care areas and short stay units

- When a patient’s survival, recovery, instilling falls risk mitigation, and/or the management of acute delirium depend on the presence of highly specialised equipment and care, the requirement for same gender rooms or ward bays clearly takes a lower priority. This does not mean that no attempt at providing same gender rooms and ward bays is necessary. At the very least staff should consider whether it is possible to improve segregation. In new units, the design should support same gender rooms and ward bays.
- In theatre Recovery Units separate male and female units are not required, although some degree of segregation remains the ideal. High levels of observation and nursing attendance should mean that all patients can have their privacy and dignity preserved whilst unconscious or in a semi conscious state.

3.4 Same Gender Bathrooms

Every effort must be made to provide patients with access to a same gender bathroom and every effort must be made to ensure that patients do not have to walk through an opposite gender area to reach their own bathroom.

Patients and carers must be informed if same gender bathrooms cannot be provided, they must also be told what is being done to address the situation and must be informed of the bathroom options that are available.

Staff must make it clear to patients and carers that NSW Health considers mixed bathroom facilities to be the exception never the normal practice. When mixed bathroom facilities are unavoidable, each patient must have their privacy and dignity constantly maintained.

In new units, the design should support same gender bathroom facilities.

3.5 Nightingale Units or Wards

Nightingale wards or units are not excluded from providing same gender accommodation. Every effort must be made to provide some form of segregation on these wards. The ideal would be for complete separation of males and females on separate wards, although it is recognised that this is not always possible.
Segregation through the use of partitions or bedside curtains is the minimum requirement on these wards. This is intended to maintain patient privacy and dignity, as well as protect patients from unwanted exposure, including casual overlooking or overhearing.

3.6 Children and Adolescent Units

- There are no exceptions from the need to ensure that the privacy and dignity of our patients is respected at all times during their health care experience. This applies to all areas, including children and adolescent units.
- A child or adolescent, for the purpose of this policy is defined as any person under the age of 16 (refer to definitions: section 1.2).
- Respecting the privacy and dignity of children and adolescents at all times during their health care experience involves the assumption that they do not have to sleep in the same room or ward bay as adult patients, or share bathroom or recreational facilities. Further, adult patients should not have to pass through children and adolescent units to reach their own facilities. Similarly, children and adolescents should not be asked to pass through an adult ward to access facilities. This is intended to protect children and adolescents from unwanted exposure, including casual overlooking or overhearing.
- For many children and adolescents, clinical need, age and stage of development will usually take precedence. Many children and adolescents take comfort from sharing with others of their own age and this may outweigh any concerns about providing same gender rooms or ward bays.
- Mixed gender rooms and ward bays are not recommended for adolescent patients. Where possible adolescent patient preference should be sought, recorded and where possible respected.
- Bathroom facilities do not need to be designated as gender specific as long as they accommodate only one patient at a time, and can be locked by the patient (with an external override for emergency use only).
Attachment 1: References and Useful Resources


Privacy Manual for Health Information (March 2015)


Children and Adolescents – Guidelines for Care in Acute Care Settings (PD2010_034)

Children and Adolescents – Safety and Security in NSW Acute Health Facilities (PD2010_033)

NSW Paediatric Inpatient Advisory Working Group (2009) Children and Adolescent definition for inpatient units, NSW Ministry of Health, North Sydney

NSW Surgical Services Taskforce Paediatric Surgery Sub Group (2008) Paediatric Surgery Model for Designated Area Paediatric Surgical Sites, NSW Ministry of Health, North Sydney


Useful Resources

National Health Service (NHS): Institute for Innovation and Improvement, Privacy and Dignity website: http://www.institute.nhs.uk/quality_and_value/introduction/privacy_and_dignity.html


UK Department of Health, Same Sex Accommodation website: https://www.gov.uk/search?q=same+sex+accommodation&tab=government-results
Local Health District: | Hospital:  
---|---
Ward/Unit Name: | Date:  

### Questions
To answer each question you will first need to calculate A, B & C. Directions to calculate A, B & C are provided under each question.

| 1. Have you reached the target for achieving Same Gender Accommodation? |  
---|---
Target 100% |  
A. At this point in time, how many ward/unit bays and single rooms do you have in use on your ward/unit?  
B. At this point in time, how many of the above mentioned ward/unit bays contain single gender only (include in use single rooms, in this calculation)?  
C. Calculate your % of providing Gender Specific Accommodation.  
A =  
B =  
C = B/A x 100 = %

### Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Very Poor</th>
<th>Extremely Poor</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

| 2. Is patient privacy able to be maintained at all times on your ward/unit?  
3. Target 100% |  
---|---
A. At this point in time, how many curtained/partitioned beds and single rooms do you have on your ward/unit?  
B. At this point in time, how many of the abovementioned curtained/partitioned beds are able to be closed without gaps and single rooms have functioning doors that close?  
C. Calculate your % of providing adequate privacy to all patients?  
A =  
B =  
C = B/A x 100 = %

### Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Very Poor</th>
<th>Extremely Poor</th>
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<td>□</td>
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244(02/07/15)
**Additional items to assist in ensuring that the patient’s privacy and dignity is maintained**

* Please ensure that you always introduce yourself to your patients and carers and talk to them in everyday language about their treatment (avoid medical jargon and abbreviations).

* Please ensure that patient accommodation is not rearranged, where possible between 9.30pm and 8am, as nobody likes to be woken up and relocated. If empty beds are in patients’ room/bay please let them know that other patients may be admitted overnight.

* For conscious patients, please ensure that you ask permission from the patient before entering closed curtains or knock before opening doors. Having signage or similar notifications available on your ward/unit can assist to prevent intrusions.

* Please ensure that patient gowns provide adequate coverage for patients when mobilising. Encouraging patients to wear their own pyjamas or clothes, where appropriate, may assist in ensuring their privacy and dignity is maintained.
RECOGNITION AND MANAGEMENT OF PATIENTS WHO ARE CLINICALLY DETERIORATING (PD2020_010)

PD2020_010 rescinds PD2013_049

POLICY STATEMENT

All NSW public health organisations are to have local systems, structures and process in place to support the recognition, response to and appropriate management of the physiological and mental state deterioration of patients.

In this policy, public health organisations include local health districts, statutory health corporations and affiliated health organisations (with respect to their recognised services) that provide direct patient care.

SUMMARY OF POLICY REQUIREMENTS

All NSW public health organisations are to:

• Have a clearly defined governance system to oversee the management and continuous improvement of the local Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System.

• Use standard clinical tools and approved local clinical management guidelines/pathways as part of the local Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System to assess and monitor patient deterioration, including the NSW Health standard observation charts (paper or electronic) (unless an exemption from use of the charts has been granted).

• Formalise and implement a local Clinical Emergency Response System (CERS) that meets the requirements outlined in section 5 of this Policy Directive.

• Engage all patients, carers and families in a culturally appropriate manner to inform them about processes to escalate their concerns about patient deterioration, including who to contact and how to contact them.

• Have a local education program to support the local Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System that aligns with the Deteriorating Patient Education Strategy.

• Ensure that all staff are made aware of the local Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System (including how to activate their local CERS), and their roles and responsibilities under the system during orientation and/or ward induction.

• Ensure that all clinicians who provide direct patient care have completed the mandatory BTF Tier one and Tier two education and training prior to or during their induction to the health service, as outlined in the Deteriorating Patient Education Strategy.

• Implement a local measurement strategy that monitors the performance and effectiveness of the Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System, including the collection and reporting of mandatory quality improvement measures.

• Communicate data and information about the performance of the local Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System to key stakeholders, including patients, carers, families and clinicians/staff.

Recognition and Management of Patients who are Deteriorating: Procedures

1. BACKGROUND

Failure to recognise and appropriately manage patient physiological and mental state deterioration is a contributing factor in many adverse events in hospitals and health care organisations around the world.\(^{1-6}\) Evidence derived from clinical incident reporting in NSW has demonstrated the same problem exists in NSW health services.\(^{13}\)
Between the Flags was developed by the Clinical Excellence Commission in collaboration with clinical experts. It is based on research into patient clinical deterioration initiated in NSW and published in the international literature.\(^{(3, 6)}\) Between the Flags provides the foundation for the NSW Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System, which is strengthened by the integration of other programs and frameworks, such as:

- Sepsis Kills
- End of Life
- Patient, carer and family escalation, known as R.E.A.C.H, and
- Take 2, Think, Do framework for diagnostic error.

The Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System has five components:

1. **Governance**: structures and processes to support implementation, management and quality improvement at Local Health District (LHD)/Specialty Health Network (SHN), facility, clinical service and clinical unit level
2. **Standard Clinical Tools**: including observation charts with standard calling criteria for clinical review and rapid response, and approved local clinical management guidelines/pathways that outline the Clinical Emergency Response System (CERS) response and support documentation
3. **Clinical Emergency Response System (CERS)**: a local system for the escalation of care that is used by staff, patients, carers and families
4. **Education**: tiered education for clinicians to develop and reinforce clinical and non-technical skills in recognising and responding to patients who are deteriorating
5. **Evaluation**: evaluation strategy that includes a family of measures (outcome, process and balancing measures) for monitoring the performance and improving the effectiveness of the Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System.

The Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System addresses criteria within the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care’s Recognising and Responding to Acute Deterioration Standard.

BTF addresses the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care National Standard 9 – Recognising and Responding to Clinical Deterioration in Acute Health Care.\(^{8, 9}\)

### 1.1 Roles and responsibilities

**Clinical Excellence Commission**

- Identify and advise the NSW Ministry of Health and public health organisations (PHOs) on available strategies, standards and tools to support continued improvement of the NSW Health Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System.
- Support clinicians and relevant Executives/Directors of Clinical Governance (DCGs) to implement, monitor and improve the Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System across NSW.
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation of local Deteriorating Patient Safety Net Systems and provide advice to PHOs to make changes, as required.

**Health Education and Training Institute**

- Work in collaboration with the CEC on the development of education program content.
- State wide education and training and management of the learning pathways for the Deteriorating Patient Program.
- Provide advice on educational standards and governance of content in the state wide learning management system.
Local Health Districts & Specialty Health Networks

- Assign responsibility, personnel and appropriate resources to implement all the requirements of this Policy.
- Ensure the requirements of this Policy are effectively implemented, including system governance, standard clinical tools, CERS, education and evaluation.
- Work with NSW Ambulance in the development, implementation and monitoring of local CERS where the provision of CERS Assist is required.

HealthShare NSW

- Incorporate the core principles of Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System and clinical handover into non-emergency transport clinical practice, where appropriate.
- Support PHOs with the implementation of the Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System/s, where required.

NSW Ambulance

- Incorporate the core principles of the Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System and clinical handover into Ambulance clinical practice, where appropriate.
- Support PHOs with the implementation of the Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System, including the provision of CERS Assist, where required.

eHealth NSW

- Ensure that the design and build of electronic medical record functionality and clinical decision support tools align with the standards and principles outlined in this document.
- Ensure that relevant electronic medical record functionality and clinical decision support tools are maintained and continuously improved where required.
- Support PHOs, as required, to implement applicable electronic medical record functionality and clinical decision support tools that align with the standards and principles outlined in this document.

KEY TERMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acute alterations to calling criteria</td>
<td>Alterations made to calling criteria for a condition where the patient’s observations will fall outside the standard parameters for a defined period of time, while treatment is taking effect. Acute alterations to calling criteria are set for a defined period of time (not longer than 12 hours), after which they revert back to standard calling criteria. Patients with acute alterations to calling criteria must have daily medical reviews to ensure their clinical progress aligns with the patient’s treatment plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional criteria</td>
<td>Signs or symptoms of deterioration depicted on the standard observation chart that a patient may exhibit outside of, or in addition to, the standard calling criteria for vital sign observations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed signs of deterioration</td>
<td>Signs or symptoms of deterioration that a patient may exhibit outside of, or in addition to, the standard calling criteria and additional criteria that are agreed following engagement of the patient, carer and family, and tailored to the patient’s specific circumstances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altered calling criteria</td>
<td>Changes made to the standard calling criteria by the AMO/delegated clinician responsible, to take account of a patient’s unique physiological circumstances and/or medical condition. Alterations may be ‘acute’ or ‘chronic’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12. MEDICAL CARE</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.442</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>A-G systematic Assessment</strong></th>
<th>A structured approach to physical assessment that considers a patient’s Airway, Breathing, Circulation, Disability, Exposure, Fluids, Glucose.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attending Medical Officer (AMO) / Delegated clinician responsible</strong></td>
<td>Senior medical practitioner who has primary or delegated responsibility and accountability for a patient on a temporary or permanent basis. For an inpatient, this is the named Attending Medical Officer (AMO) or another consultant, staff specialist or visiting medical officer with delegated responsibility. As defined in local guidelines and following a risk assessment, the delegated clinician responsible may also be a senior clinician such as a nurse practitioner. In the non-hospital/residential setting this may be the patient’s general practitioner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balancing measure/s</strong></td>
<td>A unit of data that measures whether changes to one part of a system have an impact on another part of the system and the size of the effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behaviour change</strong></td>
<td>Changes to the way a patient interacts with other people or their environment that deviate from their baseline or their expected response, based on developmental age. Changes may present as shifts in cognitive function, activity/tone, perception, or emotional state, such as abnormal thinking, irritability, agitation, inconsolability and/or delirium.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blue zone</strong></td>
<td>A coloured zone on the standard clinical tools that requires an increase in the frequency of observation. Staff are to consider calling for an early clinical review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinical Emergency Response System (CERS)</strong></td>
<td>A formalised system for staff, patients, carers and families to obtain timely clinical assistance when a patient deteriorates (physiological and/or mental state). The CERS includes the facility-based and specialty unit based responses (clinical review and rapid response), as well as the formalised referral and escalation steps to seek expert clinical assistance and/or request for transfer to other levels of care within the facility (intra-facility) or to another facility (inter-facility).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CERS Assist</strong></td>
<td>A NSW Ambulance program whereby urgent additional clinical assistance is provided in response to a rapidly deteriorating patient (red zone observations or additional criteria) in a public health care facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chronic alteration to calling criteria</strong></td>
<td>Alterations to calling criteria where a patient has a chronic (lasting &gt;3 months) health condition which causes their normal observations to fall outside standard parameters. Chronic alterations are set for the duration of the patient’s episode of care and are reviewed during routine medical review and assessment of the patient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinical Review</strong></td>
<td>A review of a deteriorating patient undertaken within 30 minutes by the clinical team responsible for the patient’s care, or designated responder/s, as per the local CERS protocol.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinical team responsible for the patient’s care</strong></td>
<td>The clinicians, led by the AMO/delegated clinician responsible, who are involved in, and responsible for, the care of the patient on a temporary or permanent basis. In most cases this is the medical team unless otherwise specified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinical service</strong></td>
<td>A health professional or group of professionals who work in co-operation and share common facilities or resources to provide services to patients for the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of a specific set of health-related problems/conditions in a facility or in the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinical unit</strong></td>
<td>A subset of a facility or service with a special clinical function.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinician/s</td>
<td>Medical, nursing, midwifery and allied health professionals who provide direct patient care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deterioration in mental state</td>
<td>A negative change in a person’s mood or thinking, marked by a change in behaviour, cognitive function, perception or emotional state. Changes can be gradual or acute; they can be observed by members of the workforce, or reported by the person themselves, or their family or carers. Deterioration in a person’s mental state can be related to several predisposing or precipitating factors, including mental illness, psychological or existential stress, physiological changes, cognitive impairment (including delirium), intoxication, withdrawal from substances, and responses to social context and environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System</td>
<td>The NSW Health Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System refers collectively to the various individual programs and frameworks implemented by NSW Health facilities/clinical services or clinical units to support the recognition and appropriate management of patients who deteriorate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of life</td>
<td>Refers to the timeframe an individual is clearly approaching the end of their life and is living with and/or impaired by a life-limiting illness. This includes the patient’s last weeks or days of life, when deterioration is irreversible and when a patient is likely to die in the next 12 months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility</td>
<td>A building or structure where healthcare is provided by a public health organisation, such as a hospital, multi-purpose centre or office-based clinic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family of measures</td>
<td>A collection of outcome, process and balancing measures that monitor many facets of the system and provides a framework to understand the impact of changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualised monitoring and assessment plan</td>
<td>A plan for assessing and monitoring the patient’s clinical situation that considers their diagnosis, clinical risks, goals of care and proposed treatment, and specifies the vital signs and other relevant physiological and behavioural observations to be monitored and the frequency of monitoring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISBAR</td>
<td>An acronym for Introduction, Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation, a structured communication tool.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last days of life</td>
<td>Refers to the last 24-72 hours of life when treatment to cure or control the person’s disease has stopped and the focus is on physical and emotional comfort and social and spiritual support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New onset confusion</td>
<td>A disturbance of consciousness, attention, cognition and perception that develops over a short period of time (usually hours to a few days).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome measure/s</td>
<td>A unit of data that measures whether changes to the system have an impact on the intended recipient and the size of the effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palliative care</td>
<td>An approach that aims to prevent and relieve suffering and improve the quality of life of patients and their families who are facing the problems associated with life-threatening illness through early identification and assessment and treatment of pain and other physical, psychosocial and spiritual issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process measure/s</td>
<td>A unit of data that measures whether the system is performing as it is intended to and that activities are occurring as planned, and the extent to which that is happening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public health organisation (PHO)</td>
<td>Local health districts, statutory health corporations and affiliated health organisations (with respect to their recognised services) that provide direct patient care.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 12. MEDICAL CARE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Rapid response</strong></th>
<th>An urgent review of a deteriorating patient by a rapid response team (RRT), or designated responder/s, as defined in the local CERS protocol.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>R.E.A.C.H</strong></td>
<td>An acronym for Recognise, Engage, Act, Call, Help is on its way. <strong>R.E.A.C.H</strong> is a CEC program for patients, carers and families to directly escalate concerns about deterioration through the local CERS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Red zone</strong></td>
<td>Coloured zone on the standard clinical tools that represent warning signs of deterioration for which a rapid response call (as defined by the local CERS protocol) is required.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Resuscitation Plans** | A medically authorised order to use or withhold resuscitation measures (formerly called ‘No CPR Orders’). Resuscitation Plans can also be used to document other time-critical clinical decisions related to end of life.  
A Resuscitation Plan is made:  
- With reference to pre-planning by patients (such as Advance Care Directives or plans)  
- In consultation with patients, carers and families  
- Taking account of the patient’s current clinical status, as well as their wishes and goals of care.  
Resuscitation Plans are intended for use for patients 29 days and older in all NSW PHOs, including acute facilities; sub-acute facilities; ambulatory and community settings; and by NSW Ambulance (12). |
| **Special Care Nursery** | A clinical unit with space designated for the care of neonates who require additional support, or who need additional monitoring and/or observation (13, 18). |
| **Standard calling criteria** | Signs and symptoms that a patient is deteriorating and may require review of their monitoring plan or escalation of care through the Clinical Emergency Response System to appropriately manage the deterioration. Standard calling criteria are depicted on standard observation charts as blue, yellow and red zones. |
| **Standard clinical tools** | A tool or resource that supports clinicians to recognise when a patient is deteriorating and outlines the appropriate response, such as the sepsis pathways; electronic fetal heart rate monitoring algorithm and labels; Comfort Observation and Symptom Assessment chart; and Resuscitation Plan, as well as the NSW Health standard observation charts. |
| **Standard observation chart** | Standardised observation chart approved for use by the NSW Ministry of Health. These have been developed for a variety of clinical settings. |
| **Track and trigger tool** | A tool, such as the standard observation chart, that records vital sign observations and allows them to be tracked over time to support identification of a change in the patient’s condition that requires a review and/or change in management or frequency of observation. |
| **Transfer of care** | The transfer of professional responsibility and accountability for some or all aspects of care for a patient, or group of patients, to another person or professional group on a temporary or permanent basis. Also known as clinical handover. |
| **Yellow zone** | Coloured zone on the standard observation charts and standard clinical tools that represent warning signs of deterioration for which a clinical review or other CERS call may be required. |
3 GOVERNANCE

Public health organisations (PHOs) need to have a clearly defined governance system in place at LHD/SHN level and facility/clinical service/clinical unit level to oversee the management and continuous improvement of the local Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System.

At the LHD/SHN level, the governance system needs to:

• Provide leadership to support the management and continuous improvement of the Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System locally
• Establish and articulate clear objectives and expectations for the Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System that align with the standards and principles outlined in this policy
• Provide a framework, endorsed by the Director of Clinical Governance or other responsible senior executive, for determining exemptions for specialty clinical units where patients are appropriately monitored and care is escalated as required, such as intensive care units, coronary care units and operating theatres, from using the NSW Health Standard Observation Charts
• Delegate clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities to personnel at facility/clinical service/clinical unit level to lead, manage and continuously improve the Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System
• Determine the education and training requirements for all staff involved in the management and continuous improvement of the Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System at a facility/clinical service/clinical unit level, including those with delegated roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for managing the system
• Review regular reports and monitor performance of the Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System across facilities, clinical services and clinical units
• Communicate with stakeholders, including patients, carers, families, clinicians and the Clinical Excellence Commission, to provide feedback on the performance and effectiveness of the Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System.

At the facility/clinical service or clinical unit level, the governance system needs to support the following functions:

• Facilitate collaboration between patients, carers and families, clinicians and managers to design, implement, monitor and continuously improve the Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System consistent with the objectives and expectations of the LHD/SHN, including a local CERS protocol that meets the requirements outlined in this Policy
• Support the development of organisational policies and procedures relevant to the Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System that reflect the role, capacity and capability of the facility/clinical service or clinical unit in hospital and non-hospital settings
• Delegate clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities to appropriately skilled and trained personnel for managing and improving the local Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System
• Ensure clinicians with delegated roles, responsibilities and accountabilities under the local Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System are oriented to the system and demonstrate a clear understanding of their roles, responsibilities and accountabilities, including contracted staff, locums and clinicians on rotating rosters
• Provide opportunities for clinicians to complete the required education and training relevant to their delegated role in the local Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System and maintain records of completion
• Ensure that clinicians with delegated responsibilities under the local Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System are appropriately credentialled
Support use of appropriate standard clinical tools/approved local clinical management guidelines or pathways as part of the local Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System, including approved NSW Health standard observation charts unless exempt

- Ensure that adequate resources (personnel and equipment), are allocated, available and fit-for-purpose to support the delivery of high-quality care as part of the Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System

- Collect and report data and information on the performance and effectiveness of the Deteriorating Patient Safety Net system to the LHD/SHN, relevant local committees, clinicians, patients, carers and families to facilitate quality improvement

- Monitor variation in practice against expected outcomes and provide feedback to clinicians on variation in practice and health outcomes to inform improvements in the Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System

- Regularly test the local Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System and/or processes through mock drills or simulated exercises where these events are infrequent or when there are significant changes to the context of service delivery.

Clinicians using, and/or with delegated roles, responsibilities and accountabilities under the Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System are to:

- Actively take part in the design, implementation, monitoring and improvement of the local Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System

- Understand and perform their delegated roles and responsibilities, as per their local Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System

- Participate in education and training related to the Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System, including education and training that focuses on culturally appropriate engagement of patients, carers and families and shared decision making

- Review their clinical practice and performance of their roles, responsibilities and accountabilities under the Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System and use the information to implement improvements to the system and changes to practice.

The allocation of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities under the Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System will vary depending on the health services’ local context, availability of resources and models of care. Some examples of the key roles, responsibilities and accountabilities that might be allocated to personnel as part of a local Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System are outlined in Appendix 10.1.

**4 ASSESSMENT OF DETERIORATION**

**4.1 Assessment**

Assessment of a patient needs to, at a minimum, include a systematic A-G assessment and be documented in the patient’s health care record, as per the requirements outlined in NSW Health Policy Health Care Records – Documentation and Management (PD2012_069). To establish the patient’s baseline and agree on other patient-specific signs of deterioration initially, assessment needs to:

- Include a comprehensive systematic physical and mental state assessment

- Consider any pre-morbid conditions and where accessible, medical or clinical history documented in health care records

- Engage patients, carers, families and where appropriate, the patient’s general practitioner, case manager or other clinicians familiar with their care.

Ongoing assessment is to involve the patient, their carer/s and family in monitoring changes in their physical and mental state and vital sign observations, as well as interpretation of clinical information and trends.
The frequency of assessment is to be increased above the minimum requirements outlined in Table 2 when:

- The patient’s vital sign observations fall within a coloured zone on a standard observation chart
- Assessment identifies other signs and symptoms of deterioration
- A CERS call has been made.

Assessment is to be respectful of, and sensitive to, the cultural and religious needs of the patient, including their personal preferences, cultural values, language and kinship systems. Patients and carers are also to be given information and education of the importance of communicating concerns around signs of deterioration.

4.2 Standard clinical tools

Standard clinical tools support clinicians to assess patients, recognise when they may be deteriorating and outline the appropriate escalation of care.

The standard observation charts approved by the NSW Ministry of Health are standardised clinical tools designed using human factors principles. The charts incorporate colour-coded calling criteria and a ‘track and trigger’ format to alert clinicians to patients who are deteriorating, by graphically ‘tracking’ their vital sign observations over time and ‘triggering’ an appropriate escalation of care based on the coloured calling criteria. The charts also include a list of additional colour-coded escalation criteria that include other standard signs and symptoms of deterioration.

All NSW Health services are to use the approved standard observation charts as part of their Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System, unless they have an exemption issued by their LHD/SHN to use alternative charts. Specialty clinical units where patients are appropriately monitored and care is escalated as required, such as intensive care units, coronary care units and operating theatres, may be exempt from using the standard observation charts, as per section 3.

Where facilities or clinical services use electronic versions of the standard observation charts, processes must be in place to ensure documentation of vital sign observations can continue to be completed during system outages.

The standard observation charts have three colour-coded zones:

- **Blue zone:** (where applicable) represents criteria for which increasing the frequency of observations and/or increased vigilance is required
- **Yellow zone:** represents early warning signs of deterioration and the criteria for which a clinical review (or other CERS) call may be required
- **Red zone:** represents late warning signs of deterioration and criteria for which a rapid response call is required.

**Appendix 10.2** provides further details of required actions when each zone is triggered.

Other standard clinical tools, such as the sepsis pathways, electronic fetal heart rate monitoring algorithm and labels, Comfort Observation and Symptom Assessment Chart, and Resuscitation Plan, have been designed to align with the colour-coded calling criteria used on the standard observation charts. The coloured zones on the standard clinical tools outline the appropriate response and these are to be incorporated as part of the local CERS.

Local clinical management guidelines or clinical pathways may be developed for specialty areas or groups of patients with clinical indications for more or less frequent monitoring. Local clinical management guidelines and clinical pathways need to outline the criteria for escalation of care (coloured zones); be approved using the local governance system; and incorporated into the local CERS.
4.3 Minimum requirements for vital sign monitoring

The minimum set of vital signs and frequency of observations for different patient groups are outlined in Table 2 below.

In addition to the minimum requirements, a full set of vital sign observations must be taken and documented in the patient’s health care record:

- At the time of admission or initial assessment (this excludes the brief clinical assessment conducted as part of the triage process on arrival to the Emergency Department)
- Within one (1) hour prior to discharge from a facility, clinical service or clinical unit.
- Prior to and following transfer of care between a facility, clinical service or clinical unit.
- A medical officer may only prescribe the frequency of vital sign observations below the minimum requirements following an assessment of the patient and with authorisation from the AMO/delegated clinician responsible for the patient’s care.
- Where a medical officer is not available onsite, a registered nurse/midwife or allied health professional may vary the frequency of observations below the minimum frequency outlined in Table 2, with authorisation from the AMO/delegated clinician responsible for the patient. This must be arranged via phone order and follow agreed local procedures.

**Table 2: Minimum number and frequency for vital sign observations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patient group</th>
<th>Minimum required frequency of assessment</th>
<th>Minimum set of vital sign observations</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult inpatients</td>
<td>Four (4) times per day at six (6) hourly intervals.</td>
<td>Respiratory rate, oxygen saturation, heart rate, blood pressure, temperature, level of consciousness, new onset confusion or behaviour change*, pain score</td>
<td>Including pregnant women greater than twenty (20) weeks gestation and less than six (6) week post-partum admitted for a condition unrelated to pregnancy who are monitored on the Standard Maternity Observation Chart (SMOC).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health acute and subacute</td>
<td>Three (3) times per day at eight (8) hourly intervals for a minimum of 48 hours. Then daily thereafter.</td>
<td>Respiratory rate, oxygen saturation, heart rate, blood pressure, temperature, level of consciousness, pain score</td>
<td>Mental state assessment of patients within a mental health inpatient unit are to be completed in line with Engagement and Observation in Mental Health Inpatient Units PD2017 025.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health non-acute</td>
<td>Three (3) times per day at eight (8) hourly intervals for a minimum of 48 hours. Then monthly thereafter.</td>
<td>Respiratory rate, oxygen saturation, heart rate, blood pressure, temperature, level of consciousness, pain score</td>
<td>Patients with active comorbid physical health conditions or aged 65 years and over are to have observations no less than weekly and are to have a comprehensive systematic physical assessment completed at least monthly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12. MEDICAL CARE</strong></td>
<td>12.449</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hospital in the Home</strong></td>
<td>At least once during each consultation/visit (17)</td>
<td>To be determined locally based on the models of care and assessment of risk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Care Nursery</strong></td>
<td>Six (6) times per day at four (4) hourly intervals</td>
<td>Respiratory rate, respiratory distress, oxygen saturation, heart rate, temperature, behaviour change*, pain score</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Newborn</strong></td>
<td>Before leaving the birthing environment</td>
<td>Respiratory rate, oxygen saturations, heart rate and temperature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One (1) full set of vital signs observations and a newborn risk assessment completed</td>
<td>Newborns with low or no identifiable risk factors are to be monitored/assessed in-line with local protocols.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If perinatal risk factors are identified and/or observations within the blue, yellow or red zone and/or additional criteria present, further observations must be recorded on a Standard Newborn Observation Chart (SNOC) six (6) times per day at four (4) hourly intervals.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paediatric inpatients</strong></td>
<td>Six (6) times per day at four (4) hourly intervals</td>
<td>Respiratory rate, respiratory distress, oxygen saturation, heart rate, temperature, level of consciousness, new onset confusion or behaviour change*, pain score</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maternity/antenatal inpatient</strong></td>
<td>Four (4) times per day at six (6) hourly intervals.</td>
<td>Respiratory rate, oxygen saturation, heart rate, blood pressure, temperature, level of consciousness, new onset confusion or behaviour change*.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>For fetal heart rate monitoring requirements refer to <a href="#">Maternity – Fetal heart rate monitoring GL2018_025</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maternity/postnatal inpatient with no identified risk factors</strong></td>
<td>Before leaving the birth environment One (1) full set of vital signs observations and a maternity risk assessment completed.</td>
<td>Respiratory rate, oxygen saturation, heart rate, blood pressure, temperature, level of consciousness, new onset confusion or behaviour change*, accumulated blood loss.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>If a woman has observations in a coloured zone or identified risk factors, vital sign observations are to be performed four times per day at six hourly intervals. Women receiving midwifery care in the home are to be monitored according to local protocol, refer to section 4.6.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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## 12. MEDICAL CARE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patient Group</th>
<th>Monitoring Frequency</th>
<th>Observations Required</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maternity/postnatal inpatient with risk factors</td>
<td>Four (4) times per day at six (6) hourly intervals.</td>
<td>Respiratory rate, oxygen saturation, heart rate, blood pressure, temperature, level of consciousness, new onset confusion or behaviour change*, accumulated blood loss.</td>
<td>SMOC is recommended for women greater than twenty (20) weeks gestation and less than six (6) week post-partum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inpatient sub-acute/long stay/rehabilitation</td>
<td>Twice a day at a maximum interval of 12 hours apart</td>
<td>Respiratory rate, oxygen saturation, heart rate, blood pressure, temperature, level of consciousness, new onset confusion or behaviour change*, pain score</td>
<td>If a patient develops an acute medical/physiological problem the required frequency of observations reverts to a minimum of four (4) times per day at six (6) hourly intervals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inpatient palliative care</td>
<td>Twice a day at a maximum interval of 12 hours apart</td>
<td>Respiratory rate, oxygen saturation, heart rate, blood pressure, temperature, level of consciousness, new onset confusion or behaviour change*, pain score</td>
<td>If a patient develops acute medical/physiological problems are managed in line with their goals of care and Resuscitation Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents in long term care facilities, such as a multipurpose service (MPS)</td>
<td>At least once per month</td>
<td>Respiratory rate, oxygen saturation, heart rate, blood pressure, temperature, level of consciousness, new onset confusion or behaviour change*, pain score</td>
<td>The frequency of observations may change depending on the resident’s condition and will be determined locally by the AMO/delegated clinician responsible for the resident’s care. Additional vital signs may be determined as clinically appropriate for the patient cohort cared for in these settings, such as weight, and monitored on a regular basis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes an assessment of the patient’s behaviour in the context of their developmental age and/or baseline assessment, noting changes in their cognitive function, activity/tone, perception, or emotional state such as abnormal thinking, irritability, agitation, inconsolability and/or delirium.

### 4.4 Individualised monitoring and assessment plans

It is recommended that patients with clinical needs which differ from approved clinical management guidelines have an individualised monitoring and assessment plan in place.

An individualised monitoring and assessment plan takes into account the patient’s clinical situation, including their diagnosis, clinical risks, goals of care and proposed treatment, and specifies the vital signs and other relevant physiological/mental state observations to be monitored, and the frequency of monitoring.

Individualised monitoring and assessment plans, along with the rationale for the plan, are to be documented in the patient’s health care record.

Patients, carers and families need to be engaged in the development of an individualised monitoring and assessment plan to ensure that it meets the patient’s needs.

An AMO/delegated clinician responsible must authorise any individualised monitoring and assessment plan which varies the vital signs or other observations to be monitored below the minimum requirements outlined in section 4.3, Table 2. This includes when the delegated clinician responsible is a senior medical officer not employed or contracted by the PHO, such as the patient’s treating general practitioner.

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If a patient with an individualised monitoring and assessment plan has observations within the blue, yellow or red zone, care must be escalated according to the appropriate zone response unless an alternative response is stipulated in their Resuscitation Plan.

Following the initiation of a CERS call, the individualised monitoring and assessment plan need to be reviewed and the frequency of observations increased.

### 4.5 Alterations to calling criteria

Standard calling criteria (blue, yellow or red zone parameters) may be altered and/or other agreed signs of deterioration identified, based on assessment of the patient’s condition and with input from patients, carers and families.

A medical officer may alter the standard calling criteria following assessment of the patient and engagement of patients, carers and families, and **in consultation with the AMO/delegated clinician responsible**.

If the AMO/delegated clinician responsible is not available onsite, a registered nurse/midwife or allied health professional responsible for vital sign observation monitoring may alter calling criteria when prescribed by the AMO/delegated clinician responsible and following assessment of the patient. This process needs to be outlined in the local CERS protocol, along with defined processes for altering calling criteria, as listed in section 5, below.

The local CERS protocol also needs to define processes for altering calling criteria, including:

- Documentation of the rationale for the new calling criteria in the patient’s health care record
- Authorisation of the alterations by the AMO/delegated clinician responsible, including when the delegated clinician responsible is a senior medical officer not employed or contracted by the PHO, such as the patient’s treating general practitioner
- The minimum timeframe for review of the altered calling criteria.
- Altered calling criteria are to only be used:
  - To align the calling criteria with the patient’s baseline vital sign observation parameters when they are above or below the standard calling criteria. Establishment of the patient’s baseline is to be done in consultation with the patient, carers and/or family and based on assessment of the patient
  - If the course of the patient’s disease or condition, or recovery from a particular intervention, is expected to be above or below the standard calling criteria
  - If the proposed changes to the standard calling criteria will improve detection of patient deterioration.

A ‘chronic’ alteration may be set to align the calling criteria with the patient’s baseline vital sign observation parameters. A chronic alteration may be set for the duration of the patient’s episode of care and needs to be formally reviewed by the clinical team responsible for the patient’s care during routine assessments. A chronic alteration may be set for patients treated in non-hospital or residential care settings, however time limits for the duration of the alteration must be set at the time the alteration is ordered and documented in the patient’s medical record.

An ‘acute’ alteration may be set to align the calling criteria with the expected progression of a patient’s disease or condition. Acute alterations are set for a defined period of time, not longer than 12 hours, before reverting back to the standard calling criteria on the appropriate standard observation chart. Acute alterations are not intended to be used for patients who are cared for in a non-hospital or residential care setting.

Special treatment plans, such as a Resuscitation Plan, which may also alter the response to the red and yellow zone triggers, are to be documented in the patient’s health care record.
4.6 Vital sign monitoring for patients in non-hospital/residential care settings

It is expected that patients who are receiving care outside of a hospital or in a residential care setting (such as outpatient clinics, community and primary health care services, midwifery care provided in the home or Hospital in the Home services) are monitored for signs of deterioration and that protocols are in place to escalate care as required.

For patients in these settings, monitoring of vital signs and other observations will depend on the:

- Patient’s clinical needs, risks and proposed treatment
- Environment in which care is being delivered
- Scope of practice of the clinician providing care
- Resources available to monitor and document vital signs and other observations
- Capacity of the service to escalate care when required.

Non-hospital and/or residential care settings need to develop local protocols that establish clear expectations for monitoring physiological or mental state deterioration, including the vital signs and other observations that will be monitored, how frequently they will be monitored and the criteria for escalation of care (coloured zones).

Non-hospital and/or residential care facilities may implement a local clinical management guideline or pathway for cohorts of patients who are frequently cared for or based on the model of care that is provided. The minimum expectations for monitoring signs of deterioration need to consider clinical risks and be approved by the local governance system or relevant committee.

Non-hospital and/or residential care settings may also consider using individualised monitoring and assessment plans for each patient. Where individualised monitoring and assessment plans are used in non-hospital/residential care settings, the requirements outlined in section 4.4 apply.

4.7 Palliative care and last days of life

Patients admitted under palliative care services are to have an individualised monitoring and assessment plan and Resuscitation Plan that aligns with their goals of care. When it is identified that a patient under the care of any clinical service/clinical unit is dying or in their last days of life, the use of standard observation charts is not appropriate. The patient’s individual monitoring and assessment plan and Resuscitation Plan are to be reviewed in consultation with the patient, carers and family to ensure comfort is observed and, where required, concerns escalated via the local CERS.

Clinicians are to refer to the CEC Last Days of Life Toolkit for appropriate resources to:

- Ensure comfort is observed in patients whose death is expected, such as the Comfort Observation and Symptom Assessment Chart; and
- Facilitate the accelerated transfer for the patient who wishes to die at home.

5 CLINICAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE SYSTEMS

A Clinical Emergency Response System (CERS) is a formalised system for obtaining prompt assistance from appropriately skilled and knowledgeable clinicians when a patient has signs and symptoms of physiological or mental state deterioration.

As the signs and symptoms of deterioration in mental state are often indicative of a physiological/organic condition and not necessarily a sign of an acute mental health condition, the CERS response to these are to be same as for physiological deterioration. Organic causes of deterioration are to be considered prior to accessing specialty expertise from a mental health service.
The CERS needs to:

- Operate 24 hours per day, 7 days per week
- Have the capacity to manage multiple calls at any given time;
- Have contingency plans to account for known or unexpected absences of key personnel;
- Be known and understood by all clinicians.
- Be able to be activated by staff, patients, carers or families.

NSW Health organisations are to develop and implement a local CERS across their organisation which includes:

- Procedures to enable patients, carers and families to directly escalate care within 30 minutes to a clinician who is not routinely involved in the patient’s care. These procedures must clearly identify how patients, carers and families may initiate the escalation and what the expected response is. Refer to the CEC's R.E.A.C.H program[^22]
- Procedures to systematically and proactively identify patients at increased risk of deterioration, with appropriate mitigation strategies
- Protocols that outline the actions to be taken to escalate care when a patient’s observations breach a blue, yellow or red zone, including who will respond and how they are to be contacted
- Procedures to review the provisional diagnosis and/or differential diagnosis by a second clinician following a CERS call, or when deterioration has not been reversed
- Protocols for accessing secure clinical units or clinical services not physically co-located with an acute service that is responsible for responding to a CERS call within agreed timeframes
- Procedures for accessing specialty expertise in alignment with the facility, clinical service or clinical unit’s service capability framework or referral network
- Protocols for intra- and inter-facility escalation that clearly identify who to refer to, how to contact them and how the transfer is to be conducted, consistent with the principles outlined in section 5.4
- Defined skills, education and training requirements for clinicians with assigned responsibilities as designated responders that align with the Deteriorating Patient Education Strategy
- Defined roles and responsibilities for team leaders and members of the rapid response team (RRT)
- An agreed set of minimum core emergency equipment and medication consistent with best practice guidelines that is readily available throughout the facility, clinical service or clinical unit in accordance with the organisation-wide risk assessment, and approved by the governance system or relevant committee
- Procedures for orientation and training of staff on how to access and use equipment for advanced resuscitation, including specialist equipment for paediatric, neonatal and maternity patients
- A structured clinical handover tool, such as ISBAR, to communicate critical information, outcomes, alerts and risks during the escalation of care between the clinicians involved
- Requirements for documenting a CERS call, including the outcome of the call, the subsequent medical management and monitoring plan, and a provisional and/or differential diagnosis in the patient’s health care record
- Prompt communication with the patient, carers and families about the response to and outcome of any CERS calls.

[^22]: [CEC’s R.E.A.C.H program](#)
For facilities, clinical services or clinical units that have a formal arrangement with the NSW Ambulance or who use ‘CERS Assist’ as part of their escalation framework, the point at which escalation to NSW Ambulance is required must be outlined in the relevant protocols and procedures.

5.1 CERS in specialty areas

Specialty areas with the internal resources to manage clinical emergencies may use a graded and tailored response protocol for patient deterioration that uses a combination of internal specialty expertise and external support to escalate care. Areas that may require a graded and tailored response protocol include emergency departments; maternity wards; neonatal intensive care or special care nurseries; and post-anaesthetic care units (recovery units).

Where a facility, clinical service or clinical unit requires a graded and tailored response protocol, the organisation wide CERS must identify and include these specialty area protocols. A specialty area’s response protocol needs to:

1. Identify the area to which the protocol applies
2. Outline the types of deterioration that can be managed without external support and the point at which external support needs to be called
3. Define the roles and responsibilities of both internal and external designated responders in managing, and reversing, patient deterioration
4. Specify the minimum core emergency equipment and medication consistent with best practice guidelines that is to be readily available and the location of these (in accordance with the organisation-wide risk assessment), and approved by the governance system or relevant committee
5. Define the skills, education and training requirements for clinicians with assigned responsibility as a designated responder for that specialty area that align with the Deteriorating Patient Education Strategy
6. Include a structured clinical handover tool, such as ISBAR, to communicate critical information, outcomes, alerts and risks during the escalation of care between the clinicians involved.

5.2 Clinical review process

Prompt and effective clinical review is essential in managing patients who are deteriorating and is to be undertaken (or supervised) by experienced staff.

If a patient’s observations enter the yellow zone (based on vital sign observations and/or additional criteria), the yellow zone response instructions on the appropriate standard observation chart, standard clinical tool or approved local clinical management guideline/pathway are to be followed. Unless specified otherwise, the decision to call a clinical review (or other CERS call) is to be made in consultation with the nurse/midwife-in-charge or relevant clinical supervisor. The decision to escalate (or not) is to be documented in the patient’s health care record.

For patients in hospital settings, a clinical review is to be undertaken by the clinical team responsible for the patient’s care (or another designated responder) within 30 minutes.

Depending on the local CERS protocol, the clinical review may be undertaken by a medical officer on call or an appropriately experienced registered nurse/midwife (RN/RM), preferably First Line Emergency Care Course (FLECC) accredited, or post graduate qualifications in emergency/critical care nursing, or credentialed in the procedures of the relevant specialty.

For patients in non-hospital or residential care settings, initiation of a clinical review must follow local procedure. The timeframe for review, the clinician most appropriate to undertake the review and other related responses need to be locally determined in line with the implemented model of care and based on clinical risks associated with the delivery of care. In these settings, the decision to initiate a clinical review also needs to be made in consultation with a clinical supervisor and documented in the patient’s health care record.
5.3 Rapid response process

If a patient’s observations enter the red zone (based on vital sign observations and/or additional criteria), the red zone response instructions on the appropriate standard observation chart, standard clinical tool or approved clinical management guideline are to be followed, and a rapid response is to be activated as per the local CERS protocol.

For patients in hospital settings, the nurse/midwife-in-charge or equivalent relevant clinical supervisor must be informed that a rapid response call has been made, and the instructions outlined on the appropriate standard observation chart, standard clinical tool and/or approved local clinical management guideline/pathway need to be followed.

Where a rapid response is called for a patient who is on an end-of-life pathway, and the appropriate level of escalation is unclear, the AMO/delegated clinician responsible is to be called, as well as the patient’s carer and/or family.

The RRT members or designated responder/s must urgently attend a rapid response call, assess the patient, treat the underlying cause of deterioration and/or provide interventions to resuscitate the patient.

In small or rural health services, the designated responder may be an appropriately experienced registered nurse/midwife (RN/RM), preferably First Line Emergency Care Course (FLECC) accredited or with post graduate qualifications in emergency/critical care nursing, or credentialed in the procedures of the relevant specialty, or a paramedic who attends as a result of a CERS Assist call.

When responding to the deterioration of a maternity, paediatric or neonatal patient, at least one member of the RRT or designated responder needs to be credentialed in the advanced resuscitation techniques and procedures of that specialty.

A facility, clinical unit or clinical service may implement a graded rapid response process based on the:

- Severity of the patient’s condition and the reason for the call. For example, patients with an immediately life threatening condition, such as cardio-respiratory arrest, airway obstruction, stridor, or are unresponsive, are prioritised to a rapid response team, and patients with red zone observations or additional criteria that are not immediately life threatening are attended by a senior registrar or equivalent in the first instance.

- Skills required to support a tailored response to a specialty area. For example, a maternity emergency managed by obstetric and midwifery staff who require additional airway support for immediate management and ICU support post-intervention.

This graded response needs to be risk assessed and approved by the relevant local committee/senior management, and clearly defined in the local CERS protocol.

For patients in non-hospital or residential care settings, the initiation of a rapid response must be in accordance with the local procedure. The actions to be taken when a red zone response is triggered need to be locally determined in line with the implemented model of care and based on the clinical risks associated with the delivery of care. In most cases, this will usually mean calling triple zero (000) for NSW Ambulance.

5.4 Patient transfer processes

5.4.1 Intra-hospital transfer processes

Patients with observations in the red or yellow zone can only be transferred between clinical units when:

1. The transferring responsible clinician approves the transfer
2. There is an individualised monitoring and assessment plan in place, which may include altered calling criteria
3. The receiving clinical team responsible for the patient’s care is advised of the individualised monitoring and assessment plan
4. They have appropriate clinical support during transportation.
5.4.2 Inter-facility transfer processes

For patients requiring transfer for specialist care, the processes for requesting and arranging transfers are outlined in the following documents:

- **PD2011_031** – Inter-facility Transfer Process for Adults Requiring Specialist Care
- **PD2018_011** – Critical Care Tertiary Referral Networks & Transfer of Care (ADULTS)
- **PD2019_024** – Adult Mental Health Intensive Care Networks
- **PD2019_020** – Clinical Handover
- **PD2019_053** – Tiered Networking Arrangements for Perinatal Care in NSW
- **GL2017_010** – NSW Paediatric Service Capability Framework
- **PD2010_030** – Critical Care Tertiary Referral Networks (Paediatrics)
- **PD2010_031** – Children and Adolescents Inter-facility Transfers
- **GL2016_018** – NSW Maternity and Neonatal Service Capability Framework
- **PD2018_002** – Service Specifications for Transport Providers, Patient Transport Service

5.4.3 Transferring patients from non-hospital/residential care settings

Patients in non-hospital or residential care settings who require escalation of care will usually be referred to their general practitioner or an acute health care facility; this may involve transfer via ambulance or other patient transport service.

Staff in non-hospital or residential care settings are to refer to and follow their locally determined procedure for escalating care. Staff must support the transfer process by communicating relevant clinical information to the receiving health care professional or facility through written documentation provided to the patient, carer or family, documenting notes in the patient’s health care record or verbally during clinical handover.

This does not include patients who are cared for in the community as an admitted patient of a Hospital in the Home (HITH) service. HITH patients who deteriorate are to be managed as per the requirements outlined in **GL2018_020 Adult and Paediatric Hospital in the Home**.

6 EDUCATION

This section is to be read in conjunction with the [CEC Deteriorating Patient Education Strategy](#) which outlines the minimum training requirements for clinicians who provide direct patient care.

All facilities/clinical services/clinical units are to have a documented local education program that:

- Incorporates patients, carers and families in the co-design and delivery of locally provided deteriorating patient education and training
- Ensures all staff are aware of and know how to activate the local CERS, including contracted staff, locums and clinicians on rotating rosters
- Describes the skills, knowledge, education and training requirements for all clinicians to understand how to engage and partner with patients, carers and families in the recognition and management of deteriorating patients, including cultural awareness and cultural competency training
- Identifies appropriate education and training programs for clinicians to complete that align with the Deteriorating Patient Education Strategy
- Describes the minimum skills, knowledge, education and training requirements on the recognition and management of the deteriorating patient for all clinicians providing direct patient care, including completion of basic life support training

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• Describes the skills, experience, education, training and credentialing requirements for clinicians who are members of the RRT or are designated responders, including advanced life support training
• Details the resources allocated to support clinicians to complete the required education and training, including protected time off
• Identifies specialty units that require clinicians to respond to and manage clinical emergencies within their own clinical service/clinical unit, and describe the skills, experience, education and training and credentialing requirements for these clinicians, including team training and the non-technical skills component of the BTF Tier Three Framework
• Outlines the system for ensuring regular educational updates are provided for existing clinicians, and the orientation and training of new clinicians on the recognition and management of the deteriorating patient
• Incorporates the components of the BTF education into other educational activities/opportunities, including: signs of physiological and mental state deterioration; systematic A-G assessment, synthesising assessment findings and observations to guide clinical decision making; expected trajectory of illness; appropriate escalation of care and the appropriate management of the deteriorating patient; structured communication, handover and team work
• Outlines processes to reinforce structured communication techniques and systematic patient assessment in daily clinical practice
• Identifies appropriate performance measures for monitoring satisfactory completion of required education and training
• Describes the roles and responsibilities for the governance of the local education program, including responsibility for developing, implementing and monitoring the program.

7 EVALUATION

All PHOs need to have a measurement strategy in place to monitor the performance and effectiveness of local Deteriorating Patient Safety Net Systems. The measurement strategy is to outline a selection of outcome, process and balancing measures, including the collection and reporting of mandatory quality improvement measures:

• Rapid response call rate per 1,000 acute separations
• Cardio-respiratory arrest rate per 1,000 acute separations.

Advice on collection and reporting of mandatory quality improvement measures, including definitions and methods for collection, is provided by the NSW Ministry of Health as part of the LHD/SHN service agreements. Mandatory quality improvement measures are available on the CEC Quality Improvement Data System (QIDS).

The outcome, process and balancing measures selected as part of the PHO’s measurement strategy are to facilitate continuous quality improvement of local Deteriorating Patient Safety Net Systems. Details on developing a measurement strategy are provided in the Deteriorating Patient Measurement Strategy Guide.

A list of example measures that could be used as part of a measurement strategy are provided below. However, these are not exhaustive and facilities/clinical services/clinical units are to select the most meaningful measures for their context.

Outcome measures:

• In-hospital mortality rates
• Percentage of patients surveyed who report a positive experience
12. MEDICAL CARE

**Process measures:**

- Rates/count/number of clinical review (yellow zone) calls
- Rates/count/number of rapid response (red zone) calls
- Rates/count/number for patient, carer and family (REACH) escalation calls
- Percentage of patients, carers and family members surveyed that know how to raise their concerns and if required make a patient, carer and family escalation (REACH) call
- Percentage of patients with a full set of observations completed at the required minimum frequency
- Percentage of patients with a full set of observations completed at initial assessment and prior to departure from a facility, clinical service or clinical unit
- Percentage of patients that have an increase in their observation frequency following triggering of a coloured zone and/or a CERS call
- Percentage of red zone triggers escalated to a rapid response call
- Percentage of yellow zone triggers escalated to a clinical review (or other CERS) call
- Percentage of patients with a Resuscitation Plan
- Percentage of patients transferred to a higher level of care following a CERS call
- Percentage of patients with alterations to calling criteria
- Percentage of clinical staff that provide direct patient care who have completed their Deteriorating Patient mandatory training

**Balancing measure:**

- In-hospital length of stay
- ICU length of stay
- ICU admission rates/occupancy rates
- Re-presentation rates.
- When selecting measures to form their measurement strategy, PHOs are to:
  - Consider the care provided by the facility, clinical service or clinical unit, the usual patient cohort/s and the patients goals of care
  - Ensure measures align with the aims and objectives of the system and any changes/improvements made to it
  - Engage with patients, carers and families to consider what factors are meaningful to measure from a patient’s perspective.

Performance reports are to be communicated to the LHD/SHN; clinicians and managers; patients, carers and families; and other key stakeholders and include an analysis of the data identifying improvement opportunities and the impact of any improvements implemented by the facility, clinical service or clinical unit/s.

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8 REFERENCES


9 RELATED DOCUMENTS

National

Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care

National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards (second edition)

National Consensus Statement: Essential elements for recognising and responding to acute physiological deterioration (second edition)

Recognising and Responding to Deterioration in Mental State: A Scoping Review

National Consensus Statement: essential elements for safe high quality end of life care
National Consensus Statement: Essential elements for safe high quality paediatric end-of-life care
Delirium Clinical Care Standard
NSQHS Standards User guide for health service organisations providing care for patients with cognitive impairment or at risk of delirium
NSQHS Standards User Guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health
NSQHS Standards User Guide for Health Service Providing Care for People with Mental Health Issues
NSQHS Standards User Guide for Measuring and Evaluating Partnering with Consumers

NSW Health
Clinical Excellence Commission – Between the Flags Project: The Way Forward
Clinical Excellence Commission – R.E.A.C.H Toolkit
PD2012 069 Health Care Records – Documentation and Management
GL2016 018 NSW Maternity and Neonatal Service Capability Framework
GL2018 025 Maternity Fetal Heart Monitoring
GL2018 016 Maternity – Resuscitation of the Newborn Infant
GL2017 018 Maternity - Prevention, Detection, Escalation and Management of Postpartum Haemorrhage (PPH)
IB2008 002 Fetal Welfare, Obstetric Emergency, Neonatal Resuscitation Training
PD2019 053 Tiered Networking Arrangements for Perinatal Care in NSW
PD2017 025 Engagement and Observation in Mental Health Inpatient Units
PD2019 045 Discharge Planning and Transfer of Care for Consumers of NSW Health Mental Health Services
PD2015 004 Principles for Safe Management of Disturbed and/or Aggressive Behaviour and the Use of Restraint
GL2017 010 NSW Paediatric Service Capability Framework
PD2010 034 Children and Adolescents: Guidelines for Care in Acute Care Settings
PD2010 032 Children and Adolescents – Admission to Services Designated Level 1-3 Paediatric Medicine and Surgery
PD2010 031 Children and Adolescents – Inter-Facility Transfers
GL2014 007 NSW Rural Paediatric Emergency Clinical Guidelines Second Edition
PD2010 030 Critical Care Tertiary Networks (Paediatrics)
PD2011 038 Children and Infants – Recognition of a Sick Baby or Child in the Emergency Department
PD2018 011 Critical Care Tertiary Referral Networks and Transfer of Care (ADULTS)
PD2011 031 Inter-Facility Transfer Process for Adults Requiring Specialist Care
GL2020 004 Rural Adult Emergency Clinical Guidelines
PD2014 030 Using Resuscitation Plans in End of Life Decisions
GL2005 057 End-of-Life Care and Decision-Making
GL2005 056 Advance Care Directives (NSW) – Using
GL2018 020 Adult and Paediatric Hospital in the Home Guideline
PD2018 002 Service Specifications for Transport Providers, Patient Transport Service
PD2019 020 Clinical Handover
10 APPENDICES

10.1 Example roles and responsibilities for the Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System

**AMO/delegated clinician responsible (i.e. consultant / staff specialist / VMO) are to:**

- Provide leadership to the clinical team responsible for the patient’s care, to ensure they respond as per the local CERS
- Support processes for, and awareness of, patient, carer and family escalation
- Ensure every patient, taking their diagnosis and proposed treatment into account, has an individualised assessment and monitoring plan specifying the vital sign observations and other relevant observations to be recorded and the frequency of these
- Involve patients, families and carers in the development and review of documented individualised assessment and monitoring plans, medical management plans and resuscitation plans, to ensure they align with the patient’s goals of care
- Ensure any alterations to calling criteria are reviewed for appropriateness, formally authorised, and documented in the patient’s health record
- Ensure that a medical management plan (including the monitoring plan) is reviewed and documented for all patients following a CERS call (clinical review or rapid response).

**Members of the clinical team responsible for the patient’s care are to:**

- Inform patients, carers and families of processes available to escalate their concerns about deterioration
- Involve patients, carers and families in the establishment of baseline observation parameters for patients to inform individualised assessment and monitoring plans and potential alterations to calling criteria
- Involve patients, carers and families in the establishment of their communication preferences and needs
- In consultation with the AMO/delegated clinician responsible, document a clear individualised assessment and monitoring plan that specifies the vital signs and other relevant observations to be recorded and the frequency of the observations
- Identifies patients at increased risk of deterioration and deploys strategies to mitigate the risks
- Discuss with, and seek authorisation from, the AMO/delegatedclinician responsible for any alterations to calling criteria and document the rationale for these alterations in the patient’s health care record
- Review and confirm the provisional diagnosis and/or proposed differential diagnosis and medical management plan, including an individualised assessment and monitoring plan, for all patients following a clinical review or other CERS call, and communicate critical information about a patient’s care to the AMO/delegated clinician responsible and other clinicians, as appropriate
- Communicate critical information, outcomes, alerts and risks to patients, carers and families following a clinical review and/or rapid response in a timely manner
- Escalate care as per the local CERS.
Nursing/Midwifery Unit Manager/supervisor or delegate (i.e. nurse/midwife-in-charge) is to:

- Support processes for, and awareness of patient, family and carer escalation
- Provide leadership in monitoring compliance with the minimum requirements of the Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System, such as completion of vital sign observations at the required frequency
- Determine the need for a clinical review for patients whose vital sign observations are in the yellow zone, when additional yellow zone criteria is present or when clinicians, patients, carers or family are concerned about a patient’s deterioration, and call for a clinical review or other CERS call as required
- Continue to escalate care as per the local CERS in the event that a clinical review is not attended by the clinical team responsible for the patient’s care, or designated responder, within 30 minutes
- Work in partnership with, and communicate critical information to, the RRT during a rapid response call
- Support staff to complete relevant deteriorating patient education programs, including the allocation of protected time to attend required training
- Identify opportunities to reinforce structured communication techniques and systematic patient assessment as covered in the BTF education program during routine clinical practice
- Provide feedback to the local Deteriorating Patient governing committee(s) regarding implementation of the five elements of the Deteriorating Patient Safety Net System.

Nursing/midwifery/allied health staff (within the related scope of practice) are to:

- Be aware of, and know how to activate, the local CERS
- Inform patients, carers and families about how to escalate their concerns about deterioration
- Conduct a systematic patient assessment, including documenting a full set of vital signs observations on an approved standard observation chart, at the frequency specified in their individual monitoring plan. In the absence of an individual monitoring plan, refer to the appropriate approved local clinical management guideline/pathway, or the minimum requirements outlined in Table 2 of this policy.
- When a coloured zone is triggered, follow the relevant coloured zone response instructions on the standard observation chart, standard clinical tool or approved local clinical management guideline/pathway.
- Increase the frequency of observations and initiate appropriate clinical care when a patient’s systematic assessment triggers a blue zone response on the standard observation chart, standard clinical tool or approved local clinical management guideline/pathway.
- Promptly notify the Nursing/Midwifery Unit Manager or delegated nurse/midwife-in-charge when a patient’s systematic assessment triggers a yellow zone response on the standard observation chart, standard clinical tool or approved local clinical management guideline/pathway.
- Initiate a rapid response call and notify the Nursing/Midwifery Unit Manager or delegated nurse/midwife-in-charge when a patient’s systematic assessment triggers a red zone response on the standard observation chart, standard clinical tool or approved local clinical management guideline/pathway, or serious concern exists about a patient’s deterioration
- Document actions taken in relation to recognition, and management of deterioration in the patient’s health care record
- Work in partnership with, and communicate critical information to, the RRT during a rapid response call
- Communicate critical information, outcomes, alerts and risks of any clinical review or rapid response calls to the Nursing/Midwifery Unit Manager or delegated nurse/midwife-in-charge, and the clinical team responsible for the patient’s care, if/when they are not involved in the process.
Rapid response teams are to:

- Ensure patients are attended to urgently when required as part of the local CERS
- Work in partnership with, and communicate critical information to the clinical team responsible for the patient’s care during a rapid response call
- Ensure all rapid response calls are documented in the patient’s health care record and outcomes are handed over to the clinician and the clinical team responsible for the patient’s care
- Communicate critical information, outcomes, alerts and risks to patients, carers and families following a rapid response in a timely manner
- Have a process to challenge or confirm the provisional diagnosis and/or proposed differential diagnosis, medical management and monitoring plan for all patients following a rapid response.

10.2 Response instructions on the standard observations charts for hospital settings

10.2.1 Blue zone response

If a patient has any observations which breach the blue zone on a standard observation chart, standard clinical tool or approved local clinical management guideline/pathway, clinicians are to:

- Initiate appropriate clinical care
- Increase the frequency of observations, as indicated by the patient’s condition.

If a clinician is worried or unsure whether to initiate a CERS call, consult with the nurse-/midwife-in-charge or relevant clinical supervisor to decide whether a CERS call is to be made, considering the following:

- What is usual for the patient and are there documented alterations to calling criteria?
- Does the abnormal observation reflect deterioration in the patient?
- Is there an adverse trend in observations?

10.2.2 Yellow zone response

If a patient has any observations or additional criteria which breach the yellow zone observations or additional criteria on a standard observation chart, standard clinical tool or approved local clinical management guideline/pathway, clinicians are to:

- Initiate appropriate clinical care
- Repeat and increase the frequency of vital sign observations, as indicated by the patient’s condition
- Consult promptly with the nurse /midwife-in-charge or relevant clinical supervisor to decide whether a clinical review (or other CERS) call is to be made.

Together with the nurse/midwife-in-charge or relevant clinical supervisor, consider the following:

- What is usual for the patient and are there documented alterations to calling criteria?
- Does the trend in observations suggest deterioration?
- Is there more than one yellow zone observation or additional criterion?
- Are you concerned about your patient?

If a clinical review is called:

- Reassess the patient and escalate according to the local CERS if the call is not attended within 30 minutes or there is increasing concern
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- Document a systematic A-G assessment, reason for escalation, treatment and outcome in the patient’s health care record
- Inform the AMO/delegated clinician responsible that a call was made as soon as it is practicable.

Where required, outcomes of the clinical review are to be documented into any relevant NSW Health, LHD/SHN or local database for capturing key performance indicators.

A structured communication tool, such as ISBAR, is to be used when providing clinical handover to the AMO/delegated clinician responsible and/or the designated responder(s).

The patient, carer and family are to be informed that a clinical review was activated and the outcome of this review.

10.2.3 Red zone response

If a patient has any red zone observations or additional criteria on a standard observation chart, standard clinical tool or approved local clinical management guideline/pathway, a rapid response call needs to be made. In addition, the clinicians are to:

- Initiate appropriate clinical care
- Inform the nurse/midwife-in-charge or relevant clinical supervisor that a rapid response call has been initiated
- Repeat and increase the frequency of vital sign observations, as indicated by the patient’s condition
- Document a systematic A-G assessment, reason for escalation, treatment and outcome in the patient’s health care record
- Inform the AMO/delegated clinician responsible that a call was made as soon as it is practicable.

Members of the RRT or designated responder(s) are to attend urgently (as per the local CERS protocol) to assess the patient; treat the underlying cause of deterioration and/or provide interventions to resuscitate the patient.

The RRT leader is responsible for ensuring the outcome of the rapid response and the resultant medical management plan is entered into the patient’s health care record.

Where required, outcomes of the rapid response call are also to be entered into any relevant NSW Health, LHD/SHN or local database for capturing key performance indicators.

A structured communication tool, such as ISBAR, is to be used when providing clinical handover to the AMO/delegated clinician responsible and/or the designated responder(s).

The patient, carer and family are to be informed that a rapid response was activated and the outcome of this response.

327(21/04/20)
INTER-FACILITY TRANSFER PROCESS FOR ADULTS REQUIRING SPECIALIST CARE
(PD2011_031)

PURPOSE

The Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC) “Retrieval and Inter-hospital transfer” Report (December 2009) has demonstrated a need to improve the transfer of patients requiring specialist care. The report reflects an analysis of Incident Information Management System (IIMS) and Root Cause Analysis reports, as well as the outcomes of a CEC Clinical Council Workshop.

The NSW Department of Health agrees with the conclusions contained within the report. Safe, timely and efficient transfer of patients who are not critically ill or injured, but who clinically require urgent specialist assessment and care, is fundamental in the provision of safe medical services across NSW.

A seamless and integrated network of clinical services that best meets the needs of such patients is the aim of this document.

In order to achieve an efficient transfer of patients between primary, secondary and tertiary centres, a streamlined process must exist. Once the specialist care has been delivered a similarly efficient return transfer is essential. This preserves a hospital’s ability to provide specialist service to others in need, and ensures the most appropriate care can be delivered in the most appropriate location.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Access to urgent specialist care and inpatient specialist care should be coordinated by a senior clinician and the Patient Flow Units within the nominated tertiary referral centre where clinical referral pathways do not exist.

Each Local Health District (LHD) must have a process in place by June 2011, outlining policy and operational guidelines on inter-LHD transfer for patients requiring access to specialist care.

IMPLEMENTATION

Roles and Responsibilities

Chief Executive (CE) LHD

• Has the direct responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the policy directive and in the delegation of a single point of arbitration as per section 5.0 of the policy directive.

LHD

• Formalise intra-LHD and inter-LHD referral systems and inter-state (if appropriate) for patients requiring referral for specialist care.
• Align inter-LHD networks for patient transfers within the existing critical care services adult tertiary referral networks, and clearly identify designated tertiary facilities according to the specialist services provided.
• Meet the needs of patients within the LHD, including the provision of clinical advice and access to appropriate treatment prior to transfer and on return to local LHD facility.
• Ensure clinical referral and support processes are clear and effectively communicated to all staff to ensure patients can access required specialist care in an appropriate time frame.

LHD and Facility Patient Flow Units:

• Establish a process whereby Patient Flow Units preferentially use all clinically appropriate options for placement of patients within the originating LHD.
12. MEDICAL CARE

- Develop LHD specific referral pathways utilising designated in-LHD specialist referral facilities.
- Ensure robust processes are in place to facilitate the co-ordination, communication and effective clinical handover of patients transfers within and across the LHDs.
- Develop and publish escalation pathways in the event of delay or disagreement regarding transfer.

NSW Ambulance Service:
- Support public health organisations with the implementation of the Inter-facility transfer process.

PURPOSE

About this document

The Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC) “Retrieval and Inter-hospital transfer” Report (December 2009) has demonstrated a need to improve the transfer of patients requiring specialist care. The report reflects an analysis of Incident Information Management System (IIMS) and Root Cause Analysis reports, as well as the outcomes of a CEC Clinical Council Workshop.

The NSW Department of Health agrees with the conclusions contained within the report. Safe, timely and efficient transfer of patients who are not critically ill or injured, but who clinically require urgent specialist assessment and care, is fundamental in the provision of safe medical services across NSW.

A seamless and integrated network of clinical services that best meets the needs of such patients is the aim of this document.

In order to achieve an efficient transfer of patients between primary, secondary and tertiary centres, a streamlined process must exist. Once the specialist care has been delivered a similarly efficient return transfer is essential. This preserves a hospital’s ability to provide specialist service to others in need, and ensures the most appropriate care can be delivered in the most appropriate location.

This policy does not override:

1. Current referral networks established within the adult, paediatric or perinatal critical care referral network policy directives:
   - PD2010_021 Critical Care Tertiary Referral Networks and Transfer of Care (Adults)
   - PD2010_030 Critical Care Tertiary Referral Networks (Paediatrics)
   - PD2010_031 Children and Adolescents - Inter Facility Transfers
   - PD2010_069 Critical Care Tertiary Referral Networks (Perinatal)

2. Current established intra- and inter-Local Health District (LHD) referral pathways which have been established and enable timely access to specialist care. However, where referral pathways do not exist or delays in the transfer of care are experienced, this policy designates a nominated referral pathway to an appropriate facility to manage timely access to specialist care.

3. Existing memorandums of understanding governing the transfer of mental health patients between facilities and LHDs.

The following table provides a summary of the referral process, contact pathways and responsibilities for staff when coordinating a patient transfer. Of note is the differentiation between PD2010_021 and PD2011_031.
### Clinical Condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Care Tertiary Referral Networks and Transfer of Care (Adults) PD2010_021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinical Condition</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient has a time-urgent clinical condition needing transfer in the shortest time possible. Patient’s condition is not time-urgent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inpatient requiring specialist care (within 24-72hrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient requires transfer for urgent specialist care (within 24hrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-facility Transfer Process for Adult Patients Requiring Specialist Care PD2011_031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Key definitions

In this document the term:
- **Must** - indicates a mandatory action that must be complied with
- **Should** - indicates a recommended action that should be followed unless there are sound clinical reasons for taking a different course of action
- **Urgent specialist care (<24hrs)** - indicates where patients require specialist intervention to prevent or manage further deterioration within a short time frame (immediate to within 24 hours).
- **Inpatient specialist care (24-72hrs)** - indicates where patients require specialist investigations or management of care not available at originating site (requires transfer within 24 to 72hrs).
- **Patient Flow Units** - represents dedicated patient flow units for the LHD or a facility or the person(s) responsible for patient flow depending on the resources within a given facility. This includes facility Bed Managers and After Hours Nurse Managers.
- **Senior Clinician** - A senior medical officer such as a Consultant, (Staff Specialist or VMO) or Senior Registrar

### KEY PRINCIPLES

Each LHD must have a clear and readily available policy incorporating the following principles:
- **Good Communication and clinical handover** - between referring and receiving Senior Clinicians that involves the Patient Flow Units, resulting in the coordination of timely and safe patient transfer for ongoing care within medically agreed timeframes.
Patient Flow Responsibility - all facilities have personnel tasked with coordinating patient flow, available 24/7 at all sites (e.g. Patient Flow Manager, After Hours Nurse Manager, Bed Manager).

Inter LHD Transfers - where clinically appropriate patient transfers to occur within the LHD.

Existing Clinical Referral Networks - where existing historical clinical referral networks are working well, these should be continued to facilitate timely access to specialist care. As part of the development of the new LHD Health Care Plans, formalised clinical networks will be determined.

Nominated Referral Centres - accessing the nominated tertiary referral centre where existing clinical referral networks don’t exist or where time is delaying the patient’s access to ongoing specialist care as per Appendix 2.

Direct to inpatient bed - the patient should be admitted directly to an inpatient bed and avoid the Emergency Department (ED) where possible unless deterioration in the patient’s condition requires assessment in the ED.

Return Transfers - on completion of specialist care patients are returned to the originating or other clinically appropriate facility within 24hrs or one working day.

Timely Escalation - immediate escalation is to occur with the appropriate service managers for decision making, when an issue regarding patient transfer arises which will impact on the patient accessing safe and timely care within the medically agreed timeframe.

IMPLEMENTATION

Roles and responsibilities

Chief Executive (CE) LHD:

- Has the direct responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the policy directive and in the delegation of a single point of arbitration as per section 5.0 of the policy directive.

LHD:

- Formalise intra-LHD and inter-LHD referral systems and inter-state (if appropriate) for patients requiring referral for specialist care.
- Align inter-LHD networks for patient transfers within the existing critical care services adult tertiary referral networks, and clearly identify designated tertiary facilities according to the specialist services provided.
- Meet the needs of patients within the LHD, including the provision of clinical advice and access to appropriate treatment prior to transfer and on return to local LHD facility.
- Ensure clinical referral and support processes are clear and effectively communicated to all staff to ensure patients can access required specialist care in an appropriate time frame.

LHD and Facility Patient Flow Units:

- Establish a process whereby Patient Flow Units preferentially use all clinically appropriate options for placement of patients within the originating LHD.
- Develop LHD specific referral pathways utilising designated in-LHD specialist referral facilities.
- Ensure robust processes are in place to facilitate the co-ordination, communication and effective clinical handover of patients transfers within and across the LHDs.
- Develop and publish escalation pathways in the event of delay or disagreement regarding transfer.

NSW Ambulance Service:

- Support public health organisations with the implementation of the Inter-facility transfer process.
ACCESSING THE LEVEL OF CARE REQUIRED

LHDs are required to establish a single telephone contact number within 6 months of implementation. The purpose of this contact number is to provide all clinicians with clinical support and advice on clinical care and access to appropriate care and clinical referral pathways.

Patients who require transfer for specialist treatment fall broadly into two categories:
1. Those who require urgent specialist care (<24hrs) not available at the originating site
2. Those who require inpatient specialist care (24-72 hrs) not available at the originating site

The decision to transfer and determination of the urgency of transfer (medically agreed timeframe) must be made through discussion between the senior clinician at the referring site and a senior clinician from the specialist service at the receiving facility.

Patients and their representatives must be kept informed of any decisions to transfer a patient between facilities.

Delays in transfer of urgent patients must be minimised. If a bed is not available at the receiving hospital within a clinically relevant time or there is a disagreement regarding transfer, LHD policy must provide clear and immediate escalation pathways in advance of the transfer. This should not delay the transfer.

Escalation pathways should involve senior clinicians, facility and LHD executive and Patient Flow Units.

Should the senior clinician at the nominated receiving facility not support the patient transfer, they then have a clinical and professional responsibility to assist with patient placement to an appropriate alternative location for treatment and care.

Ongoing delays must be escalated to executive staff of the referring hospital. Communication amongst each facility executive may be required to assist with escalation processes. Such events should be routinely subject to audit and review.

Paramount to all communication between clinicians is the provision of adequate clinical information regarding the patient, sufficient to enable clinicians to make clinical decisions on the most appropriate care for the patient.

It is imperative that facility and LHD Patient Flow Units are involved in the discussions coordinating the patient transfer, and that the Bed Board Tool within the Patient Flow Portal is used to log transfer requests and facilitates good communication. This will allow for streamlined coordination of inter-hospital transfers.

LHDs must ensure a transfer checklist is in place. The use of an inter-facility transfer checklist will assist in standardising practice and ensuring an adequate level of information is provided, assisting clinical handover of the patient. (See Appendix 1 for an example of an inter-hospital transfer checklist.)

For urgent specialist care (<24hrs)

Transfer of patients for urgent specialist care must occur within 24 hours. The transfer of these patients requires a coordinated approach between the referring and accepting senior clinician (or their representative) and the receiving and sending Patient Flow Units. Direct transfer to an appropriate inpatient bed should be the first preference.

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Prior to transfer, the referring senior clinician must:

1. Determine transfer urgency in consultation with the receiving senior clinician (the Patient Flow Unit at the facility should be working with the Clinicians to identify a transfer timeframe that best meets the patient’s needs.

2. Contact the person responsible for allocating beds at the receiving hospital. (Bed Manager, After Hours Nurse Manager, Patient Flow Unit)

3. Ensure the transfer is made in a timeframe that is appropriate to the patient’s clinical condition and provide an accurate estimated time of arrival.

4. Determine the appropriate form of clinical transportation and level of supervision for the patient in consultation with the receiving senior clinician

5. Provide copies of appropriate documentation with the patient which must include the patient’s clinical notes, medication chart, current investigation results and referring and receiving doctor contact details.

A patient who is at risk of deterioration should be considered for early transfer to a facility where their care could be managed more effectively. At any time should the patient’s condition deteriorate and become critical, PD2010_021 Critical Care Tertiary Referral Networks and Transfer of Care (Adults) should be utilised to ensure the patient has access to the appropriate level of care required in a timely manner.

 Patients should be transferred directly to their allocated inpatient bed or a clinically appropriate area on arrival to the receiving facility (irrespective of time of day). It is the responsibility of the accepting team to conduct a timely review. If a patient’s condition has deteriorated en route to the receiving facility, assessment may be required in the Emergency Department. The Emergency Department senior clinician should be notified, if this is required, and provided with a clinical handover prior to arrival at the receiving facility.

**For Inpatient specialist care (24-72 hrs)**

Transfer of inpatients for specialist care should occur within business hours wherever possible. The transfer process must be coordinated between the referring senior clinician, the accepting senior clinician and the Patient Flow Unit, and include agreement on timelines around the transfer.

**In hours**

Patients who are being transferred from a hospital ward/unit for the purpose of ongoing specialist care do not generally require clinical assessment or treatment by Emergency Department staff at the receiving facility unless the patient has deteriorated en route. Their admission should be managed by inpatient specialist teams in appropriate inpatient/ward areas. This assessment should be carried out in a similar timeframe to transfers from the emergency department.

**Out of hours**

Outside business hours, and where specialist inpatient teams are not available within a reasonable timeframe, local policy should clearly state arrangements regarding:

1. The specific location within the facility where the patient will be transferred for specialist assessment and management

2. The process for conducting the initial assessment and management.

Patient safety should guide the decision on where the patient is most appropriately placed.
For return transfer of care post specialist assessment review or intervention

All patients that require specialist care must be transferred with the understanding that when the specialty services are no longer required, care of the patient will be transferred back to the originating hospital, or a hospital with an equivalent level of care capability close to the patient’s geographical home location.

This ensures that specialist services are available for others in need and that care is delivered to the patient in the most appropriate setting. The treating specialist team is responsible for initiating return transfers of care and should liaise with the admitting team at the receiving facility to negotiate the plan for transfer. The Patient Flow Unit must be included in the discussions and transfer information including contact details of individuals logged in the Bed Board application within the Patient Flow Portal.

LHD policy must clearly outline the return referral process. The policy must reinforce that:
1. The specialist hospital must notify the receiving hospital that the patient is ready for return transfer and provide a clinical handover informing them of the patient’s clinical condition and management
2. Relevant details must be entered onto NSW Bed Board via the Patient Flow Portal
3. The receiving hospital should give the returning patient priority in bed allocation and avoid return transfer through the emergency department
4. The planned inter-facility return transfer should occur within 24 hours or 1 working day of notification
5. Transfers to rural areas must consider the availability of a medical officer to admit the patient back into a facility and relevant clinical health support when coordinating the patient transfer.
6. Escalation pathways should be in place to address transfer delays outlining the person(s) responsible for managing the escalation and action to be taken.

GOVERNANCE

The Chief Executive (CE) of the receiving LHD is responsible for ensuring coordination of inter-facility transfers for patients requiring access to specialist care.

If a situation arises where issues are encountered in coordinating appropriate care for patients requiring specialist care or return transfer patients, these issues are to be escalated via the hospital’s and LHDs organisational management structure. In the event that a resolution cannot be reached the issues are then to be escalated to a position delegated by the CE LHD of no less than tier 2 level. The CE LHD or delegate is required to ensure a process is in place to:

I. Activate the nominated tertiary referral hospital pathway
II. Implement return patient transfer pathway

Resolutions of issues are to be managed at the CE LHD to CE LHD level to ensure policy compliance results in patient accessing safe and timely specialist care.

THE TRANSFER NETWORK

Due to the variety of indications for transfer for specialist review, specific clinical conditions cannot be described here. Transfer of patients may need to occur within LHD (intra-LHD transfer) and between LHDs (inter-LHD transfer). LHD Policy should reflect the need for intra-LHD and inter-LHD transfer of patient to access specialist care. Operational guidelines should include clear processes that link the transfer to an accepting clinician, Patient Flow Manager and transport at the same time.
In line with the PD2010_021 Critical Care Tertiary Referral Networks and Transfer of Care (Adults) the CE LHD or delegate is responsible for ensuring the appropriate referral arrangements are in place for all non-critical patients requiring referral for specialist care. Formalised specialist clinical referral networks and referral processes must be in place to guide and assist clinicians to ensure appropriate and timely patient referrals.

Where cross-jurisdictional border arrangements are in place i.e. Victorian, Queensland, Australian Capital Territory and South Australian borders, this policy supports existing arrangements. However where delays occur in accessing timely care for patients, transfer to the nominated referral hospital must be considered. These clinical referral networks are as per, PD2010_021 NSW Critical Care Tertiary Referral Networks & Transfer of Care (Adults), which defines the links between LHDs, and tertiary referral hospitals for specialist clinical care. (Appendix 2)

Justice Health does not have acute health care facilities, but seeks acute services from LHDs where necessary, generally through emergency departments. Liaison with Justice Health is critical prior to transfer of care back to Justice Health, to ensure ongoing care needs are met.

**Intra LHD transfers**

LHDs are responsible for developing intra LHD links to assist clinicians in transferring patients that require specialist care.

LHD policy must clearly identify
- The process for coordinating the transfer (which includes the Patient Flow Units)
- The facilities responsible for accepting particular patient cohorts by speciality need.

**Inter LHD transfers**

If intra LHD specialist services are not available it will be necessary to escalate the transfer to a facility in another LHD.

Local policy should indicate who is responsible for coordinating inter LHD transfer and reflect the following steps.

1. Unless an alternative clinically appropriate transfer is agreed, inter LHD transfers should follow the nominated clinical referral networks used for critically ill or injured patients to tertiary referral centres
2. If the nominated tertiary referral hospital has issues accepting the patient, and the patient has an urgent condition, transfer must not be delayed: LHD escalation pathways must be activated to ensure the patient has timely access to specialist care.
3. If a patient can receive equivalent and effective specialised care in a less acute facility within the tertiary referral LHD, the tertiary referral centre will arrange treatment in that facility.
4. Any patient transfer should take into account the receiving hospital’s distance from the patient’s home and the impact this may have on the patient’s relatives and carer(s).
5. The final decision must be made by the receiving senior clinician in consultation with the referring senior clinician and the Patient Flow Units.
6. If an alternative provider cannot be found within an appropriate time frame, the nominated tertiary hospital must accept the patient.
12. MEDICAL CARE

FEEDBACK

LHDs should incorporate feedback loops into inter-facility transfer procedures. This should manifest in a monthly or more frequent teleconference or face to face meetings with the LHD’s Patient Flow Managers.

There must also be a well documented and immediate escalation process if issues arise at any stage, whether it is in forward or return transfers.

A post implementation checklist (Appendix 7.3) is to be completed at 3 and 6 months after Policy Directive implementation and be forwarded to the Director, Health Services Performance Improvement Branch.
## Appendix 1 EXAMPLE of an Inter-hospital Transfer Checklist

### Transfer Details
- **Transfer Date:** / / 
- **Diagnosis:**
- **Patients current condition:**
- **Accepted by Dr.:**
- **Mode of transport:** SVH Transport • NSW Ambulance • NSW P5 • Air Ambulance • Wingaway • SHSEH Transport •
- **Bed availability confirmed by receiving facility:** yes □ no □
- **Date:** / / 
- **Time:** hrs

### Management/Intervention/Assessments

<table>
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<th>yes □ no □</th>
<th>IV therapy:</th>
<th>yes □ no □</th>
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<td>Specify:</td>
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<td>Mobility Issues:</td>
<td>yes □ no □</td>
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<td>NGT/PEG:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incontinence:</td>
<td>yes □ no □</td>
<td>Risk of cross infection:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specify:</td>
<td></td>
<td>no □ yes □ precautions:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urinary Catheter:</td>
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<td>Contact: Droplet □ Airborne □</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specify (ICU □ SPC □ Other:</td>
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<td>Infection (Type):</td>
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### Assessment prior to transfer

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<td>Pain medication due</td>
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<td>Observations:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glasgow coma scale if required</td>
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<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blood sugar level if required</td>
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<td>Current BSL: Next due:</td>
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<td>Wound care chart</td>
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<td>Pressure Ulcer Assessment</td>
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<td>Waterflow score:</td>
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<td>Dentures</td>
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<td>Communication cefect</td>
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<td>X-rays/ scans (pts own)</td>
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<td>Appropriate Sustenance provided</td>
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<td>Sandwiches and drinks required for road travel outside metro Sydney</td>
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### Handover of Patients condition
- **Nursing Management:**
- **Examples:**

---

**EXAMPLE ONLY**
Appendix 2  HD and Nominated Tertiary Referral Centres for Urgent and Non Urgent Specialist Care

Metropolitan NSW LHDs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LHD</th>
<th>Central Coast</th>
<th>Illawarra Shoalhaven</th>
<th>Nepean Blue Mountains</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Nominated Tertiary</td>
<td>Royal North</td>
<td>St George</td>
<td>Nepean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral Centre</td>
<td>Shore</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>Gosford</td>
<td>Bulli</td>
<td>Blue Mountains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Long Jetty</td>
<td>Coledale</td>
<td>Hawkesbury</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Woy Woy</td>
<td>David Berry</td>
<td>Lithgow</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wyong</td>
<td>Kiama</td>
<td>Portland</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Milton Ulladulla</td>
<td>Springwood</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Shoalhaven</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Wollongong</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LHD</th>
<th>Northern Sydney</th>
<th>South Eastern Sydney</th>
<th>South Western Sydney</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominated Tertiary</td>
<td>Royal North</td>
<td>Prince of Wales</td>
<td>Liverpool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral Centre</td>
<td>Shore</td>
<td>St George</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Royal Hospital for Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>Greenwich</td>
<td>Calvary Healthcare</td>
<td>Bankstown Lidcombe</td>
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<td>Hornsby</td>
<td>Gower Wilson (Lord Howe Island)</td>
<td>Braeside</td>
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<td>Macquarie</td>
<td>Sutherland</td>
<td>Bowral</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Camden</td>
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<td>Neringah</td>
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<tr>
<th>LHD</th>
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### 12. MEDICAL CARE

#### Rural LHDs

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Hunter New England</th>
<th>Mid North Coast</th>
<th>Murrumbidgee</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominated Tertiary Referral Centre</td>
<td>John Hunter</td>
<td>John Hunter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>Armidale</td>
<td>Bellingen</td>
<td>Albury^42 Balranald</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barraba</td>
<td>Coffs Harbour</td>
<td>Barham Koondrook</td>
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<td>Batlow</td>
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<td>Port Macquarie</td>
<td>Deniliquin</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Young</td>
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---

^42 Albury is networked with clinical services in Victoria however referral to a NSW facility may be required due to clinical need.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LHD</th>
<th>Northern(^{43})</th>
<th>Southern(^{44})</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Far West</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nominated</td>
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<td>Ballina</td>
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<td>Baradine</td>
<td>Broken Hill(^{45})</td>
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<td>Bega</td>
<td>Bathurst</td>
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<td>Braidwood</td>
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<td>Sydney Children’s Hospital Network</td>
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<td>127(02/06/11)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wellington</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{43}\) Northern LHD maintains a clinical referral with Queensland.

\(^{44}\) Murrumbidgee, Southern maintains a clinical referral network between The Canberra Hospital and the following hospitals: Bateman’s Bay, Batlow, Bega, Bombala, Boorowa, Braidwood, Cooma, Delegate, Moruya, Pambula, Queanbeyan, Tumut, Yass and Young.

\(^{45}\) Broken Hill maintains clinical referral networks with South Australia.
Post Implementation Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS</th>
<th>Not commenced</th>
<th>Partial compliance</th>
<th>Full compliance</th>
<th>Notes:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Evidence of documented clinical referral pathways established across and between the Local Health Network</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Establishment of a single point of telephone contact providing support to clinicians with issues relating to access of appropriate care and clinical referral pathways</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Single LHD arbitrator designated for the resolution of escalated patient inter-facility transfer issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Number of patients requiring arbitration at tier 2 level to successfully occasion an inter-facility transfer to a higher level care facility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Number of patients breaching &gt;24hr for a return transfer time at 3 and 6 months</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
PATHWAY FOR ACUTE CORONARY SYNDROME ASSESSMENT (PACSA)  
(GL2019_014)
GL2019_014 rescinds PD2011_037

PURPOSE
The Pathway for Acute Coronary Syndrome Assessment (PACSA) outlines how to assess and manage patients with suspected acute coronary syndrome (ACS).

It has been designed to standardise practice throughout the variety of health services operating in NSW. PACSA will be utilised in rural, remote and metropolitan clinical environments.

PACSA was developed to replace the 2011 NSW Health Policy Directive PD2011_037 Chest Pain Evaluation (NSW Chest Pain Pathway).

KEY PRINCIPLES
The first step in PACSA is to identify patients with ST-elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI) who require reperfusion.

If no STEMI is identified, a sequence of risk assessments is undertaken to determine a patient’s overall risk and direct their care. This sequence comprises:
- Clinical Risk Assessment
- Troponin Risk Assessment
- Electrocardiogram (ECG) Risk Assessment
- Summative Risk Assessment – an integration of the findings of the above assessments which also allows for further expert clinical judgement.

These steps are described in detail in the Pathway for Acute Coronary Syndrome Assessment (PACSA) Clinical Practice Guide in the section entitled: How to use PACSA.

USE OF THE GUIDELINE
PACSA consists of four documents:
- PACSA Flowchart (NH700422)
- PACSA Checklist (NH700420)
- PACSA STEMI Reperfusion Flowchart (NH700423)
- PACSA STEMI Reperfusion Checklist (NH700421)

The PACSA Flowchart and PACSA STEMI Reperfusion Flowchart outline each step of management. Each Flowchart has a corresponding Checklist which will be digitized for

ABORIGINAL EAR HEALTH PROGRAM GUIDELINES (GL2011_013)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide Local Health Districts with a range of suggested strategies developed by the NSW Otitis Media Expert Advisory Committee to:

- Reduce the number of young Aboriginal children being adversely affected by otitis media by reducing lifestyle risk factors amongst parents, carers and their extended families.
- Improve the level of awareness about otitis media amongst the Aboriginal community, health and education professionals, thereby supporting a preventive approach and improved early identification.
- Improve the effectives of services which lessen the impacts of otitis media on health and learning outcomes.

KEY PRINCIPLES

The primary aim of the attached guidelines are to encourage Local Health Districts to move away from, screening-only approaches, which have been found to be ineffective at reducing prevalence rates and to instead focus on prevention using a broad public health approach.

Effective primary prevention strategies outlined in the attached NSW Aboriginal Ear Health Program Guidelines include improving nutrition and the home environment, increasing breastfeeding and reducing passive smoking.

USE OF THE GUIDELINE

Local Health Districts developing local and regional responses addressing otitis media are asked to consider the directions and suggested strategies contained herein which place priority on prevention through a broad public health approach incorporating existing child health surveillance and health care programs (rather than universal-style screening).

To download or view the Guidelines go to
PURPOSE

Local Health Districts, Specialty Health Networks and other NSW public health organisations have a responsibility to provide nutrition care for all their admitted patients. This Policy directive sets out the NSW Health framework for a strategic and coordinated approach to nutrition care for admitted patients, including weight and height/length assessment, from admission to transfer of care.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

This Policy applies to all NSW Local Health Districts, Specialty Health Networks and other NSW Health organisations which provide services to admitted patients including, but not limited to hospitals and emergency departments, Day stay centres (e.g. renal dialysis, chemotherapy etc.), Multipurpose services, Mental Health facilities and Hospital in the home.

Where these facilities provide food and nutrition care services to admitted patients, consumers and residents, the nutrition care processes described in this policy directive including weight and height/length assessment must be in place.

IMPLEMENTATION

Chief Executives are responsible for:

• Implementing the Nutrition Care Policy, within their respective facilities.
• Ensuring governance structures are in place for all sites within the Local Health District or Network.
• Assigning responsibility, personnel and resources to meet the requirements of the Policy.
• Ensuring a staff/volunteer education and training program for nutrition care is in place.
• Ensuring systems for nutrition risk screening, nutrition assessment, and weight and height assessment using appropriate equipment and validated tools are in place.
• Ensuring clinician work practices are consistent with the requirements of the Policy.
• Ensuring systems to evaluate the nutrition care and weight and height assessment processes are in place.
• Reporting on the implementation and evaluation of the requirements of the Policy.
• Ensuring providers of food services comply with the requirements of this Policy.

Nursing/Midwifery Unit Managers (or Nurse/Midwifery Managers where appropriate) are responsible for:

• Enabling and monitoring systems to ensure patients, consumers and residents receive appropriate nutrition care.

The Agency for Clinical Innovation is responsible for:

• Providing support to NSW Local Health Districts, Specialty Health Networks and other NSW public health organisations for the implementation of the Nutrition Care Policy.
• Monitoring and evaluating implementation of the Policy within NSW Local Health Districts, Specialty Health Networks and other NSW public health organisations in collaboration with the NSW Ministry of Health and key stakeholders.

315(17/11/17)

43 When the term ‘patient’ is used throughout this Policy it refers to all patients, consumers, and residents admitted to a NSW Health facility for care.
12. MEDICAL CARE

- Reporting on the implementation and evaluation of the Policy to the NSW Ministry of Health Nutrition and Food Committee. This includes recommendations for amendments to the Policy and other relevant documents such as nutrition standards and diet specifications.

Food Service Providers (including HealthShare NSW and contracted providers) are responsible for:

- Ensuring the standards set out in this Policy and other related policies are incorporated into all food service provision activities for admitted patients, including menu planning and design, and food service system design and delivery in NSW Local Health Districts, Specialty Health Networks and other NSW public health organisations.

- Ensuring appropriate consultation and communication with NSW Local Health Districts, Specialty Health Networks and other NSW public health organisations.

Health Education and Training Institute

- Provides educational resources to support the implementation of this Policy.

NUTRITION CARE PROCEDURES

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 Food and nutrition in health

Good nutrition is vital for everyone, particularly for those who are frail, ill or suffering from injury. The provision of good nutrition care is an integral aspect of health care and is associated with better patient outcomes. Hospital patients rely on the hospital to provide foods which are nourishing and acceptable to the patient in terms of their developmental, cultural and psychosocial needs. To achieve the best outcomes for the patient other issues such as patient access to foods and the provision of assistance with eating need to be addressed.

Food is not only essential for physical health, childhood growth and development, mental health and general well-being but also essential to an individual’s sense of self. Food has strong psychological connotations associated with nurturing. In the hospital environment, meal times provide a welcomed routine to the day. Eating may be one of few opportunities many patients have to regain independence, make choices and ultimately take control over an aspect of their care, providing a positive milestone on the road to recovery. Familiar foods are also important and can provide comfort and security in unfamiliar situations.

All hospital food services have a duty of care to meet the nutrition requirements and the developmental, cultural and psychosocial needs of each patient. All staff can contribute to making the mealtime environment pleasant and can assist patients in accessing and enjoying their meals.

Assessment of a person’s nutritional status is important for identifying their nutritional risk during admission, as well as for promoting longer-term health and wellbeing. Along with nutrition screening, weight and height/length assessment is an important component of identifying patients who may benefit from additional nutrition care.

1.2 Malnutrition in hospital

The term malnutrition can be used to describe any nutritional imbalance and includes over and under-nutrition. However, for the purpose of this Policy, malnutrition refers solely to protein-energy under-nutrition.
A primary concern for acute, chronic, and transitional care settings is the recognition and treatment of malnutrition.\textsuperscript{46} Malnutrition may be present in a person who is a normal weight, overweight or obese, not just those who are underweight. Many patients are malnourished on admission to care, or are at nutritional risk. If not addressed, the nutritional status of patients may worsen during the course of admission. This may result from impaired intake, impaired digestion and/or absorption, poor food choices, poor eating behaviours, altered metabolic states and unusual nutrient requirements. Early identification, documentation and management of malnutrition is critical.

1.3 Overweight and obesity in hospital

The prevalence of overweight and obesity among Australians has been steadily increasing over many years and health problems related to excess weight impose substantial economic burdens on individuals, families and communities.\textsuperscript{47}

Long-term management is required for people who are overweight or obese. Interventions need to be individualised and supported by self-management principles and regular review by a healthcare professional.

The hospital setting provides an opportunity to identify people who are affected by overweight and obesity, and to initiate appropriate care including nutrition advice, weight management strategies or pathways where appropriate.

However, people who are overweight or obese and develop a severe acute illness or experience a major traumatic event are at risk of malnutrition and frequently need and benefit from intensive nutrition intervention.\textsuperscript{48}

1.4 Consequences of poor nutrition

Unless systematic efforts are made to identify and manage patients at nutritional risk, the above conditions may go undetected and unmanaged during the person’s admission and on transfer of care. If untreated, they can cause a wide range of adverse outcomes for the person and the health system. These include:

**For the individual:**

- Delayed wound healing
- Increased risk of falls and pressure injuries
- Muscle wasting and weakness
- Increased prevalence of both adverse drug reactions and drug interactions
- Infection
- Dehydration
- Impaired mobility
- Diarrhoea, constipation
- Impaired metabolic profiles
- Apathy and depression.

**Consequences for paediatric inpatients can also include:**

- Faltering growth and poor weight gain

\textsuperscript{46} White et al., 2012
\textsuperscript{47} National Health and Medical Research Council, 2013
\textsuperscript{48} White et al., 2012
12. **MEDICAL CARE**

- Excess weight gain for length or height
- Impaired neurodevelopment
- Delayed achievement in developmental milestones. This may include some or all of the following aspects of development: physical (fine & gross motor skills), emotional, cognitive, social, language, and cultural.

**For the health system:**

- Increased lengths of stay
- Increased rates of readmission
- Increased costs
- Greater antibiotic use
- Increased complications
- Increased clinical intervention
- Increased staff time per patient

1.5 **Key definitions**

The following terms apply in this document

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Malnutrition</strong></td>
<td>Malnutrition due to starvation, disease or ageing can be defined as “a state resulting from lack of uptake or intake of nutrition leading to altered body composition (decreased fat free mass) and body cell mass leading to diminished physical and mental function and impaired clinical outcome from disease”49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Must</strong></td>
<td>Indicates a mandatory action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nutrition Care</strong></td>
<td>A coordinated multidisciplinary approach to the provision of nutrition that adapts to the consumer/patient’s individual needs and preferences throughout the healthcare journey. It encompasses interventions, monitoring, and evaluation designed to facilitate appropriate nutrient intake based upon the integration of information from the nutrition assessment. This includes access to safe, acceptable and appropriate food services, nutrition supplements and/or enteral and parenteral nutrition.6,50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nutrition Screening</strong></td>
<td>‘A process of identifying patients with characteristics commonly associated with nutrition problems who may require comprehensive nutrition assessment and may benefit from nutrition intervention.’51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nutrition Assessment</strong></td>
<td>‘A comprehensive approach to gathering pertinent data in order to define nutritional status and identify nutrition-related problems. The assessment often includes patient history, medical diagnosis and treatment plan, nutrition and medication histories, nutrition-related physical examination including anthropometry, nutritional biochemistry, psychological, social, and environmental aspects’10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nutrition Support</strong></td>
<td>The provision of nutrients to make up the shortfall between the patient’s nutrient requirements and their oral intake. Supplementary nutrition can be given in the form of additional foods and/or fluids, enteral feeds or parenteral nutrition (PN).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

49 Sobotka 2012 and Cederholm et. al, 2015
50 American Dietetic Association, 1994
51 Watterson et. al, 2009
### Overweight and Obesity

Abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that may impair health.\(^{52}\)

For adults, the World Health Organization (WHO) defines overweight and obesity as follows:
- overweight is a Body Mass Index (BMI) greater than or equal to 25kg/m\(^2\);
- obesity is a BMI greater than or equal to 30kg/m\(^2\).

For children (2-18 years), the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention BMI for age charts (2000)\(^{53}\) are used:
- above a healthy weight (overweight) is BMI for age: 85\(^{th}\) centile to below 95\(^{th}\) centile
- well above a healthy weight (obesity) is BMI for age: 95\(^{th}\) centile and above.

For children under 2 years, monitor for evidence of excess weight gain using WHO Child Growth Charts.\(^{54}\) For example, where the percentile documented on the weight-for-age chart is higher than the percentile documented for the length-for-age chart, and especially if the difference is increasing.

### Should

Indicates a recommended action that is to be followed unless there are sound reasons for taking a different course of action.

### Underweight

For adults, the World Health Organization (WHO) defines below a healthy weight (underweight) as:
- a Body Mass Index (BMI) less than 18.5kg/m\(^2\)

For children (2-18 years), the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention BMI for age charts (2000)\(^{55}\) are used:
- below a healthy weight (underweight) is defined as a BMI for age below the 5\(^{th}\) centile

For children under 2 years, monitor for evidence of inadequate weight gain or poor growth using WHO Child Growth Charts.\(^{56}\)

### Weight and height/length assessment

The process of
1. Measuring and documenting a person’s height (or length in children under 2 years) and weight,
2. Using the measurements to calculate a BMI, and
3. Using the appropriate BMI for age chart (in children) and BMI cut-off values (in adults) to inform clinical decision making and care.

### 1.6 Related NSW health policies and guidelines

- **PD2010_049**  
  Multipurpose Services - Policy and Operational Guidelines
- **PD2011_015**  
  Care Coordination: Planning from Admission to Transfer of Care in NSW Public Hospitals
- **PD2012_042**  
  Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Origin - Recording of Information of Patients and Clients
- **PD2012_069**  
  Health Care Records – Documentation and Management
- **PD2014_004**  
  Incident Management Policy

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\(^{52}\) World Health Organization, 2016  
\(^{53}\) National Center for Health Statistics, 2000  
\(^{54}\) World Health Organisation, 2006  
\(^{55}\) National Center for Health Statistics, 2000  
\(^{56}\) World Health Organisation, 2006
12. MEDICAL CARE

PD2017_001  Responding to the needs of people with disability during Hospitalisation
PD2017_033  Physical Health Care within Mental Health Services
GL2005_057  End-of-Life Care and Decision-Making – Guidelines
GL2017_012  Healthy Food and Drink in NSW Health facilities for Staff and Visitors Framework
GL2017_019  Physical Health Care of Mental Health Consumers
GL2017_021  Growth Assessment in Children and Weight Status Assessment in Adults
IB2012_024  Metabolic Monitoring Clinical Documentation Module
IB2013_039  Foodborne Listeriosis Control in Health Care Institutions

Agency for Clinical Innovation


1.7 Other related sites

- NSW Department of Primary Industries Food Authority http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry
  - This policy aligns with the National Safety and Quality Healthcare Standards
- The Healthy kids website www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au
  - general information on healthy eating and physical activity information for children and parents
  - for NSW health professionals, focusing on lifestyle management in children.
- The Go4Fun program www.go4fun.com.au
  - a free, community-based referral program for children who are above a healthy weight, and their families
- The Get Healthy Service www.gethealthynsw.com.au
  - a free, phone-based lifestyle coaching service for NSW residents 16 years and older.

2 GOVERNANCE

A strategic and coordinated approach is required by Local Health Districts, Specialty Health Networks and other NSW public health organisations to ensure a high standard of nutrition care is provided to patients.

Governance structures should include consumer, clinical and corporate representation. Each Local Health District and Specialty Health Network should have a governance structure for food and nutrition that includes representatives from the following groups:
12. MEDICAL CARE

- Senior management
- Medical staff
- Nursing/midwifery
- Consumers and their carers
- Nutrition and Dietetics
- Food services
- Other allied health staff (e.g. speech pathology, occupational therapy) as required
- Other disciplines should be consulted as needed.

The role of local governance structures should include the following activities:

- Implementation of this Policy
- Operational policy/procedure development, endorsement and review
- Effective communication of policies and procedures to staff
- Ensuring nutrition care is considered in the planning and development of new services
- Monitoring implementation of agreed standards and related procedures
- Monitoring performance against agreed standards
- Review, management and reporting of nutrition care incidents
- Evaluation of nutrition care which includes the consideration of feedback received from consumers, staff and key stakeholders
- Providing feedback to staff and consumers about performance against the Policy.

A governance group at each health facility should be considered.

3 WEIGHT AND HEIGHT/LENGTH ASSESSMENT

Assessing weight and height/length is the first step in identifying and developing a care plan for patients according to their current weight status and clinical condition.

Weight and height/length assessment requires measurement of the patient’s actual (not estimated) weight and height/length.

All patients under the age of 18 years **must** have their weight and height/length measured and documented within 24 hours of admission and weight should continue to be measured and documented at least weekly in the acute setting and at least monthly in long stay facilities. Head circumference should also be measured and documented from birth to at least two years of age on admission.

All patients 18 years and older should have their weight and height measured and documented within 24 hours of admission and weight should continue to be measured and documented at least weekly in the acute setting and at least monthly in long stay facilities (e.g. multipurpose services, rehabilitation centres, mental health facilities).

Measurement of weight and height/length, and assessment of weight status, is to be performed and documented according to the NSW Health Guideline: Growth Assessment in Children and Weight Status Assessment in Adults.

There may be a small number of patient populations where measuring weight and height/length is not clinically appropriate and this decision will need to be made at a specific service-level.
4 NUTRITION SCREENING

Nutrition screening is key to early identification of patients with nutritional problems which may go unrecognised and therefore remain untreated.

There are many factors that may prevent a patient from eating and/or drinking adequately and safely. These include, but are not limited to, physical difficulties, medical conditions, behavioural difficulties, age, stage of development, cognitive impairment, and changes to sense of taste as a result of treatment/illness or loss of appetite.

Nutrition screening is a rapid, simple and general procedure used by nursing, medical or other clinical staff to detect patients at risk of malnutrition. It is applicable in the hospital, outpatient, community and ambulatory care settings as well as long stay facilities such as multipurpose services and residential aged care.

NSW Local Health Districts, Specialty Health Networks and other NSW public health organisations must have in place a system for nutrition screening using a validated tool. The choice of tool and subsequent action pathway is dependent on the patient population and the staff resources available. Ideally the tool should be quick simple, accurate and reliable.

Examples include but are not limited to: the Malnutrition Screening Tool (MST), the Mini Nutrition Assessment (MNA), the Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (MUST) and the Paediatric Nutrition Screening Tool (PNST).

Nutrition screening should occur:

- within 24 hours of admission and then weekly during the patient’s episode of care
- at least monthly in long stay facilities (e.g. multipurpose services, some rehabilitation centres, some mental health facilities)
- if the patient’s clinical condition changes.

Patients whose score is ‘at risk’ on a validated screening tool or whose clinical condition is such that their treating team identifies them as at nutritional risk should be referred to a dietitian for a full nutrition assessment and nutrition support as appropriate.

There may be a small number of patient populations where nutrition screening is not clinically appropriate and this decision will need to be made at a specific service-level. For example people with eating disorders and people receiving palliative care.

5 NUTRITION ASSESSMENT

Patients should have a full nutrition assessment if they have been identified as at risk by nutrition screening. Nutrition assessment determines an individual’s nutritional status and helps identify appropriate nutrition interventions. Early detection of malnutrition and implementation of appropriate nutrition support reduces the risk of patients’ nutrition status deteriorating during an episode of care.

Local Health Districts, Specialty Health Networks and Public Health Organisations must have in place a system for nutrition assessment for the diagnosis of malnutrition. The nutrition assessment must be undertaken by a dietitian and an appropriate validated tool must be used to support the diagnosis of malnutrition.

Examples of validated assessment tools include but are not limited to the Subjective Global Assessment (SGA) Tool, Subjective Global Nutrition Assessment in Children (SGNA) Full Mini Nutritional Assessment (Full-MNA) and Patient Generated Subjective Global Assessment (PG-SGA).

Patients requiring nutrition assessment should be seen by a dietitian within two working days of referral.
12. **MEDICAL CARE**

If there is no dietitian available, a protocol that outlines the management of the patient until a nutrition assessment can be completed must be in place and communicated to staff. Strategies such as telehealth could be considered for facilities where access to a dietitian on-site is limited.

Nutrition assessment should be discussed with the treating doctor and multidisciplinary team and must be documented in the patient’s medical record.

6 **NUTRITION CARE PLANNING**

Individuals identified as malnourished or at nutritional risk must have an appropriate nutrition care plan developed by a dietitian and documented in the patient’s medical record.

The patient’s overall nutrition care plan must be documented and incorporate the recommendations made by the multidisciplinary team involved in the patient’s care. This would include, but is not limited to, recommendations made by Dietitians, Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Nurses/Midwives and the medical team.

This nutrition care plan should contain clearly documented nutrition interventions to attain identified goals of treatment. Good patient care may require help with feeding, recording of food and fluid intake, modified menus, additional dietetic advice and oral nutrition supplements and/or oral, enteral or parenteral nutrition support. Patients, carers and/or relatives should have input into the nutrition care plan and communicate any issues with these plans with a member of the multidisciplinary care team. Referral to the appropriate clinician(s) should follow where required.

Nutrition care plans should be:

- reviewed regularly and documented to reflect changes
- monitored to ensure goals are met with further action taken as necessary
- communicated appropriately to the patient and care givers.

Changes in a patient’s clinical condition that may impact on their nutrition should be monitored and appropriate action taken. Action may include re-screening, re-assessment and changes to care plans.

6.1 **Transfer of care**

Patients who require ongoing nutrition care on transfer of care must have a clear nutrition care plan documented. The plan should be communicated to the patient and/or carer as well as to any receiving facility and the patient’s general practitioner and other members of the community-based health care team. On transfer, the care plan should include information about:

- weight status
- nutrition status
- special dietary requirements
- key messages for achieving and maintaining a healthy weight, where required
- provision/purchase and preparation of specialised nutrition support products and relevant equipment where required
- arrangements for referral and follow-up.

Arrangements should be in place for continuing care. This could include but is not limited to, primary care, community-based care, private practitioners or an outpatient service.

If the patient has an ongoing need for specialised nutrition support items the patient should have access to, or be provided with, an adequate supply of these items while waiting for their own supply where required (e.g. enteral formula or equipment, thickened fluids, thickener).
7 PLANNING AND DELIVERY OF FOOD AND FLUIDS

Patients are more likely to eat a meal and receive the appropriate balance of nutrients it provides when the meal and presentation is pleasing and appetising. Meals should be delivered to the wards or respective dining areas and served promptly to maintain the nutrition content, temperature and quality.

Effective multidisciplinary communication is vital for the efficient provision of food in hospital and to ensure that patients’ nutrition requirements are met while minimising waste.

Patients/carers should be provided on admission with information about meal services and the importance of nutrition in an easy-to-read format.

7.1 Menus


Patients should be:

- given the opportunity of selecting food and fluids from the menu
- assisted with menu selection, as required, by an appropriate member of staff. This will range from staff with general knowledge of the menu and available food items to those with the skills and knowledge to guide a patient/carer to choose from the menu according to the patient’s therapeutic diet order and/or the dietitian’s nutrition care plan.
- able to make their menu selections no more than one day ahead of the day of service. This has been shown to enhance oral intake.

 Relatives/carers can provide assistance to patients who are unable to make their own menu selections, by either making menu choices on the patient’s behalf or informing staff of the patient’s food preferences.

7.2 Provision of food and fluids

The diet ordering and the meal delivery systems should be efficient, timely and safe. The diet ordered for the patient should be explained to the patient and/or carers.

The number of meal occasions (mealtimes) should meet the needs of the local population and be spread out to cover most of the hours spent awake. Food should be available for patients who are admitted out of normal hours, or who are not present at ward mealtimes.

All food provided by the facility or service must comply with relevant legislative standards, including those pertaining to food safety. Systems must be in place to cater for patients at risk of sentinel events including those with dysphagia, allergies and those who are severely immunocompromised.

Where clinically possible, patients’ nutrition requirements should be provided by food in accordance with endorsed nutrition standards. Appropriate access to fluids, particularly drinking water, must be provided for all patients, as clinically appropriate. Oral supplements should not substitute for, or be relied upon, to enhance the provision of food and fluid unless there are clear clinical indicators.

The following patients should be considered for oral, enteral or parenteral nutrition support:

- patients who cannot consume adequate nutrition orally to meet their nutrition requirements, including those patients on texture-modified diets,
- patients with inadequate intestinal function
- patients who are designated as ‘Nil-By-Mouth’ for more than three days.
Strategies must be in place to minimise fasting including clear guidelines outlining the specific minimum and maximum fasting times required for procedures (including when fasting is not required).

Specific nutrition concerns related to end-of-life issues should be considered according to GL2005_057 End-of-Life Care and Decision-Making – Guidelines.

8 THE MEALTIME ENVIRONMENT

Hospital routines, clinical procedures and ward rounds can disrupt mealtimes and significantly reduce patients’ nutrition intake. A relaxed and pleasant mealtime environment enhances patients’ enjoyment of their meals and can influence the amount of food and fluids they consume.

All staff should focus on creating a mealtime environment conducive to eating and providing feeding assistance where required during mealtimes. This includes:

- minimising interruptions to the patients’ meal times such as ward/medication rounds, teaching and diagnostic procedures
- preparing patients for eating prior to the meal delivery (e.g. appropriate seating, positioning, toileting, hand washing, accessing dentures and or glasses and clearing of over-bed trolleys)
- providing patients who are able the opportunity to sit out of bed to eat their meals
- ensuring patients are able to access their food and open packaging.

For some patient groups access to a dining room for meal times may be appropriate e.g. mental health facilities and multipurpose services.

9 PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE TO EAT AND DRINK

Many patients require some form of assistance or supervision with eating and drinking. This ranges from assistance with opening packages, meal supervision to fully assisted feeding. If assistance with eating and drinking is not provided when required, patients’ nutritional status may be compromised.

Independence with eating and drinking should be promoted in a safe and supportive way.

Patients should be:

- treated with respect and dignity at all times when being prepared for and receiving food and fluids
- given adequate time (at least thirty minutes) to consume their meal before the tray is collected
- provided with appropriate modifications to their meal to assist them with accessing and/or eating the meal
- provided with equipment/utensils to meet their individual needs including adaptive aids, cutlery and drinking devices.

Carers, relatives and volunteers can be involved in assisting patients to eat if deemed safe by the clinical staff and if any necessary training has been provided.

Paediatric patients (particularly the very young) require direct supervision during meal times, monitoring total intake and safe consumption. This may be provided by a parent/carer.

Wards and dining areas should be adequately staffed at mealtimes and the importance of providing timely and individualised assistance with eating and drinking should be recognised in work allocations.

A system for the development and assessment of new food products, packaging, dinnerware and cutlery for ease of accessibility and useability by patients should be in place. Such a system must include consultation with appropriate stakeholders (e.g. consumers).
10 STAFF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Training and education programs enhance an understanding of the link between good nutrition care, identifying those at risk of poor nutrition, preventing malnutrition and delivering better patient outcomes.

All staff involved in nutrition care should:

- understand their role and responsibilities, and receive appropriate education and training on the key aspects of nutrition care relevant to their patient demographic, the diets available and the purpose of these diets if responsible for ordering diets
- be aware of the role of food and nutrition supporting a patient to achieve optimal nutrition, prevent malnutrition, and maximise patients’ clinical outcomes and quality of life
- be aware that patients who are overweight or obese may also be malnourished
- be aware of their role in measuring and monitoring patients’ weight and acting on identified risks.

Education programs on weight status assessment, nutrition care and malnutrition should be provided annually and additionally as required. Training could be provided locally or via Health Education and Training Institute.

11 EVALUATION

NSW Local Health Districts, Speciality Health Networks and other NSW public health organisations must have a system to evaluate the nutrition care provided. The system must include monitoring and reporting of the following:

- audit of weight and height/length documentation
- audit of nutrition screening and nutrition assessment
- patient experience and satisfaction with food and nutrition care
- regular feedback to staff and consumers on compliance with the Policy.

12 BIBLIOGRAPHY


## ATTACHMENT 1: NUTRITION CARE POLICY SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Examples of evidence</th>
<th>Available Resources</th>
<th>COMPLIANCE</th>
<th>Actions required</th>
<th>Assigned to</th>
<th>Target Completion date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The LHD/SHN/Organisation has an effective nutrition care governance structure that has clinical, consumer and corporate representation in place that is appropriate for each facility. | - Terms of Reference  
- Minutes and Action plans  
- Communication to staff and consumers about the governance structure.  
- Clear protocols for nutrition care including weight and height/length measurement and documentation | - Templates for Terms of Reference and Agenda’s: ACI Nutrition and Mental health toolkit  
- Engaging consumers and carers: ACI Nutrition and Mental health toolkit  
- Growth assessment in children and weight status assessment in adults | Not compliant  
In progress  
Compliant |  |  |  |
| There is a system in place to ensure patients undergo nutrition screening within 24 hours of admission to care and weekly using a validated nutrition screening tool (or monthly for long stay facilities e.g. multipurpose services, some rehabilitation centres, some mental health facilities).* | - Appropriate screening tool(s) are in use and supported by clear protocols.  
- Monitoring and evaluation plan  
- Audit results and action plans | - NSW Health Adult Admission form  
- Evidence based practice guidelines |  |  |  |  |
### 12. MEDICAL CARE

| Appropriate equipment (such as scales, height/length measures and specialised feeding equipment) is functional, well positioned and available in clinical areas.* | - List of available equipment  
- Equipment audits, reports and action plans  
- Evidence of routine calibration |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Patients have their weight and height/length measured and documented within 24 hours of admission to care and then  
  - weight measured weekly in the acute setting.*  
  - weight measured monthly in long stay facilities (e.g. multipurpose services, some rehabilitation centres, some mental health facilities) | - Audits, reports and action plans  
- Local policy or protocol | - Adult and Paediatric Admission forms  
- [Physical Health Care of Mental Health Consumers (GL2009_007)](link)  
- [NSW Health Metabolic monitoring module](link)  
- Evidence based practice guidelines  
- Age appropriate growth charts for boys and girls |  |  |  |  |  |
| There is a system in place to ensure patients at nutritional risk are referred to a dietitian for a full nutrition assessment. The nutrition assessment occurs within two working days of referral to the dietitian.* | - Clear referral pathways and protocols  
- Appropriate nutrition assessment tool(s) are in use and supported by clear protocols.  
- Documentation audit results, reports and action plans | - Evidence based practice guidelines |  |  |  |  |
| The menu provided to patients meets the needs of the local population | The menu development and review process has considered:  
  o Average length of stay  
  o The demographic and cultural profile of consumers  
  o Feedback from stakeholders including consumers (via surveys, focus groups, participation in processes etc.) | - ACI Nutrition Standards  
- ACI Nutrition Standards Menu review tool  
- ACI Nutrition Care and Food Service Data Checklist: ACI Nutrition and Mental health toolkit |
|---|---|---|
| There are systems in place to ensure patients have the opportunity to select their own meals where appropriate | - Clear protocols in place  
- Information is provided to patients/carers about the food service  
- Audits, reports and action plans | - ACI ChOICES: The Patient menu selection process  
- ACI Food and Nutrition brochure |
| Patients who need assistance with eating and drinking are identified and the level of care they need is provided.* | - Systems in place and supported by clear protocols  
- Audits, reports and action plans  
- Feeding assistance program in place | - ACI Dementia and Delirium Care Volunteer implementation and training resource  
- NSW Health Admitted Patient survey results (Bureau of Health Information) |
| Nutrition care requirements are included in care plans, and appropriately communicated on transfer of care | - Systems in place and supported by clear protocols  
- Audits, reports and action plans | - HETI eLearning module: Nutrition screening for malnutrition  
- Weight4Kids online modules |
| There is a system in place to identify and train relevant staff in nutrition care. | - Clear protocol in place  
- Training program available  
- Training audits, reports and action plans |  

Nutrition care is evaluated by a range of stakeholders and the process includes:

- Patient experience and satisfaction with food and nutrition care.
- Multidisciplinary incident review and management

- Surveys, audits, focus groups
- Meal time observations
- Reports and action plans
- Incident investigation or analysis
- NSW Health Admitted Patient survey results (Bureau of Health Information)
- HealthShare Food Service patient satisfaction survey results
- Data from Incident Management Systems

Routine feedback is provided to staff and consumers on compliance with the Nutrition Care Policy

- Local intranet and / or internet page
- Evaluation results are shared with consumers and staff and used to improve services (e.g. via newsletters, meetings, intranet sites, publications, information for consumers/ carers)

*This element requires regular audit as part of evaluation.*
SAFE ADMINISTRATION OF LIQUID MEDICINES BY ROUTES OTHER THAN INJECTION (PD2012_006)

PURPOSE

There have been a number of incidents resulting in serious injury where doses of oral liquid medicines have been administered parenterally.

These incidents have occurred through the use of parenteral syringes to prepare liquid medicine doses resulting in inadvertent administration of the dose via the incorrect route. The outcomes of this type of incident may be catastrophic and can be fatal.

This policy has been developed to minimise the risk of serious injury or death from the parenteral administration of liquid doses of medicines intended for other routes (principally oral or enteral).

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

• Oral/enteral dispensers (also called oral/enteral syringes) or graduated medicine cups are to be used to prepare, measure and administer all liquid doses intended for:
  • Oral and enteral use
  • Inhalational, intranasal, topical, or rectal use where measurement of volume is required
  • Injectable medicines intentionally prescribed for non-parenteral use
• Devices used for withdrawing liquid medicine doses intended for non-parenteral use from their container must have connections compatible with the oral/enteral dispensers
• Enteral feeding catheters, both nasogastric and percutaneous must have connections compatible with the oral/enteral dispensers in use.
• No device intended for access to the gastrointestinal tract should feature a female Luer® connector (Luer-Lok® or Luer-Slip®).

IMPLEMENTATION

Local Health District Chief Executives
• Assign responsibility for implementation of the standard and maintenance of the use of oral/enteral dispensers in line with mandatory requirements within the Local Health District.

Directors of Clinical Governance
• Ensure systems are in place to:
  • Implement the mandatory requirements and standards.
  • Monitor compliance with the policy and standards.

Hospital, facility, clinical stream and unit managers, Heads of Departments, Nurse/Midwife In Charge
• Ensure systems and practices prescribed in this policy are implemented and sustained successfully.
• Clearly identify and store oral/enteral dispensers separately from parenteral syringes.
• Ensure that oral/enteral dispensers and compatible connectors are available at the point-of-care.
• Monitor compliance and practices described in this policy.
• Ensure compliance of staff with use of the devices as described.
Directors of Pharmacy

- Liaise with relevant staff to ensure supply of oral/enteral dispensers and compatible connectors are maintained in all clinical areas.
- Ensure all clinical pharmacists and technicians are aware of this policy and ensure it is followed in all clinical areas.
- Ensure all dose measuring devices issued to outpatients and those transferring to the community comply with this policy.

1. BACKGROUND

The policy statement and standards together provide direction to minimise the risk of patient injury or death from inadvertent parenteral administration of liquid drug doses intended for other routes.

This policy mandates use of oral/enteral dispensers to measure and administer liquid medication doses by routes other than injection. Oral/enteral dispensers allow accurate volume measurement and prevent connection with injectable access devices. Use of dedicated devices provides a check against a medicine dose being administered by the incorrect route.

This policy is relevant to all clinical staff involved in administration of medicines and applies to adults, children and neonates.

2. KEY DEFINITIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration line</td>
<td>This includes all giving sets, administration lines and invasive monitoring lines through which medicines and fluids could be administered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrel (of syringe)</td>
<td>The hollow cylinder of a syringe in which fluids are measured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catheter</td>
<td>A flexible tubular device for removing fluids from, or delivering fluids to, a body cavity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calibration</td>
<td>(the scale of a measuring instrument) an instrument divided into marked intervals for optimal measuring so that it can be read in the desired units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dead space</td>
<td>The volume of fluid remaining in the tip of a syringe after the plunger of the syringe has been fully depressed into the barrel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enteral</td>
<td>Fluids (nutrition or medicine) given into the gastrointestinal tract.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (Luer) Connector</td>
<td>Describes the shape and size of the port which connects with a male Luer connector. The standard shape of devices designed to access the vascular system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hub/syringe adaptor</td>
<td>The proximal end of a needle which attaches to the syringe barrel by means of a press-fit mechanism (Luer) or a twist-on mechanism (Luer-Lok).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injection</td>
<td>For the purposes of this policy includes intravenous, intramuscular, intra-arterial, epidural, subcutaneous routes of administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intravenous</td>
<td>Parenteral drug and fluid administration into or within a vein or veins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luer taper</td>
<td>A Luer taper is a standardised system of small-scale fluid fittings used for making leak-free connections between a male taper fitting and its mating female part on medical and laboratory instruments, including hypodermic syringe tips and needles. It originated as a 6% taper fitting for glass bottle stoppers. Key features of Luer taper connectors are defined in the ISO 594/1:1986 standard. (BS EN 20594-1:1994).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are two varieties of Luer taper connections: Luer-Lok and Luer-Slip. Luer-Lok fittings are securely joined by means of a tabbed hub on the female fitting which screws into threads in a sleeve on the male fitting. Luer-Slip fittings simply conform to Luer taper dimensions and are pressed together and held by friction (they have no threads). Luer components are manufactured either from metal or plastic and are available from many companies worldwide.

“Luer-Lok” and “Luer-Slip” are registered trademarks of Becton Dickinson. In the literature a “Luer-Lok” style connector is often generically referred to as a “Luer lock connector” and it has since become an industry standard.

**Male (Luer) Connector**

Describes the shape and size of the nozzle (tip) of a syringe that connects to a female Luer port. The standard shape of the tip of an intravenous syringe.

**Must**

Indicates a mandatory action required by a NSW Health policy directive, law or industrial instrument.

**Nasogastric tube**

A flexible plastic tube passing into the stomach through the nostril and nasopharynx.

**Oral/enteral dispenser**

A device manufactured with a non-Luer taper male tip so that it cannot be fitted to a female Luer port. This device is used to measure and/or administer liquid doses of medicines for non-parenteral administration. Some products may be labelled as oral/enteral syringes.

**Parenteral (Medicine)**

Taken into the body or administered in a manner other than through the digestive tract. For the purposes of this policy, refers to administration by injection.

**Public health organisation (PHO)**

- A local health district.
- A statutory health corporation that provides inpatient services, or
- An affiliated health organisation in respect of its recognised establishments that provide inpatient services.

**Plunger**

The movable part of the syringe which is pushed down the barrel to expel its contents or pulled up within the barrel to fill the syringe.

**Route of administration**

The path by which a substance is taken into the body (i.e., by mouth, injection, inhalation, rectum, or by application).

**Should**

Indicates an action that should be followed unless there are sound reasons for taking a different course of action.

**Straw**

A length of plastic tubing that connects to an oral/enteral dispenser used to draw up liquids from a container.

**Syringe**

A device for injecting or withdrawing fluids. For the purposes of this policy a syringe is used to administer medication or fluid parenterally. Devices used to measure and/or administer liquid doses of medicines for non-parenteral administration are referred to as oral/enteral dispensers.

**Tip (of syringe)**

The point of the syringe which is connected to a needle or device and from which fluids are delivered.

3. **ORAL/ENTERAL DISPENSERS - REQUIREMENTS**

- Oral/enteral dispensers are manufactured with non-Luer connector geometry and in several coloured presentations. Requirements include:
  - must be designed with a tip which is unable to be connected to a Luer fitting on injectable systems. This lack of connectivity may be achieved by variation of the angle of the Luer taper e.g. reverse Luer taper, straight taper, non-Luer taper.
12. **MEDICAL CARE**

- must be readily distinguishable from parenteral syringes by labelling (oral/enteral use only) and/or colour (of plunger or barrel).
- must be available in a size range from one millilitre (1mL) to at least fifty millilitres (50mL) to accommodate the possible range of oral dose volumes.
- must be provided clean, not necessarily sterile, but over-wrapped, individually or in small quantities to facilitate clean handling.
- must be single patient use devices.
- must have minimal dead space to ensure accurate measurement.
- must be calibrated in metric quantities and in millilitre increments.
- must be compatible with administration sets used for enteral feeding purposes. These should be clearly differentiated from giving sets for parenteral use. There must be a mechanism or use of clear labelling to alert clinical staff that the device is in use for enteral feeds **ONLY**.

- Oral/enteral dispenser caps must be used for pre-packed doses e.g. from pharmacy, but must be kept out of reach of children due to potential choking hazard.
- Devices to assist withdrawal of doses from liquid containers (stoppers or straws) must be compatible with the oral/enteral dispensers.

4. **ENTERAL FEEDING SYSTEMS**

- All nasogastric and enteral feeding tubes chosen for use must have connections compatible with the oral/enteral dispensers in use and should not feature any in-line female Luer administration ports nor be able to be connected to the patient using a male Luer terminal connector.
- Only devices with non-Luer or catheter-tip connectors to fit catheter-tip ports on enteral feeding systems must be used.
- Three-way taps and syringe-tip adaptors should not be used in enteral feeding systems.
- A portal for administration of oral medicines via enteral feeding catheters must be available. Note: the oral medicines portal must not contain ports that can be connected to parenteral syringes or have (distal or proximal) end connectors which can be connected to parenteral lines.
- Enteral feeding tubes should be labelled to indicate route of administration.
- Oral/enteral dispensers must be used for expressed breast milk or formula, if administered via enteral catheter or by mouth to an infant except when cups or bottles are in use.

5. **LIQUIDS FOR INHALATION, INTRANASAL, TOPICAL OR RECTAL ADMINISTRATION**

- Liquids for inhalation, intranasal, topical or rectal administration
  - are to be purchased in ready to use units wherever possible.
  - parenteral syringes should not be used for measurement or administration of doses.
- If injectable solutions are prescribed for inhalation, intranasal, topical or rectal administration and there is no alternate product,
  - oral/enteral dispenser and compatible straw should be used where possible.
  - withdrawal of doses from vials may require the use of needles and luer-compatible syringes.
  - to reduce risk of inadvertent injection dose should be both drawn up and administered at the bedside. Where this is not possible the container must be labelled with the intended route of administration eg FOR INHALATION ONLY.
  - labelling of any dispensed product must include the intended route of administration.
If a bulk pack of solution for inhalation must be used, a non-Luer dispenser must be used to withdraw doses and expel them into inhalation reservoirs.

Where a sterile solution is prepared in a pharmacy, it must be dispensed in a container clearly labelled with the intended route of administration. Containers should be chosen that are not amenable to withdrawal of solution for injection.

6. PROCEDURES

6.1 Obtain and stock oral/enteral dispensers which are:

- clearly differentiated from parenteral syringes through barrel or plunger colouring or through clearly distinguished packaging.
- readily available in clinical areas where liquid medicine doses for routes other than injection are prepared.
- clearly recognised through use of pre-printed labelling eg FOR ORAL/ENTERAL USE ONLY.
- stored separately from parenteral syringes and storage areas clearly identified.

6.2 Prepare and administer doses as follows:

- Oral/enteral dispensers should be used to prepare and administer liquid medication doses which are:
  - not readily measured by available calibrations using an oral medicine measure or cup
  - administered by the oral or the enteral route (whether by nasal or percutaneous entry)
  - given by inhalation, intranasal, topical or rectal administration where measurement of volume is required
  - injectable medicines intentionally prescribed for non-parenteral use.
- Shake containers of oral medicine in suspension form prior to withdrawal of doses, to ensure accurate dose delivery.
- Devices to assist measurement and withdrawal of medicine doses from liquid containers (stoppers or straws) must be compatible with oral/enteral dispensers.
- Oral/enteral dispensers are single patient use devices and must be discarded after use. If several liquid medicine doses are to be given to one patient at the same time of day, they should each be separately prepared and administered.
- For accurate dose measurement, align the widest part of the plunger with the calibrated markings on the barrel.
- Determine compatibility of the medicine with oral feeds and flush feed tubing between administration of doses.

6.3 Labelling of non-parenteral liquid doses

- Preparation of doses for immediate administration is preferred.
- If doses must be prepared in advance, these must be labelled at a minimum with the drug, dose, volume and intended route of administration eg FOR ORAL/ENTERAL USE ONLY. The label is to be affixed so that it does not obscure calibrations.
- If a single dose is prepared for immediate administration labelling is not required.
- All administration lines used for administration of non parenteral medication should be labelled and include route of administration with the label near the insertion point on the patient side. For paediatric patients where the label should be placed near the container to minimise dislodgement.
- If a dose of medicine is prepared for enteral administration via an infusion device, the dispenser must be labelled with drug, dose, volume, route and time of preparation, name of person preparing as well as patient identification.
6.4 Dispensing

- Where unusual drug doses are to be administered, professional judgement should be used to determine if pre-loaded doses in capped oral/enteral dispensers are to be provided by the pharmacy service.
- Bulk pre-packing of oral doses in oral/enteral dispensers must not be routinely undertaken unless on exceptional cases and by an accredited pharmacy service using principles of Good Manufacturing Practice and adherence to Australian pharmacy manufacturing standards.
- Oral/enteral dispensers must be provided to outpatients or patients transferred to community care for all non-parenteral medicine doses of liquid medicines not readily measured in a calibrated oral medicine cup.
- Oral/enteral dispensers supplied as part of a commercial drug product pack must be used unless the dose to be given is unable to be accurately measured using the device or if a Luer fitting syringe has been provided.

7. PATIENT EDUCATION

When patients or carers are required to administer liquid medicines by routes other than injection, only oral/enteral dispensers are to be supplied.

Particular care is required to educate such patients or carers of patients where a long-term intravenous catheter is in situ as some medicines may need to be given by injection and others by the oral/enteral route. Interpreters are to be used for patients or carers of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Visual aids such as brochures may be provided.

8. REFERENCES

4. European Standard EN 1615:2000 Enteral feeding catheters and enteral giving sets for single use and their connectors. Design and testing. This European Standard specifies requirements for the design and testing of single-use enteral feeding catheters, single-use enteral giving sets and their connection systems.
10. Standards aligned with PIC/S: Pharmaceutical Inspection Convention (PIC) and the Pharmaceutical Inspection Co-operation Scheme (PIC Scheme), developed with the Therapeutic Goods Administration – Pharmacy Manufacturing Technical working group.
12. Small bore connectors for liquids and gases in healthcare applications – Part 1 General requirements ISO80369-1 2010
15. NSW Health Policy Directive PD2007_036 Infection Control Policy
# APPENDIX 1 – IMPLEMENTATION & COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessed by:</th>
<th>Date of Assessment:</th>
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## REQUIREMENTS

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not commenced</th>
<th>Partial compliance</th>
<th>Full compliance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Responsibility is assigned to personnel for implementation of Safe Administration of Liquid Medicines by Routes Other Than Injection</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Oral/enteral dispensers are present in all clinical areas where non-parenteral doses are prepared and administered.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Oral/enteral dispensers are stored away from parenteral syringes and are accessible at the location used for preparation of doses.</td>
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<td>Notes:</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Only oral/enteral dispensers or a graduated medicine cup are used to prepare and administer non-parenteral liquid doses, including oral, enteral, topical intranasal, rectal and inhaled doses</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. A pharmacy service, where available, pre-loads unusual medication doses into oral/enteral dispensers for accurate, ready-to-use administration.</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
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<td>Notes:</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. On transfer, patients are always provided with oral/enteral dispensers for all non-parenteral medicine liquid for medicines not readily measured in a calibrated oral medicine cup</td>
<td>❑</td>
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145(25/01/12)
USER-APPLIED LABELLING OF INJECTABLE MEDICINES, FLUIDS AND LINES
(PD2016_058)

PD2016_058 rescinds PD2012_007

PURPOSE
This Policy Directive sets out the requirements for user-applied labelling of injectable medicines, fluids and lines in NSW Public Health Organisations and NSW Ambulance.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS
All NSW Health Public Health Organisations and NSW Ambulance are to apply the requirements set out in the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care's National Standard for User-applied Labelling of Injectable Medicines, Fluids and Lines (Labelling Standard).

IMPLEMENTATION
NSW Ministry of Health is responsible for:
- Providing access to user-applied labels through state contracted suppliers (cost of labels being dependent on demand).

NSW Clinical Excellence Commission is responsible for:
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy by reviewing the completed implementation checklists
- Providing resources to support implementation and ongoing compliance with this policy
- Informing the State Forms Management Committee and HealthShare NSW Procurement Services of any changes to the Labelling Standard.

Chief Executive is responsible for:
- Assigning responsibility, personnel and resources to implement and comply with this policy.

Director of Clinical Governance is responsible for:
- Reporting the status of the policy implementation to the NSW Clinical Excellence Commission by returning a completed Implementation checklist (Attachment 5.1) within twelve months of publication of the policy.

Drug and Therapeutics Committees are responsible for:
- Providing local oversight of safe implementation of this policy.

Health Service Managers are responsible for:
- Ensuring relevant labels are available for use in clinical areas
- Ensuring clinicians receive education on user-applied labelling
- Monitoring implementation and compliance with the policy.
1. **BACKGROUND**

Failure to recognise the correct container (for example; bags, bottles, syringes) for injectable medicines and fluids, or the correct conduit (for example; administration lines, invasive monitoring lines, catheters or burettes) can result in an administration error.

Use of multiple label design; colour; size and content, and lack of use of labels in certain circumstances, has also contributed to medication safety incidents.

Where multiple parenteral and enteral lines are in use, incorrect line selection has contributed to adverse patient outcomes from administration of fluids and medicines by an incorrect route.

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) has developed the National Standard for User-applied Labelling of Injectable Medicines, Fluids and Lines (Labelling Standard) to ensure accurate communication of injectable medicines and fluids information through standardised user-applied labelling. The Labelling Standard replaces the 2012 National Recommendations for User-applied Labelling of Injectable Medicines, Fluids and Lines(1).

Consistent with the Labelling Standard, NSW Health provides access to user-applied labels through state contracted suppliers for use in all NSW Public Health Organisations.

1.1 **Related documents**

NSW Health Policies:
- Medication Handling in Public Health Facilities

Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care:
- National Standard for User-applied Labelling of Injectable Medicines, Fluids and Lines

2 **PROCEDURES**

All NSW Public Health Organisations and NSW Ambulance are to:
- Implement this policy
- Apply requirements as set out in the Labelling Standard
- Ensure there is no customisation or alteration of Labelling Standard labels.

3 **RESOURCES**

A range of resources to support implementation of the Labelling Standard are available on the ACSQHC webpage.

Resources are also available on the Clinical Excellence Commission [User-applied Labelling webpage](#).

4 **REFERENCES**

5 LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

5.1 Implementation checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LHD/Facility:</th>
<th>Date of Assessment:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessed by:</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS</th>
<th>Not commenced</th>
<th>Partial compliance</th>
<th>Full compliance</th>
<th>Notes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. An assessment has been conducted to determine the user-applied labelling requirements (consistent with the Labelling Standard) in all clinical areas.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The required user-applied labels are available in clinical areas.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. User-applied labels are applied to injectable medicines and containers in accordance with the Labelling Standard.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. A process is in place to ensure relevant clinical staff receive education on user-applied labelling.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. A process is in place for the ongoing monitoring of compliance with the Labelling Standard.</td>
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286(12/1/17)
NSW ABORIGINAL HEALTH PLAN 2013-2023 (PD2012_066)

PURPOSE

The NSW Aboriginal Health Plan 2013-2023 (the Plan) is the result of the NSW Government’s commitment toward closing the gap in health outcomes for Aboriginal people.

Over the next ten years the Plan provides unique opportunities for NSW Health to re-examine the best ways of working together and redesigning health services to achieve health equity.

The Plan has been developed to help guide how health systems are planned, delivered, and monitored over the next decade in relation to Aboriginal health. The success of these reforms will be dependent upon working in partnership and utilising the expertise of Aboriginal people in shared leadership arrangements and innovative collaborations.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all staff of Local Health Districts, Specialist Health Networks, Pillars and other NSW health related statutory authorities.

Six strategic directions have been identified to drive the changes needed in the health system to improve Aboriginal health. They are:
1. Building trust through local partnerships.
2. Building the evidence and implementing what works.
3. Ensuring integrated planning and service delivery.
4. Strengthening the Aboriginal workforce.
5. Ensuring culturally safe work environments and health services.

To support achievement of these strategic directions, several strategic actions that support each of the strategic directions require implementation. Please refer to these actions on pages 10-16 in the Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Plan adopts a systems reform approach to improve health equity for Aboriginal people, and will support the NSW health system to achieve the NSW 2021: A plan to make NSW number one targets to:
- Reduce smoking rates by 4% for Aboriginal people.
- Reduce the rate of smoking by 2% per year for pregnant Aboriginal women.
- Halve the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal infant mortality rates by 2018.
- Reduce the age-standardised rate of potentially preventable hospitalisations by 2.5% for Aboriginal people by 2014-15.

Local Health Districts, Specialist Health Networks and the Pillars will be required to implement and report on achievements over the life of the Plan.

The Plan’s strategic directions will be implemented through NSW Health funding and performance management structures. Inclusion of key performance indicators in LHD and SHN Service Agreements and Service Compacts will provide a mechanism to ensure engagement and support of the Plan by NSW Health service providers.

All Service Agreements will explicitly require services to provide a proportion of interventions for Aboriginal people.
The health of the Aboriginal people of NSW: Report of the Chief Health Officer, 2012 has been released in conjunction with the Plan. This report will be used as a baseline of the health status of Aboriginal people and health system performance. It will be reproduced every three years to identify where improvements have been made. Also, annual progress meetings will be held with the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services sector and NSW Health to showcase the progress made against the strategic directions and actions contained in this Plan.


NSW HEALTH & AGEING AND DISABILITY AND HOME CARE (ADHC) JOINT GUIDELINE (GL2013_001)

Supporting residents of ADHC operated and funded accommodation supported services who present to a NSW Public Hospital.

PURPOSE

The aims of the Guideline are:
1. To ensure that staff working in hospitals and disability accommodation support services are aware of their respective roles and responsibilities to people with disability before, during and after transfer of care from hospital.
2. To provide a framework for best practice for health care staff and disability support staff/nurses so together they can:
   • Identify areas of risk that could compromise a person with disability’s capacity to achieve the best health outcomes and their safety and/or dignity during a hospital stay;
   • Agree on what additional supports are required to reduce identified risks; and
   • Negotiate responsibility and resources for the provision of agreed additional support.
3. To link and reference each agency’s policies rather than replicating them (staff should refer to relevant policies where indicated in this Guideline).

This Joint Guideline (the Guideline) has been endorsed by ADHC and NSW Health and was developed in consultation with key stakeholders across health and disability sectors.

KEY PRINCIPLES

The following general principles underpin the Guideline:

• **Person Centred Approach**
  An approach that places the person at the centre of decision making and treats natural networks of support and service providers as partners. A philosophical background based on the value of human rights, independence, choice and inclusion.

• **Patient Centred Approach**
  An approach that is geared towards using resources to develop a culture where the patient is both the heart of the system and the driver behind every decision.

• **Communication**
  Good communication between the person, their family/guardian, hospital staff and the disability support staff and sharing information about the person’s health and disability support needs makes a positive difference to a person’s health outcomes.
12. MEDICAL CARE

- **Sharing Information**
  Key information that hospital staff need to know about the person and their support needs should be provided in a universally consistent format and travel with the person around the hospital for ease of access.

- **Sharing Expertise**
  Sharing expertise to ensure that people with disability achieve the best health care outcome is central to this Guideline.

- **Capacity to consent**
  It is the responsibility of the treating practitioner to determine if the person is able to give consent for medical or dental treatment. Disability Support Staff cannot provide consent for medical treatment under any circumstances.

The document covers issues relating to workforce, care coordination and transfer of care, the key stages of planned and unplanned admission to hospital, resolution of issues arising during the hospital stay, local liaison mechanisms and implementation.

**USE OF THE GUIDELINE**

Local Health Districts should use this Guideline in conjunction with NSW Health Policy Directives - PD2011_015: Care Coordination: Planning for Admission to Transfer Care in Public Hospitals and PD2008_010: People with Disability: Responding to Needs During Hospitalisation.

Some Local Health Districts (LHDs) and ADHC Regions have developed local protocols which provide the framework for effective support of ADHC clients during a hospital stay. This Guideline aims to facilitate a higher level of compliance with existing NSW Health and AHDC policies.

As a minimum requirement, all local protocols need to comply with the general principles set out in this Guideline. Providing these principles are included in local protocols, all other protocol features can be negotiated, expanded and adapted to meet existing local needs.

The implementation of the Guideline should be reported through the Local Health District’s Disability Action Plans.

**Use of the Jointly Agreed Hospital Support Plan Part 1 & 2 (Appendix 1)**

The Hospital Support Plan may be inserted into the plastic sleeve of My Health Record. Part 1 of the Hospital Support Plan contains all relevant personal, consent, health/medical and disability support information necessary to help hospital staff provide safe and effective health care and will be completed by the disability support staff. It will be presented to hospital staff at every pre admission/admission and a copy be kept with the person at all times including all transfers of care.

Part 2 of the Hospital Support Plan is designed to facilitate the sharing of clinical and disability support expertise. It provides the framework to negotiate the range and level of support the person will require during hospitalisation to ensure they achieve the best health outcomes and maintain their safety and dignity.

Part 2 of the Hospital Support Plan is completed in partnership with disability support staff/nurses, the nurse in charge of the unit/ward, the person and, if the person agrees, the family/guardian, at a pre admission meeting or as soon as the person is settled following an unplanned admission to hospital.

SNAKEBITE AND SPIDERBITE CLINICAL MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES 2013 – THIRD EDITION (GL2014_005)

PURPOSE

Clinical resource document to advise on the management of patients with actual or suspected snakebite or spiderbite, and the appropriate levels, type and location of stored antivenom in NSW health facilities. These are clinical guidelines for best clinical practice which are not mandatory but do provide essential clinical support.

KEY PRINCIPLES

Determination of antivenom stock requirements is best done at a regional level, either for a whole Local Health District (LHD) or important regions within a Local Health District in collaboration with local Critical Care Clinicians based a review of risks, facilities, past usage and other practical considerations using the following principles:

• Geographic location and degree of isolation.
• Local snake and spider distribution.
• History of envenoming cases.
• Referral role of regional, rural and metropolitan hospitals.

Whilst, the definitive management of snake envenoming can only occur in a hospital with a laboratory that can do an INR/aPTT and there is sufficient nursing care; antivenom treatment can (and should) be given to obviously envenomed patients in smaller hospitals without laboratory services prior to retrieval.

Specifically, the guidelines recommended that at a minimum ALL hospitals in NSW should have:

• One (1) vial of brown snake antivenom.
• One (1) vial of tiger snake antivenom.
• One (1) vial of polyvalent antivenom should be kept in larger regional and referral hospitals, retrieval services across NSW, and in larger hospitals west of the Great Dividing Range for mulga snake.
• Two (2) vials of funnel-web spider antivenom should be kept in all hospitals where the spider occurs.

USE OF THE GUIDELINE

The guidelines should be used as a clinical resource document to assist in the assessment, decision making and clinical management of patients with confirmed or suspected snakebite or spiderbite, and the appropriate levels, type and location of stored antivenom in NSW health facilities.

To download the Guideline please go to

205(20/03/14)
ADULT URETHRAL CATHETERISATION FOR ACUTE CARE SETTINGS
(GL2015_016)

PURPOSE
The purpose of this guideline is to describe the best practice principles that should be employed when inserting and managing urethral catheters in adult acute care settings in NSW Public Health Organisations (PHOs).

KEY PRINCIPLES
Indwelling urinary catheters are a potential reservoir of infection. To minimise the risk of a patient acquiring a catheter associated urinary tract infection (CAUTI), clinicians should ensure that indwelling urethral catheters are:

• Inserted only if clinically indicated
• Inserted and maintained using aseptic technique
• Removed as soon as the clinical need has been resolved.

Catheter insertion, routine care and catheter removal should be documented in the patient’s healthcare record.

USE OF THE GUIDELINE
The Chief Executives of NSW PHOs are responsible for the implementation of this Guideline within their services / facilities to ensure that local protocols or operating procedures are in place, aligned and consistent with the Guideline.

All clinicians working in adult acute care settings and who are involved in the care of patients with catheters should be aware of the Guideline and actively participate in its implementation.

The Clinical Excellence Commission will take responsibility for producing resources for PHOs to support the implementation of this guideline.

To download the Guideline please go to  

COMPACKS PROGRAM GUIDELINES (GL2016_023)

PURPOSE
The ComPacks Program Guideline is a resource for frontline Local Health District staff and ComPacks Service Provider staff to facilitate the implementation of the Program.

KEY PRINCIPLES
ComPacks was developed specifically for people in NSW Public hospitals who need immediate support to return home safely using a combination of community case management and non-clinical community services. A ComPacks package may include assistance with personal care, domestic assistance, transport and social support, and is available for up to six weeks from the time of discharge from hospital.

The ComPacks Program Guidelines outline the key components of the ComPacks program, including eligibility, referrals, services, assessment, stakeholder responsibilities and coordination and performance management.

USE OF THE GUIDELINE
In 2010 a resource tool kit was implemented for the ComPacks Program. The ComPacks Program Guidelines is an extension of this toolkit and is designed as a resource for frontline Health staff, Local Health District Relationship Managers, ComPacks Service Provider Case Managers and Relationship Managers. It was developed in consultation with representatives from these groups.

To download the Guideline please go to 
CARDIAC MONITORING OF ADULT CARDIAC PATIENTS IN NSW PUBLIC HOSPITALS  (GL2016_019)

PURPOSE
Over time, individual hospitals have developed a range of protocols and standards for cardiac monitoring resulting in practice variance between hospitals and local health districts (LHDs).

The clinical Guideline provides the recommended minimum standards for cardiac monitoring of adult patients with a primary cardiac diagnosis in NSW hospitals, regardless of the clinical area in which they are managed.

Compliance with the Guideline will improve patient outcomes and timely discharge through the appropriate use of cardiac monitoring in public hospitals in NSW. This Guideline replaces PD2008_055 - Cardiac Monitoring in Adult Cardiac Patients in Public Hospitals in NSW.

KEY PRINCIPLES
Cardiac monitoring is a useful diagnostic tool for managing patients with cardiac arrhythmia or acute ischaemic changes (actual or potential). However, it has no therapeutic value unless the clinicians supervising the patient are skilled in the recognition and management of these abnormalities.

Registered nurses (RN) may allocate a patient to a monitoring category in the absence of medical direction, however, the final responsibility for risk assessment of patients requiring cardiac monitoring rests with the treating medical officer.

Clinical areas designated as appropriate for the management of patients requiring continuous cardiac monitoring (see Glossary, page 10) should have central monitoring capability with all cardiac monitors (apart from those used for transfers) connected to the central monitor. In the absence of a local policy, alarm parameters should be set as per ‘Between the Flags Yellow Zone’.

At the end of the minimum recommended monitoring period, a daily re-assessment of the patient’s clinical indication for continued monitoring is necessary to ensure that monitoring is ceased when it is no longer required. This assessment should be performed by the treating medical team for group A patients (see page 7) or an appropriately skilled delegate (e.g. CNC, CNE, NUM) for group B patients (see page 8).

It is preferable that patients who require continuous cardiac monitoring (see Glossary, page 10) remain monitored at all times. However, if cardiac monitoring must be interrupted for any reason, patients must be under direct visual observation (see Glossary, page 10) by clinical staff with the appropriate skill set (see Table 1, page 6) during the entire period that central cardiac monitoring is unavailable.

Clinical areas managing patients listed in the Guideline should have at least one nurse on duty at all times who meets competency requirements for the relevant escort skill sets (see Table 1, page 6).

If facilities are unable to meet this standard, the patient should be transferred to a facility that is able to provide this level of care.
If a patient is being transferred, direct visual observation must be maintained by a clinician with the appropriate skill set (see Table 1, page 6).

Each LHD should determine the required competency assessments for each facility to ensure availability of adequate staffing skill mix.
USE OF THE GUIDELINE

Chief Executives
- Should provide the document to staff working in areas where cardiac monitoring may be used for example cardiac wards, emergency departments.

Directors of Clinical Governance and Patient Flow Managers
- Should monitor the implementation of the Guideline and its impact on patient experience, outcome and patient flow within their facilities.

Nurse Unit Managers
- Should support their staff to implement the Guideline.

Nursing Staff
- Should provide cardiac monitoring for patients according to the recommendations in the Guideline
- Should have the required basic or advanced skill set for patient escort (see Table 1, page 6)
- Should discontinue cardiac monitoring for group B patients after the recommended monitoring period if the patient is stable after discussion with a senior registered nurse, unless there is a written medical order to continue (see Table 3, page 8).

Medical Staff (including general practitioners)
- Should review the requirement for cardiac monitoring daily for all patients (see Table 2, page 7; see Table 3, page 8)
- Should document in the patient’s medical record if cardiac monitoring is to continue after the recommended monitoring period stating the clinical indications and specific timeframe (see Table 2, page 7; see Table 3, page 8)
- Should document in the patient’s medical record if cardiac monitoring is to discontinue (see Table 2, page 7).


NSW CLINICAL SERVICE FRAMEWORK FOR CHRONIC HEART FAILURE
(GL2017_006)

PURPOSE
The NSW Clinical Service Framework for Chronic Heart Failure (CHF) provides nine evidence-based standards to support clinicians in community and hospital environments to provide best-practice care in the prevention, diagnosis and management of people with CHF across the continuum of care.

Compliance with the Framework will improve patient outcomes and experience and reduce length of stay and re-hospitalisation.

KEY PRINCIPLES
- Management of people with CHF should align with the nine evidence-based standards described in the Framework.

- The document may be used by general practitioners, nurses, doctors, allied health staff and Aboriginal health service providers.

- The Framework provides guidance for a range of clinical settings including Primary Health Networks (PHNs) and general practices, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS), Aboriginal Medical Services (AMS), community health services, hospitals and Local Health Districts (LHDs).
12. MEDICAL CARE

- Health services for people with chronic and complex conditions need to be reconfigured to be more integrated, coordinated and patient focused throughout the continuum of care.

- People with CHF often have multiple comorbidities and physiological and psychosocial needs that change over time. Access to different levels of care at various stages of the disease trajectory is needed to reduce presentations to hospital.

- The General Practitioner (GP) or other primary care provider plays a central coordinating role in the person-centred medical home model where care is delivered in partnership with a multidisciplinary team. The GP may be able to reduce unplanned admissions by early identification of patients with increasing care needs and planned admission for rapid assessment and treatment rather than an emergency hospital presentation.

- Supported self-management underpins the aims of services, therefore, clinical team members should be trained in health behaviour change to deliver the service in partnership with the patient, their family and carers who are central to decision making and setting patient-centred achievable goals.

USE OF THE GUIDELINE

Chief Executives
- Should provide the document to staff working in areas where patients may present for example, emergency departments, cardiac and medical wards

Directors of Clinical Governance and Patient Flow Managers
- Should monitor the implementation of the Framework and its impact on patient experience, outcome and patient flow within their facilities

Nurse Unit Managers
- Should support their staff to implement the Framework

Nursing Staff
- Should provide evidence-based care as recommended in the protocol

Medical Staff (including GPs working in mainstream and Aboriginal Health Services)
- Should assess, risk stratify and manage patients using the 12 evidence-based minimum standards described in the protocol.

To download the Guideline please go to

315(24/04/17)
GROWTH ASSESSMENT IN CHILDREN AND WEIGHT STATUS ASSESSMENT IN ADULTS  (GL2017_021)

PURPOSE

To support core patient care, this document describes the following:
- A standardised approach to measuring weight and height in children and adults, and to measuring length and head circumference in younger children.
- Interpreting and recording these measurements as part of determining weight status.
- Key equipment and patient considerations around taking these measurements.

KEY PRINCIPLES

Weight and height measurement of children and adults – or weight, length and head circumference measurement of younger children – should be performed on a regular basis as part of providing good clinical care. For example, it is necessary to measure weight, height and head circumference in order to monitor children’s growth. It is also necessary to measure weight and height (or length) to determine weight status in children and adults.

Standardised measurement and interpretation of weight, height, length and weight status, will improve the accuracy and usefulness of measurements over time and across facilities, and support clinical decision making.

USE OF THE GUIDELINE

This guideline helps clinicians perform weight, height, length, or head circumference measurements of their patients, and to use these measurements to assess their patients’ weight status.

This guideline also helps managers design and establish workflow practices that enable routine measurements.

YOUTH HEALTH AND WELLBEING ASSESSMENT GUIDELINE (GL2018_003)

PURPOSE

This guideline presents the current best evidence for conducting a youth health and wellbeing Assessment. Its purpose is to inform practice for healthcare providers to achieve the best possible care in NSW.

This guideline is primarily for clinicians caring for young people (12-24 years old) in a paediatric, adolescent or adult healthcare setting.

This guideline supports NSW Health’s commitment to implement appropriate psychosocial assessment tools, such as HEEADSSS, to assess and respond to the holistic health and wellbeing needs of young people outlined in the NSW Youth Health Framework 2017-2024 (PD2017_019).

KEY PRINCIPLES

Youth health and wellbeing assessments are important to assist clinicians to identify and respond early to areas of concern in a young person’s life that might affect their health and wellbeing.

The youth health and wellbeing assessment is not a diagnostic tool. It is a holistic, flexible approach designed to build rapport and engage with a young person in a clinical setting. The information gathered can then be used to directly address any concerns and/or refer a young person for a specialist response.

The most widely used youth health and wellbeing assessment tool in Australia and internationally is known as a HEEADSSS assessment.

Each letter of HEEADSSS reflects a major domain of a young person’s life. Capturing information in each domain helps reveal risks, behaviours and protective factors. It helps to identify areas of intervention where the clinician can work with the young person to achieve better health outcomes.

- H Home
- E Education and Employment
- E Eating and Exercise
- A Activities, Hobbies and Peer Relationships
- D Drug Use (cigarettes, alcohol)
- S Sexual Activity and Sexuality
- S Suicide, Self-Harm, Depression, Mood, Sleeping Patterns
- S Safety and Spirituality

In general, a youth health and wellbeing assessment (12-24 years old) should be conducted with every young person who attends a health service or hospital. Where appropriate young people in an adult or paediatric inpatient area within a hospital should have a youth health and wellbeing Assessment completed in conjunction with other screening assessment/admission processes.

Clinical judgement should be used to determine the appropriateness of the assessment for 12-24 year olds. This includes considering the young person’s health condition, maturity, the environment and health service context (for example, sufficient time or privacy may not be available in an Emergency Department context).

In general an assessment is done through conversation with a young person. On some occasions, where it is more appropriate a young person can be asked to complete the Youth Health and Wellbeing Assessment Chart (Appendix 1).
It is essential that clinicians/healthcare workers read and understand this guideline in particular Sections 6 to 11 of the Guideline.

- Section 6 Issues covered by a youth health and wellbeing assessment
- Section 7 When to conduct a youth health and wellbeing assessment
- Section 8 Youth health and wellbeing assessment flow diagram
- Section 9 Self-completed assessment using Youth Health and Wellbeing Assessment Chart
- Section 10 Setting up and concluding the assessment
- Section 11 Contraindications and cautions

**USE OF THE GUIDELINE**

This guideline should be considered when conducting Youth Health and Wellbeing Assessment with young people (12-24 years old) who attend a health service or hospital.

This document outlines the -

- approach that should be taken by NSW Health staff when conducting a youth health and wellbeing assessment (Sections 7 - 10)
- issues to consider when implementing the youth health and wellbeing assessment within different health settings and with different age groups (Sections 11 - 12)

A range of resources for workers are available to support Youth Health and Wellbeing Assessment when needed (Appendices 1 – 4).

The document should not be seen as a prescriptive set of rules to be applied without the clinical input and discretion of the managing health professionals. Each patient should be individually evaluated and a decision made as to appropriate management in order to achieve the best clinical outcome.

**The Youth Health and Wellbeing Assessment: Guideline is available at:**