

Performance

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Priority 1

Keep people healthy

NSW Health continued efforts to provide health services to keep NSW residents safe in a challenging year characterised by the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. The NSW Health vaccination rollout began on 22 February 2021 and 851,400 vaccinations had been administered at the end of June 2021.

We also continued to tackle major health issues affecting our community, from supporting pregnancy and the first 2000 days of life, to improving the health of children and Aboriginal people. Our goal is to keep our community healthy by delivering public health programs, campaigns and initiatives to prevent disease, reduce injuries and encourage healthier choices. Reducing harms from tobacco, alcohol and other drug use remained a priority.

Our priorities

- 1.1 Implement policy and programs to reduce childhood overweight and obesity
- 1.2 Embed a health system response to alcohol, tobacco and other drug use and work across agencies
- 1.3 Reduce the impact of infectious diseases, including COVID-19, and environmental health factors, including natural disasters, on community wellbeing
- 1.4 Embed Aboriginal social and cultural concepts of health and wellbeing in programs and services
- 1.5 Support pregnancy and families to ensure that all children have the best possible start in life

Key achievements

- In 2020-21, NSW Health Pathology conducted over 3 million COVID-19 diagnostic tests with a median time of 18 hours from collection to results and performed more than 500,000 saliva screening tests for hotel quarantine workers.
- The Centre for Aboriginal Health led the successful community-driven 'Keep Our Mob Safe' campaign throughout the pandemic, evolving to become the NSW Aboriginal COVID-19 Communication and Engagement Strategy.
- Offered access to free in-school dental care to 121,701 primary school students across 290 schools, reaching 89 per cent of the 136,000 children targeted for the year. A total of 18,487 students received dental treatment, with first-time patients accounting for 78 per cent of patients treated.
- Improved access to IVF services with \$42 million invested by the NSW Government in testing rebates and key NSW Health IVF hospital clinics. This included NSW Health's first statewide fertility preservation service for cancer patients at the Royal Hospital for Women, which had administered treatment to 168 cancer patients by 30 June 2021.
- NSW Health and the NSW Department of Education developed 'Respect Your Brain' – a series of three animated videos to inform young people of the impact of alcohol, MDMA and cannabis use on the growing brain. With promotion across NSW Health, local libraries and high schools, the videos have had more than 21,000 views.

Keeping people healthy during emergencies

In 2020-21, our response to the COVID-19 pandemic took precedence as we mobilised our clinicians and support staff to contend with the increased demand on our health system. The State Health Emergency Operations Centre (SHEOC) and the Public Health Response Branch have coordinated the statewide response to COVID-19, working closely with local health districts, specialty networks and other NSW Health organisations.

SHEOC also led the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines and provided governance for the NSW quarantine program, working with other stakeholders to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission from travellers to NSW.

The Public Health Response Branch coordinated the statewide health protection network's case finding, outbreak investigation, public health risk assessment, contact tracing, investigation of adverse events following COVID-19 immunisation and world-class epidemiological analysis and reporting.

Importantly, we purchased additional ventilators and medical equipment to support increased intensive care unit capacity in readiness for COVID-19 infection outbreaks. We also coordinated free testing to the NSW community, implementing innovative models and ensuring access for all. As at June 2021, over 350 testing clinics across NSW were operational and had conducted 6.15 million tests.

With support from Sydney Local Health District, the Clinical Excellence Commission completed 467 weekly audits of quarantine hotels in NSW since January 2021. It also developed and led a statewide Respiratory Protection Program, with over 38,000 health workers participating.

More than 3500 clinicians joined 30 clinical Communities of Practice to publish almost 100 guidance documents and develop local solutions for the COVID-19 response, resulting in more than 430,000 webpage views by over 255,000 users. We provided rapid, evidence-based advice on COVID-19 and published the weekly Risk Monitoring Dashboard, assessing transmission risk in healthcare settings. NSW Health also commenced the NSW Sewage Surveillance Program for COVID-19, which played a key role in keeping regional NSW safe. Critical intelligence to understand COVID-19 in the community helped inform the public health response throughout the year by providing an early warning of undiagnosed cases or an increase in infections in the community, and enabled NSW Health to identify areas to target increased community testing.

Developing data collections, analysis and reporting on community wellbeing

Analytical tools were produced by the System Information and Analytics Branch to model the impact of COVID-19 on intensive care unit demand and disease transmission in the community. Weekly reports relating to the NSW Vaccination Program were also generated using combined NSW data with data provided by the Commonwealth to support the planning and delivery of vaccine administration. This includes dynamic forecasting based on weekly updates, supporting the initial short-term healthcare capacity to meet expected surge and the long-term response to COVID-19.

Supporting mental health during COVID-19

As part of the NSW Government's \$80 million investment to strengthen mental health support in response to COVID-19, local health districts and specialty health networks recruited over 200 mental health clinicians and peer support workers. A total of \$16.4 million went to enhance the capacity and responsiveness of the Mental Health Line, where NSW Health services responded to over 18,000 calls a month.

An additional \$20 million was invested in expansion of virtual mental health services, over \$6 million was invested in inpatient mental health units and \$6 million was invested to support first responders, including police and ambulance, to respond to people experiencing mental distress in the community.

Keeping kids healthy

NSW Health simplified consumer access to programs, services and information. It continued to work with clinical services to embed routine measurement of children's height and weight into practice to drive outcomes, with referrals to support services for families with children above a healthy weight. Targeted social media campaigns resulted in a 69 per cent increase in engagement and reached over 5 million people (an increase of 181 per cent) to support the adoption of Healthy Eating and Active Living behaviours compared with performance in the previous financial year.

The NSW Health and Department of Education established a joint 'Supporting Student Health and Wellbeing Memorandum of Understanding' and annual work plan to maintain and strengthen student mental and physical health and wellbeing. This increased healthy food and drink choices in school canteens, with 95 per cent of NSW Government school canteens now meeting the Healthy School Canteen Strategy.

Saving the date to vaccinate

The 2020-21 'Save The Date To Vaccinate' childhood vaccination campaign was successful in delivering the key message around the importance of on-time vaccination to the target audiences of parents and carers of children aged up to five years old and pregnant women. The refreshed creative was delivered through digital and social channels including a content partnership with MamaMia and Kidspot. In 2020-21, 97.7 per cent of Aboriginal children and 94.8 per cent of non-Aboriginal children were fully immunised at five years of age.

Keeping people healthy by reducing tobacco use

NSW Health worked with the Department of Education and Cancer Institute NSW to enhance public education around the health risks of e-cigarette and tobacco use. To reduce the impact of e-cigarettes on young people, the Centre for Population Health enhanced compliance and enforcement activities for liquid nicotine offences and other e-cigarette retailing laws. NSW Health inspectors seized 80,000 e-cigarettes and e-liquids containing nicotine, 490,000 cigarettes and 180 kg of other illegal tobacco in 2020-21.

Supporting our citizens to quit smoking

The Cancer Institute NSW delivered the tobacco control awareness campaign 'You Quit, You Win' across multiple digital and social media channels from December 2020 to June 2021, resulting in 36.8 per cent of smokers seeking help to quit smoking. Between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021, there were over 5800 inbound calls to and 9250 outbound calls from NSW Quitline. During the same time period, there were 703,218 sessions on iCanQuit and 5288 people joined online.

The Cancer Institute NSW collaborated with the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council to develop a Reporting for Better Cancer Outcomes program report highlighting the impact of cancers on Aboriginal communities. The Institute also partnered to distribute funding for nicotine replacement therapy and promoted smoking cessation through Koori Quitline social media channels.

Reducing alcohol and other drug use harms

NSW Health has a number of programs aimed at helping consumers achieve better health outcomes in relation to the use of alcohol and other drugs.

A collaboration between NSW Health organisations, NSW Poisons Information Centre and NSW Police increased intelligence on emerging drug risks. This resulted in eight public drug warnings and five clinical safety notices issued. These provide information to the public and clinicians about health risks, early recognition, how to seek help, management and notification. Key detections include potent opioids in heroin and cocaine and circulating counterfeit alprazolam.

The Agency for Clinical Innovation's Drug and Alcohol Network launched the Alcohol and Drugs Cognitive Enhancement program, aimed at improving brain function for better alcohol and drug treatment outcomes.

In December 2020, we launched the Strategic Prioritisation Framework for Alcohol and Other Drugs Research and Evaluation 2020-2024. All four of its objectives were achieved by June 2021 and research and evaluation projects aligned with the framework were initiated. For example, the framework is directing analysis of an alcohol and other drug public health register by the University of New South Wales and the University of Sydney to answer policy questions around mortality, service gaps and consumer treatment journeys. These projects will drive innovation and improve health outcomes for people experiencing alcohol and other drug-related harms.

Responding to substance use in pregnancy

Substance Use in Pregnancy and Parenting Services continued to provide coordinated multidisciplinary care to pregnant women who used alcohol and other drugs, from the antenatal period to up to two years post-delivery. The services aimed to improve health and social outcomes for women and their families, and more than 600 women were accepted as clients throughout the year.

Opioid Treatment and Take Home Naloxone programs

The successful NSW Opioid Treatment Program continued to support the use of the long-acting injectable (depot) formulation of buprenorphine. In 2021, NSW Health began working with general practitioners and pharmacists to expand its use in primary care and private sector settings.

About 23,000 patients received opioid treatment in both public and private healthcare and an estimated 14 per cent received depot buprenorphine throughout the year. In the public opioid treatment setting (including in custody), it was about 30 per cent.

Opioids are responsible for over three deaths in Australia per day, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Prescribed opioids account for 70 per cent of opioid-induced deaths either by accident or through misuse. Naloxone provides a significant opportunity to save lives because opioid overdoses tend to happen gradually, rather than suddenly. However, it is possible to prevent death by administering naloxone to reverse the effects of the overdose. Public health and non-government services across NSW supplied more than 4000 units of naloxone free of charge to people at risk of experiencing or witnessing an opioid overdose.

The Take Home Naloxone program was scaled up during 2020-21. More than 900 health workers across all local health districts, the Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network and the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre have been trained to supply take home naloxone. In 2021, NSW Health also enabled 44 non-government health and welfare services across NSW to begin supplying naloxone to their clients.

Keeping people healthy by reducing the impact of infectious diseases

NSW Health continued to make progress towards the elimination of HIV transmission in NSW, with 33 per cent fewer residents diagnosed than the previous five-year average. The 2021-2025 HIV Strategy was launched, focusing on preventing HIV transmission in priority populations and settings, and reducing stigma and discrimination for those living with and at risk of acquiring HIV.

The elimination of hepatitis C as a public health concern by 2028 remains a priority. NSW Health and partners continued to focus on increasing access to testing and curative treatment for vulnerable populations.

Keeping people healthy during natural disasters

Following the summer bushfires of 2019-20, several inquiries were initiated to better plan, prepare for and respond to bushfires in the future. The Environmental Health Branch (within Health Protection NSW) coordinated the NSW Government response to the report of the Legislative Council, *Health Impacts of Exposure to Poor Levels of Air Quality Resulting from Bushfires and Drought*. The 10 recommendations included developing nationally consistent air quality reporting, and reviewing the effectiveness of the air quality and health information provided to the public.

NSW Health made significant contributions to the development of nationally consistent public health messaging for different levels of air pollution (including bushfire smoke). The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee has endorsed PM2.5 and PM10 air quality categories and associated health messages.

NSW Health is also supporting the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment in review of the effectiveness of air quality and health information provided to the public. The findings of the review will guide decisions about an air smart public education campaign.

The Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements was established on 20 February 2020 in response to the extreme bushfire season of 2019-20. The Commission examined the coordination, preparedness for, response to and recovery from disasters as well as improving resilience and adapting to changing climatic conditions and mitigating the impact of natural disasters.

The State Preparedness and Response Branch coordinated the NSW Health contribution to Notice to Give Information received by the State of NSW that was submitted to the Commission on 25 June 2020. NSW Health provided input into relevant areas related to air quality information, the integration of primary care into disaster management, Australian Medical Assistance Teams capabilities and the mental health impacts of natural disasters.

The Mental Health Branch worked closely with Resilience NSW in its evaluation of the Bushfire Recovery Program. It was represented on the Steering Committee for the National Disaster Framework.

The framework advanced the Royal Commission Recommendation 15.3, which sought revised cross-jurisdictional arrangements to support localised planning for response and recovery. The Mental Health Branch will support Commonwealth-led actions to progress implementation of the framework and actions in response to the Royal Commission.

In March 2021, NSW experienced severe weather that generated heavy rain and flooding impacting the North Coast, Hunter, Nepean and Hawkesbury areas. NSW Health provided additional healthcare to support communities that were isolated, or at risk of flooding, as part of the state's emergency response.

NSW Health worked with emergency services and other government agencies to ensure residents were safe and able to access required health services. Arrangements were put in place for vulnerable patients affected by floodwaters. A specialist Medical Assistance Team was deployed to North Richmond for five days to provide emergency care for the communities isolated by several major road closures.

NSW Health staff including nurses, mental health support staff, pharmacists and public health staff were deployed to support the community in evacuation centres that were established in the Mid North Coast and Upper Hunter regions. NSW Health also supported an evacuation centre at Castle Hill established for residents evacuated from the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley area.

The NSW Government committed \$36.4 million over four years for mental health Response and Recovery Specialists across regional and rural areas in 2021. This included farmgate counsellors and drought peer support workers, and 30 Disaster Recovery Clinicians who worked closely with primary health networks, community and welfare agencies and mental health services. These roles have been broadened to reflect the range of issues impacting disaster-affected areas in 2020-21, including bushfires, floods and the mice plague.

Delivering culturally safe and tailored health services

NSW Health continued to work closely with the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council to progress actions that support the Aboriginal Community Controlled sector to deliver social and emotional wellbeing programs. NSW Health provided \$2 million to Aboriginal Community Controlled Services to deliver culturally responsive social and emotional Aboriginal wellbeing initiatives, as part of the extension of the Emergency Drought Relief Mental Health Package.

The Centre for Aboriginal Health held 53 capacity-building events across NSW Health to support completion of Aboriginal Health Impact Statements. The Impact Statements ensure that the specific needs of Aboriginal people are fully considered when developing new policy, program and strategic initiatives. During the year a total of 125 Impact Statements were completed and approved across NSW Health.

The Centre also developed and delivered the Aboriginal Health Progress Report for all local health districts and specialty health networks, including the annual Aboriginal Health Dashboards. These continued to report on a range of outcome indicators and progress against implementing the Aboriginal Health Plan 2013-2023.

Meanwhile, the Agency for Clinical Innovation's Aboriginal Health Working Group co-designed engagement and implementation requirements for the collection of culturally appropriate measures for Patient Reported Outcome Measures.

Supporting pregnancy and the first 2000 days

To care for pregnant women and provide their babies with the best possible start in life, NSW Health partnered with other NSW Government agencies to launch Brighter Beginnings: the first 2000 days of life, a whole-of-government initiative, in October 2020.

NSW Health also finalised recruitment into the Focus on New Fathers program in four local health districts from August 2020 to 30 June 2021, with 3260 enrolments. The pilot will continue until the end of 2021, testing psychosocial screening to fathers in the perinatal period with pathways to provide support and care.

Significant improvements were made to the Get Healthy in Pregnancy Service with the development of an e-Referral option from eMaternity software. This resulted in an increase of referrals, with a total of 14,153 in 2020-21.

SAFE START, a policy for pregnant women and families with babies up to two years old, helps identify families with mental health and social difficulties. It was reviewed this year to ensure its currency with research, national clinical guidelines and optimal statewide implementation.

The Henry Review, an independent review into children's health services in NSW, made 77 recommendations relating to all health services and clinicians delivering care for children, young people and families. Implementation of many recommendations has already commenced. This includes the establishment of a new statewide committee that will provide system leadership and advice to strengthen NSW health services to children, young people and their families.

The Agency for Clinical Innovation established the Maternity and Neonatal Network to provide direction, governance and leadership for existing statewide clinician forums and groups. At 30 June 2021, the Network had 342 members. A collaborative partnership was formed within NSW Health to lead the neonatal components of the response to the Paediatric and Neonatal Intensive Care work plan and recommendations of the Henry Review.

Keeping People Healthy Award winner

An extraordinary response to the global COVID-19 pandemic

NSW Health Pathology

NSW Health Pathology's pandemic breakthrough on 22 January 2020 was made by a team of experts at the Institute of Clinical Pathology and Medical Research Westmead, who rapidly established highly specialised COVID-19 testing capabilities. Working in the state-of-the-art biosecurity P4 laboratory, elite researchers were able to successfully grow the live virus from NSW patients – a much-needed step in understanding and containing the deadly virus. Knowing COVID-19 does not discriminate by age, location or background, NSW Health Pathology leveraged its extensive statewide network and local clinical partnerships to expand access to reliable testing across the state. By mid-August 2020, NSW Health Pathology experts had conducted more than 1.2 million COVID-19 tests – an unprecedented effort that placed NSW among the highest testing rates per capita in the world and undoubtedly helped save lives. NSW Health Pathology won the 2020 Keeping People Healthy Award for their achievement.



NSW Health Pathology, led by Professor Dominic Dwyer, quickly established and increased COVID-19 testing capabilities across the state to respond to COVID-19 with agility this year.

Priority 2

Provide world-class clinical care where patient safety is first

NSW Health is placing patient experience and value based health at the heart of everything we do – part of enhancing a world-class healthcare system where every individual matters, every day.

In 2020-21, NSW Health organisations collaborated to:

- review and implement protocols and policies that put patient and staff safety first
- make sure the right systems are in place so we can drive value based healthcare for all patients, in every part of NSW
- embed the principle of human experience as central to clinical treatment and patient care
- ensure all patients have timely and equitable access to healthcare whatever their need, geographic location or age.

Staff in local health districts and networks put these strategies into action to deliver excellent care across NSW.

Our priorities

- 2.1 Continue to deliver high-quality and safe patient care**
- 2.2 Continue to embed value based healthcare to deliver the right care in the right setting**
- 2.3 Elevate the human experience by actively partnering with patients, families and caregivers**
- 2.4 Provide timely and equitable access to appropriate care**
- 2.5 Use data and analytics to drive reform and innovation and to support value based healthcare**

Key achievements

- Established the Maternity and Neonatal Safety Program to improve safety for mothers and babies in NSW.
- Continued to review, update and implement protocols and procedures to keep staff and patients safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. eHealth NSW, in partnership with the Clinical Excellence Commission, completed the rollout of the new incident management system *ims+* to all NSW Health organisations.
- Embedded value based healthcare in all agencies, and through four integrated programs, aimed at securing better health outcomes for our patients and better value across the health system.
- Launched *Elevating the Human Experience: Our guide to action for patient, family, carer, volunteer and caregiver experiences* in April 2021 to improve the experience of patients, families and carers in the health system.
- Continued enhancement of local health district board reports tailored to the information needs of local health districts and speciality health network board members.

Delivering high-quality and safe patient care

Improving safety for mothers and babies

The Maternity and Neonatal Safety Program was established in 2020-21 to address systematic safety and quality issues for mothers and babies in NSW.

The program priorities include the delivery of perinatal safety education, reducing stillbirth by supporting teams to reliably implement the Safer Baby Bundle, and standardising the recognition and management of babies with neonatal encephalopathy.

In October 2020, the Neonatal, Small Baby and Paediatric Transport Governance Committee was convened to provide oversight and direction of clinical and corporate governance for neonatal, small baby and paediatric transport in NSW, particularly the possible risk to patient safety.

Responding to incidents

ims+

eHealth NSW, in partnership with the Clinical Excellence Commission, completed the rollout of the new incident management system, ims+, to all NSW Health organisations. ims+ tracks clinical and work health and safety incidents and contributes to patient and workplace safety.

COVID-19 response plans

In 2020-21, HealthShare NSW developed and implemented COVID-19 response plans across the organisation. These plans included unique partnering arrangements with the private sector to ensure the responsiveness and continuity of our critical services in times of increased service levels because of COVID-19.

Protecting patients and paramedics

NSW Ambulance developed a Pandemic Management Protocol to ensure the safety of both paramedics and patients, as well as clinical quality. NSW Ambulance also rolled out new procedures and education to improve safety for clinicians undertaking high-risk aerosol procedures for critically ill patients. The procedures outlined a range of clinical safety technology with a higher specification level than previous intensive care paramedic equipment.

Embedding value based healthcare

Implementing value based care

In 2020-21, NSW Health embedded value based care across the health system. Over the 12 months this was underpinned through four statewide programs:

- Leading Better Value Care
- Integrated Care
- Commissioning for Better Value
- Collaborative Commissioning.

In 2020-21, four new working groups were established to support value based healthcare measurement and evaluation; articulate research priorities; set the approach for value based funding and purchasing; and align communication approaches with other reform areas.

Other milestones in implementing value based care in 2020-21 included:

- hosting the first virtual statewide Value Based Healthcare Forum in November 2020, which attracted more than 500 delegates from almost 100 organisations
- publishing the article *Value based healthcare in NSW: continuing the patient-centred journey* by NSW Health Secretary Ms Elizabeth Koff in *The Health Advocate*

- hosting the inaugural Australian Value-Based Health Care Conference awards in May 2021, which recognised two local NSW Health services – Concord Repatriation General Hospital's Osteoarthritis Chronic Care program and Sydney Local Health District's Bronchiolitis program
- publishing the Commissioning for Better Value Strategy 2021-24, which supports better patient care and experiences by shifting the focus from outputs to outcomes
- distributing the Value Based Healthcare Update e-newsletter to stakeholders across Australia with relevant, engaging digital content, tools and resources
- progressing the Statewide Diabetes Initiative in collaboration with primary health networks and other service providers. The initiative aimed to support a more coordinated approach to diabetes management to keep people well and out of hospital.

NSW also provided significant input into national and cross-jurisdictional work on paying for value and outcomes under the 2020-25 Addendum to the National Health Reform Agreement.

Elevating the Human Experience, an action plan

NSW Health is committed to improving the patient experience and making it an empowering one for everybody involved, including family and carers.

Elevating the Human Experience: Our guide to action for patient, family, carer, volunteer and caregiver experiences was launched in April 2021. This first statewide guide to action builds on existing work to outline a coordinated approach and create a truly human-centred health system.

To develop the action plan, more than 500 consumers and staff worked to identify and prioritise initiatives that will improve the experience of patients and families.

Throughout 2020-21, *Elevating the Human Experience* was promoted through a dedicated public website that launched during Patient Experience Week, as well as monthly newsletters, seminars and key events such as the Gathering of Kindness.

To support *Elevating the Human Experience*, eHealth NSW developed a new patient engagement platform strategy that outlines what technology is needed to enhance the experience of patients, carers and families in the health system. It identified access to information, patient feedback and equity as key areas for digital enablement and support.

Project CHEF, Bowral and District Hospital

Food is critical to patient health and for their experience in hospital. In May 2021, the Project CHEF (Co-Designing Healthy and Enjoyable Food) pilot launched at Bowral and District Hospital.

Project CHEF is a more patient-centred model of providing food services in NSW public hospitals. It focuses on flexible mealtimes and allowing patients to eat when they are hungry rather than at set mealtimes, by submitting orders through their mobile device to a dedicated call centre. Patient experience is a key measure of success for the pilot and a consumer group of former patients and community members was actively involved in its design and implementation.

Improving the emergency department experience

More than 30,000 emergency department patients and families provided real-time feedback about their experiences of care, which has led to changes throughout the year.

In 2020-21, the Emergency Department Patient Experience Program was extended, with funding for 100 new Patient Experience Officer positions across 52 NSW public hospital emergency departments. The new positions were in response to feedback from patients and carers about waiting times when seeking emergency care.

Technology initiative, GoShare, has allowed hospital staff to share information with patients and families in more than 20 languages, including the Charter of Health Care Rights.

The Centre for Aboriginal Health

The Centre for Aboriginal Health and the Bureau of Health Information reviewed patient experience survey data to publish two Snapshot reports: *Adults admitted to hospital: Results from the 2019 patient survey*; and *Maternity care: Results from the 2019 survey*. Of the almost 3500 Aboriginal people who responded to the Adult Admitted Patient Survey, around eight in 10 said the nurses (81 per cent) and doctors (80 per cent) were 'always' kind and caring.

The Centre worked with local health districts to build the cultural safety of the health system, including approaches identified in *Elevating the Human Experience*. Tools include the NSW Health Services Aboriginal Cultural Engagement Self-Assessment Tool, which identifies ways of strengthening cultural engagement between NSW Health organisation staff and their Aboriginal stakeholders.

Getting access to care right for everyone

Reducing preventable visits to hospital

In April 2021, Integrated Care launched the statewide initiative Planned Care for Better Health (PCBH), which supports the Premier's Priority for reducing preventable visits to NSW hospitals by five per cent by 2023.

The PCBH program identifies patients who are vulnerable and at risk with complex health and social needs, and provides person-centred coordinated care in the community. The Risk of Hospitalisation algorithm supports staff to identify patients who will benefit from integrated care interventions. The algorithm considers an extensive list of demographic and socioeconomic factors, including a patient's hospital utilisation and medical history. In partnership with the patient and their carer, the comprehensive health psychosocial assessment supports a shared approach to improving health and wellbeing goals.

The implementation of the algorithm, telehealth, virtual care and remote monitoring are key to enabling the delivery of care in the community and reducing preventable hospitalisation.

Most importantly, through the PCBH program and other integrated care initiatives, patients receive appropriate care in the right setting for them. As a result of the program, NSW Health achieved a saving of 200,000 bed days in the first half of 2021.

To further reduce preventable visits to hospital, Integrated Care in partnership with Health Services will implement a statewide initiative targeting patients who frequently present to emergency departments over a 12-month period. Early modelling indicates that identifying and supporting these patients to access primary and community services can lead to substantial reductions in emergency department visits and improve the experience patients have of the health system.

Treating NSW children safely – from home

The Sydney Children's Hospitals Network continued to help patients receive care closer to home with the help of local health teams through virtualKIDS, Australia's first paediatric-specific virtual care service.

The 24/7 nursing-led service provided timely and equitable access to care, through functions such as remote monitoring, a patient and family hotline, collaborative virtual ward rounds and coordinating specialty advice facilitation.

In 2020-21, COVID-19 reduced the availability of clinic space and nursing staff to complete food allergen challenges and made parents understandably reluctant to attend clinic appointments with their children.

In response, NSW Health paediatric allergy services established new outreach services in regional NSW and trialled Saturday clinics for low-risk food allergen challenges. These changes were positively received by NSW parents.

From Good to Great in emergency departments

The collaborative Good to Great program has brought together various parts of NSW Health to deliver on the Premier's Priority of improving service levels in hospitals.

Good to Great has empowered leadership teams in emergency departments to focus on leadership capability, building positive workplace culture and nurturing collaborative partnerships to improve patient, carer and staff experience and the performance of emergency departments.

In 2020-21, the program started in 11 emergency departments at Coffs Harbour, Belmont, Armidale, Queanbeyan, Dubbo, Nepean, St George, Sutherland, Sydney/Sydney Eye, Sydney Children's and Ryde hospitals.

EPIC

New Emergency Protocols Initiating Care (EPIC) protocols were developed to streamline care so that patients are treated on time in emergency departments.

These protocols have focused on the first hour of emergency care when the safety and experience of patients is critical. The program also recognised the skills and qualifications of nursing staff in our emergency departments. EPIC is currently being piloted in Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District.

Getting things done in 2020-21

Over the reporting period, measures across NSW to ensure patients and communities receive access to appropriate care included:

- rolling out the NSW Telestroke Service at 11 regional and rural hospitals across NSW, with over 900 patients receiving consultations since March 2020
- publishing *The NSW Health Genomics Strategy Implementation Plan 2021-25* to enhance disease management and prevention in NSW
- expanding the NSW Health Pathology exome sequencing service to improve access to genomic testing within NSW Health. Exome sequencing is a technique for sequencing all the known protein-coding regions of DNA in a genome (known as the exome). The service saw 5508 exome referrals, exceeding initial modelling by 120 per cent
- establishing the first national ocular gene therapy centre at the Children's Hospital at Westmead, which continues to be a global leader in the gene-based treatment of spinal muscular atrophy.

NSW Health is currently on track to deliver 10,000 additional cataract surgeries by 2023, with 32,424 cataract surgeries completed across NSW metropolitan, rural and regional public hospitals in 2020-21 – more than 2000 above target for the year.

Increasing elective surgery capacity

In July 2020, the NSW Health Elective Surgery Roundtable brought together experts from the public and private sectors to rethink the way surgery is organised and better deliver the outcomes that matter most to patients waiting for elective surgery.

The NSW Elective Surgery Action Plan was developed in 2020-21 as an outcome of the Roundtable. The plan has delivered more elective surgery capacity with a statewide guideline for transferring care to private providers; a review of the Surgical Activity During Christmas/New Year policy; and a new electronic surgery referral system.

Using data and analytics to drive reform and innovation

HOPE for patients and clinicians

In 2020-21, the Agency for Clinical Innovation led the implementation of patient reported measures to improve the experience of patients and support their shared treatment. Patient reported measures gave patients the opportunity to provide direct and timely feedback about their experiences in the health system and how it impacted their general wellbeing and ability to do the things that mattered to them.

A new IT platform was launched to support the real-time collection and use of patient reported measures. The system, known as Health Outcomes and Patient Experience (HOPE), was co-designed with consumers, clinicians and managers. It allowed patients or their carers to log in using a personal computer, smartphone or tablet to provide feedback and access information uploaded by their healthcare provider through dashboards and decision support tools.

This information sharing has helped clinicians and patients share decision making about care, treatment and health interventions. Collecting data also allowed clinicians to measure progress and improvement in patients' health, and provides the health system with insights into patient needs to drive future improvements.

HOPE has been rolled out in more than 100 locations, 13 local health districts and one general practice.

ROVE

The Register of Outcomes, Value and Experience (ROVE) is a virtual registry that links Leading Better Value Care administrative, clinical and patient reported measures data in a single place.

Launched in 2020-21, ROVE allowed staff to review key monitoring and evaluation measures and benchmark local progress against the state and other districts. Over 70,000 patient experience surveys have been linked into ROVE. This allows a multidimensional view of patient experience and facilitates the use of data to action service improvement at local and system levels.

Excellence in Aboriginal Healthcare Award winner

Defining the Gap: Planning and Reporting Framework

Hunter New England Local Health District

Hunter New England Local Health District's Aboriginal Health Unit developed a comprehensive Closing the Gap Framework, which incorporates key elements of planning, reporting, monitoring and accountability to improve service design, delivery and outcomes for Aboriginal consumers. The communication mechanisms of the Closing the Gap Framework provide transparency, visibility and accountability for the local health district regarding health outcomes for Aboriginal consumers. The Aboriginal Health Unit uses this tool to work collaboratively with Hunter New England services to increase their understanding, capacity and responsiveness to Aboriginal health needs. For their work, Hunter New England Local Health District won the 2020 Excellence in Aboriginal Healthcare Award.



Stacey Simpson, left, and Aimee Smith from Hunter New England Local Health District helped to develop this tool as part of the Closing the Gap Framework.

Priority 3

Integrate systems to deliver truly connected care

Integrated care connects people with the right services and connects information across the health system to make sure people get the care they need when they need it.

By connecting health networks and services across the system in 2020-21, we provided high-quality healthcare for people at risk of suicide and the most vulnerable people in our community, ensuring they were treated safely and with dignity.

Our priorities

- 3.1 Drive health system integration and connectivity
- 3.2 Progress Towards Zero Suicides initiatives across NSW
- 3.3 Achieve mental health reforms across the system
- 3.4 Strengthen the network of services for frailty, ageing and end of life care
- 3.5 Support vulnerable people and people with disability within the health sector and between agencies

Key achievements

- Improvements for vulnerable and at-risk patients across seven integrated care initiatives, including a 24 per cent reduction in unplanned admissions from residential aged care.
- The launch of seven SafeHavens and 12 Suicide Prevention Outreach teams to help reduce suicide rates in NSW by 20 per cent by 2023.
- There was \$36.4 million over four years for mental health Response and Recovery Specialists to support mental health in regional and rural communities.

- An extra 20 nurses and 35 allied health professionals, and refurbishment of 34 palliative care facilities to support a dignified end of life for people in NSW.
- The launch of two Statewide Intellectual Disability Mental Health Hubs, to provide specialist support for people with intellectual disability and training for more than 1500 health and disability professionals.

A more connected health system

Seven evidence-based integrated care initiatives focused on improving outcomes for vulnerable and at-risk populations and connecting them with services and support. Comparisons with control groups have already demonstrated results.

Emergency Department to Community: Each patient showed an average reduction of 10 presentations to emergency departments, over 12 months.

Residential Aged Care: Reduced bed days from unplanned admissions by 24 per cent, with an average annual reduction in ambulance callouts of 21 per cent.

Vulnerable Families: By providing community support to parents or carers with complex health and social needs, and their children, this program saw an average reduction of 0.4 emergency department admissions per patient compared with the control group.

Paediatric Network: On average, travel was reduced by 4620 km for each patient, and there were on average 12 fewer missed days of school for the patient, and six fewer missed workdays for the carer.

Specialist Outreach to Primary Care: Improving the capacity and capability of general practitioners to provide specialist assessment and care in non-hospital settings led to a 44 per cent reduction in attendance to emergency departments for the enrolled patients. All patients reported improved engagement and GP integration.

Secondary Triage: Between June 2020 and June 2021, NSW Ambulance received 106,254 calls from residential aged care facilities; 47,833 were classified as low acuity calls (45 per cent). Of these, 12 per cent (5885) were managed by the Secondary Triage process with 57 per cent (3343) of residents receiving their care in residence, with no transfer to hospital required.

Planned Care for Better Health (PCBH): Improves care quality and health literacy, and can lead to a reduction in unplanned hospital admissions. PCBH and other key integrated care initiatives achieved a saving of 200,000 bed days in the first half of 2021.

Collaborative Commissioning

Collaborative Commissioning is a whole-of-system approach that supports value based care in the community by setting up working relationships between health organisations, stakeholders and service providers across the entire range of care for a patient.

The central platform of Collaborative Commissioning has been the establishment of regionally based partnerships between primary health networks, local health districts and other affiliated health organisations. These partnerships led change at the local level by focusing healthcare around the priority health needs of their local population, using local resources.

Six Collaborative Commissioning partnerships were established to focus on:

- cardiology in the community
- value based urgent care
- urgent care for frail and older persons
- type 2 diabetes
- obesity and diabetes
- chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and congestive heart failure.

Linking GP data

In NSW, 450 GP practices – almost one in five GP practices – participated in the data linkage project Lumos. The linked datasets brought together primary care clinical information with hospital data to support decision making across value based healthcare programs.

Connecting better with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services

In 2020-21, the Centre for Aboriginal Health focused on supporting Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) to manage COVID-19. This included supporting ACCHS:

- with clinical education in partnership with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW
- with access to social and emotional wellbeing support and consumables, as well as advice around infection control, border closures and exemptions.

Rules were introduced in all Service Agreements to ensure all local health districts and specialty health networks had a partnership agreement with their local ACCHS. The Agreements are subject to periodic review and require high-level representation within the local health district.

Performance frameworks and clinical networks were established with local health districts and specialty health networks to enable integrated planning and service delivery. Some of these clinical networks have established an Aboriginal health program of work, including the Aboriginal Chronic Conditions Network and the Cardiac Network.

The Centre for Aboriginal Health continued to work on seed projects in areas of particular importance, including mental health, cancer and incorporated culture into the delivery of antenatal care services for women giving birth off country.

Frailty taskforce

The Agency for Clinical Innovation established the NSW Frailty Taskforce and a Community of Practice with over 500 members, encouraging a more integrated approach to frailty, ageing well and end of life care.

Towards Zero Suicides

Towards Zero Suicides aims to reduce the suicide rate in NSW by 20 per cent by 2023. In 2020-21 the initiative progressed, with:

- seven Safe Havens providing an alternative to presenting to emergency, and 12 Suicide Prevention Outreach Teams launched
- the availability of aftercare in nine primary health networks
- suicide prevention rural counsellors recruited in eight local health districts
- the development of suicide care pathways to improve care and prevent suicide in 15 local health districts and Justice Health
- the completion of suicide prevention training by 3769 community members, 1158 Service NSW staff and 475 NSW Health staff
- commissioning of statewide packages for priority populations
- progression of 12 Aboriginal suicide prevention projects
- commencement of three peer-led programs
- four new Community Wellbeing Collaboratives that organise local community response to suicide becoming operational
- Youth Aftercare services for children and young people at risk of suicide operational in three local health districts
- the launch of the NSW Suicide Monitoring System, which provides monthly reports on the estimated number of suspected and confirmed suicides in NSW
- the launch of support services for people who are bereaved and affected by suicide.

Achieving mental health reform

Mental health is a focus and priority across the NSW health system. Achievements in mental health reform in 2020-21 included:

- the *Aboriginal Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-25*, which was published in December 2020. NSW Health also continues to support local health districts and specialty health networks to develop their own implementation plans
- NSW Health progressing work on the NSW Peer Workforce Framework in 2020-21, including establishment of an Expert Reference Group and commencement of procurement to support a comprehensive consultation and engagement process. It is anticipated consultation will continue into early 2022, with the framework expected to launch in 2022
- the *NSW Service Plan for People with Eating Disorders (2021-2025)*, published on the NSW Health website. Embedding the treatment of eating disorders services as core business in districts and networks will ensure people can access care close to their home, families and local support networks
- *The Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act 2020*, which commenced in March 2021, replacing the Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act 1990. The changes included updated language, and changes to make the forensic mental health system more efficient, transparent and clear. The changes were communicated through new information resources for the health sector and community, including an information session for NSW Health staff
- The Family Focused Recovery Framework 2020-2025, which was launched in October 2020, focusing on the wellbeing of children of parents with mental illness, and parents with mental illness. Grants were provided to specialty health networks and local health districts to support implementation of the new framework. A baseline evaluation has been conducted to monitor the ongoing effectiveness of the framework.

A five-year mental health reform program

In June 2021, NSW Health submitted an initial report against 17 of the 24 actions identified in *Living Well in Focus 2020-2024: A strategic plan for community recovery, wellbeing and mental health in NSW (LWiF)* by the Mental Health Commission of NSW.

NSW Health has planned to provide the next, mid-term progress report on the implementation of LWiF in mid-2023.

Enhancing rural counselling support

In 2021, the NSW Government committed \$21.15 million for a five-year extension of the Rural Adversity Mental Health Program.

Seclusion and restraint prevention

As part of the NSW Mental Health Patient Safety Program, 50 Improvement Coaches were trained to work with mental health services to identify improvement priorities and to lead improvement initiatives against these priorities.

The Clinical Excellence Commission has worked with three local health districts on safety and quality projects to reduce restrictive practices.

In June 2021, the Mental Health Branch completed a series of statewide training webinars presented by international experts on the Six Core Strategies[©] to reduce risk, prevent and work to eliminate the use of seclusion and restraint. These included follow-up coaching sessions for 20 clinical leaders and managers of acute mental health facilities.

Reducing unplanned mental health admissions for Aboriginal people

NSW Health is actively building a more inclusive organisational culture across the health system to ensure the cultural safety of Aboriginal people is prioritised. An example of this is the Aboriginal Health Dashboard Toolkit, which included advice on building cultural competency, improving identification, establishing cultural safety of environments and effective communication.

Quarterly performance meetings across 2020-21 have provided the opportunity to put this advice into practice through monitoring and implementation of initiatives to reduce the gap in care between Indigenous and non-Indigenous mental health consumers in areas such as readmission to hospital and post-discharge care in the community.

Supporting Royal Commissions into aged care and disability

During 2020-21, NSW Health continued to lead the NSW Government input to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. This included responding to the Royal Commission's requests for information, attendance at the special hearing on the impact of COVID-19 in aged care held in August 2020 and providing a response to the Royal Commission's draft recommendations.

NSW Health also responded to requests from the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. NSW Health representatives appeared as witnesses at three public hearings focusing on:

- the provision of healthcare or services for people with cognitive disability
- education and training of health professionals in relation to people with cognitive disability.

Strengthening services for frailty, ageing and end of life care

Safety in residential aged care

NSW Health worked with the Australian Government Department of Health and the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission to develop and update the *Protocol to support joint management of a COVID-19 outbreak in one or more residential aged care facility (RACF) in NSW*.

The joint protocol is one of a suite of documents that will help the Australian Government, NSW Government and aged care approved providers work together to prevent, prepare for and respond to an outbreak of COVID-19 in a Commonwealth-funded registered aged care facility in NSW.

The protocol aims to optimise care for all residents in impacted nursing homes, regardless of their COVID-19 status, and to contain and control the outbreak to bring it to an end as quickly and safely as possible.

NSW Health residential aged care services implemented a new Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS), a new set of Commonwealth reporting obligations for residential aged care providers commencing 1 April 2021. The SIRS is focused on the safety, health, wellbeing and quality of life of aged care consumers.

Supporting independence and wellbeing for older people

In line with the Australian Government's aged care reform agenda, NSW Health is committed to ensuring wellness and reablement (short-term or time-limited support) practices are implemented as a core part of all NSW Health aged care services. The approach ensures that older people in NSW live as active, purposeful, healthy and independent lives as they can and, where possible, remain living in their own homes.

To assist in the focus on client independence and autonomy, NSW Health published the *Wellness and Reablement in Aged Care Guideline* in January 2021.

The guideline aims to support and promote a consistent understanding of wellness and reablement, and its practical implementation and measurement across aged care services provided by NSW Health. It applied to all aged care services provided by NSW Health: Transitional Aged Care, the Commonwealth Home Support Program, the Aged Care Assessment Program and the Regional Assessment Service.

Improving palliative care in NSW

Improvements and enhancements to palliative care continued across NSW in 2020-21. An extra 20 nurses and 35 allied health professionals joined the specialist palliative care workforce to provide greater choices for people at the end of life and to ensure people can be cared for at home if they choose.

In regional and rural NSW, palliative care services were supported to use telehealth so that people can access specialist palliative care wherever they live.

Across NSW, 34 refurbishment projects of palliative care facilities were completed to create more home-like environments for patients, families and carers when patients are cared for in hospital settings at the end of life.

A further 34 refurbishment projects will be completed over the next two years. Following a further funding boost in the 2020-21 Budget, an extra 5000 End of Life home support packages are now available for people in NSW.

NSW Health received \$10 million over five years from the Australian Government to enhance palliative care for people in residential aged care facilities.

All districts have completed planning and are now implementing a variety of approaches, including additional nurses to provide in-reach palliative care, education and training to build skills of staff, shared assessment and care planning, as well virtual care.

Healthcare for vulnerable people

Intellectual Disability Health Service

The Intellectual Disability Health Service (IDHS) has provided capacity-building for primary healthcare and NSW Health staff and improved access to quality mainstream health services for people with intellectual disability and complex needs. An evaluation of the program is underway to assess program outcomes and inform future implementation.

Two new intellectual disability mental health hubs

An investment of \$4.4 million over four years has funded two Statewide Intellectual Disability Mental Health Hubs. These Statewide Intellectual Disability Mental Health Hubs were launched by the Minister for Mental Health and the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability in February 2021.

More than 100 people with intellectual disability and co-occurring mental health problems have received a clinical consultation or assessment. The Hubs have also provided training for more than 1500 health and disability professionals.

Both the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network Mental Health Intellectual Disability Hub and the Statewide Intellectual Disability Mental Health Outreach Service at Sydney Local Health District have received referrals from regional and metropolitan services, with care being provided face-to-face and through telehealth.

COVID-19 support for people with disability

Communities of Practice were established across key clinical specialities to support the response to COVID-19. The Disability Community of Practice has provided a forum to share ideas, strategies, local solutions and concerns with respect to pandemic preparedness for people with disability. The group has more than 150 members including people with disability, peak non-government organisations, clinicians, program managers and other key stakeholders.

Supports provided to people with disability and participants of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) during the pandemic included:

- the introduction of NDIS Hospital Liaison Officers in local health districts
- implementation of new escalation pathways and an accommodation register to assist with safe patient discharge from hospitals
- provision of disability-related public health messaging distributed via easy-read resources, webinars, websites, videos and virtual NDIS service provider forums.

LGBTQI health

In 2020-21, NSW Health opened the first of two new transgender health service hubs, following a gender services review. Maple Leaf House, in Newcastle, provides coordinated, multidisciplinary health services for trans and gender diverse children, adolescents and young people.

From 2021-22 onwards, \$3.4 million a year has been committed to gender services including the development of a joint service across Sydney Children's Hospitals Network in partnership with a Sydney-based local health district and statewide coordination including further development of the NSW Model of Care.

In June 2021, the NSW Government committed \$3 million to ACON towards the establishment of an LGBTQ health centre.

Once established by ACON, the health centre will aim to improve access for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and other sexuality and gender diverse people to primary and community-based healthcare.

An integrated approach to trauma

The Integrated Prevention and Response to Violence, Abuse and Neglect (IPARVAN) Framework is being implemented to strengthen NSW Health's response to violence, abuse and neglect, including children and young people with problematic or harmful sexual behaviour. An implementation plan for phase 2 is under development focusing on integrating NSW Health's Violence, Abuse and Neglect services with the broader health system and interagency partners as well as continuing the phase 1 focus on integrating Violence, Abuse and Neglect services themselves.

The Agency for Clinical Innovation partnered with NSW Health's Education Centre Against Violence to deliver trauma-informed care training for clinicians. Participants learned about the application of trauma and violence-informed approaches to their work, with a particular focus on First Nations people of Australia accessing healthcare systems.

The domestic violence routine screening pilot commenced in six emergency departments with the support of eHealth NSW's clinical system solutions for flagging and screening eligible patients, and training for health staff delivered by NSW Health's Education Centre Against Violence. An evaluation of the pilot is underway, to be completed in mid-2022.

Programs were implemented as part of the NSW Government response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, including:

- a pilot by South Eastern Sydney and Mid North Coast local health districts to improve outcomes for survivors through specialist trauma counselling and treatment provided by NSW Health's sexual assault, mental health, alcohol and other drug and Aboriginal health services, with community support services.

An action research evaluation and costing study will provide evidence to inform statewide rollout of the new integrated service model from 2022-2023

- a Sexual Assault and New Street Services Access Strategy for People with Disability, developed by NSW Health in partnership with the NSW Health Education Centre Against Violence. The strategy sets out a framework to improve access for people with disability to NSW Health specialist Sexual Assault Services and New Street services for children and young people who have engaged in problematic or harmful sexualised behaviours, including support for their families and carers, by enhancing specialist therapeutic practice and building workforce capacity for disability inclusion. A Co-design Advisory Committee made up of people with lived experience has been established to guide implementation of the strategy.

On behalf of the NSW Government, NSW Health is developing a NSW Framework for Preventing and Responding to Problematic and Harmful Sexual Behaviours. A cross-government governance structure has been established to lead the development of the framework and supporting projects. The framework will be based on a public health model and is being developed through a co-design approach. A review of the current policy and legislation approach in NSW, a survey of the workforce across the sector and a quantitative and qualitative research project with children and young people who have displayed problematic and harmful sexual behaviours and their parents and carers have been completed. Drawing on this evidence will ensure that the framework responds to the current context in NSW and experience of children and families. An implementation plan for the framework is also under development and will outline actions and activities that will be prioritised under the framework's strategic directions, including a strong focus on primary and secondary prevention initiatives and resources.

In addition, an Integrated Trauma-Informed Care Framework for vulnerable children, young people and families was being developed, aiming to improve the healthcare experiences of vulnerable children and young people and their families and carers, as well as the experiences of healthcare providers.

The Safe and Supported at Home (SASH) Program launched in 2018 supported patients with disabilities to manage at home, particularly those who have been unsuccessful with applying to the NDIS. In 2020-21, there were 7400 packages delivered to support people with disability to remain in their own home.

Health Research and Innovation Award winner

A Childhood Cancer National Precision Medicine Program

The Sydney Children's Hospitals Network

This program aimed to develop a comprehensive testing platform to provide in-depth tumour profiling to identify personalised treatment plans for children with high-risk cancers. The Zero Childhood Cancer platform includes rapid genome sequencing and drug testing to analyse patient results to identify novel therapies. Results included:

- more than 350 children with high-risk cancers being enrolled in the program
- reportable molecular aberrations being identified in more than 90 per cent of cases leading to a change of diagnosis in five per cent of patients, while 70 per cent received a new treatment recommendation
- a previously unknown germline mutation being identified in 16 per cent of cases
- 25 per cent of patients receiving a new treatment, with the majority showing clinical benefit
- 40 per cent of patients experiencing a cessation of tumour growth, and 30 per cent having their tumours shrink – in some cases with complete disease resolution.

The Sydney Children's Hospitals Network won the 2020 Health Research and Innovation Award for this program.



The Sydney Children's Hospitals Network developed a platform to personalise treatment for children with high-risk cancers.

Priority 4

Develop and support our people, culture and governance

Amid challenging circumstances and a rapidly changing landscape, our staff remained our most important asset, enabling us to serve and deliver quality healthcare for the people of NSW. In hospitals and health services, our frontline staff continued to ensure the acute and chronic care, and physical and mental wellbeing of the citizens of NSW. Others provided support, management and development of our critical workforce.

Workplace health, safety and wellbeing remained a priority. The commitment and dedication of our people has enabled NSW Health to maintain the highest standards of care while ably responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. We grew our workforce and deployed staff where they were most needed. We continued to support and upskill our staff, offering dedicated wellbeing services and training to empower them in an increasingly digital healthcare environment.

Our ongoing focus on leadership development, listening to feedback, and improving practices through technology meant we continued to enhance our support for staff. In addition, we celebrated the strength and diversity of our workforce, their resilience and CORE values of collaboration, openness, respect and empowerment.

Our priorities

- 4.1 Achieve a 'Fit for Purpose' workforce for now and the future
- 4.2 Improve diversity in all levels of the system
- 4.3 Strengthen the culture within Health organisations to reflect our CORE values more consistently
- 4.4 Develop effective health professional managers and leaders
- 4.5 Improve health, safety and wellbeing at work
- 4.6 Deliver effective regulation, governance and accountability

Key achievements

- More than 400 final-year medical students were employed in Assistant in Medicine (AiM) positions across 41 facilities in local health districts and networks between July and November 2020. The AiM position was established in March 2020 to supplement the junior medical workforce in response to the pandemic.
- The NSW Government committed \$46.8 million over four years in the 2020-21 state budget to create 100 additional Wellbeing Nurse positions to be placed in NSW secondary and primary schools. By 22 June 2021, 28 of the first tranche of 50 Wellbeing Nurses had been recruited.
- To celebrate the strength of staff diversity, build an inclusive culture and support staff, the Diversity Inclusion Belonging Resource Hub was launched in December 2020 to provide direction to NSW Health organisations.
- Public health organisations continued to implement workplace culture and safety action plans, expanding these to include a range of COVID-19-specific wellbeing initiatives such as wellness support webpages and resources, workshops partnering with the Black Dog Institute and various webinars focusing on mental health in lockdown. NSW Health contributed more than \$4.6 million to local health districts, networks and statewide services to fund this work.
- The NSW Health Focus on the Future initiative aligns with the Future Health Strategy in supporting the health system to become digitally enabled and adaptable to technological changes and disruptions. The initiative helped senior leaders to forecast workforce needs through workshops and programs focused on creating a culture of innovation. Focus on the Future has produced a series of podcasts for the NSW Health workforce and communities about future ways of working, and how technology will intersect with healthcare in the future.

Supporting the workforce during the pandemic

NSW Health delivered a range of workforce planning and support to respond to the pandemic staffing requirements.

Various additional positions and roles helped to relieve workforce pressures, including the Assistant in Medicine (AiM) position for final-year medical students.

More than 2000 nurses undertook critical care upskilling and refresher courses in preparation for a surge in intensive care requirements as a result of the pandemic. Nurses have also been utilised broadly across the health system, leading vaccination and COVID testing, as well as supporting patients in the community and in health hotels. Nurses have rapidly established COVID-specific wards, caring for COVID-positive patients who require hospital-based care.

The nursing graduate workforce was increased in response to COVID, with an additional 150 positions targeted to support the vaccination rollout in NSW Health vaccination hubs. These graduates will also gain experience in hospital acute care, preparing them more broadly as a future workforce in the health system.

Budget support was provided for 318 full-time equivalent temporary allied health positions between April and December 2020. The funding intention was to prioritise the skilled critical care physiotherapy workforce into intensive care units, to lower the demand on inpatient hospital beds for non-COVID-19 patients and reduce wait lists. About 260 positions were filled, with many local health districts using the funding to extend the period of engagement and retain the roles over a 12-month period.

To increase the COVID vaccination rollout, NSW Health enabled a wide range of health practitioners and health practitioner students to be authorised to administer the COVID-19 vaccine to the community. These health practitioners and students are supported by additional education and work in NSW Health vaccination hubs.

The Care Assistant Strategy identified low-risk COVID-19-related activities able to be supported by a person from a non-health background when given appropriate training. A care assistant role was developed as a temporary role to provide basic care and companionship to patients, enabling healthcare professionals to continue to deliver critical functions.

Support was also provided to NSW Health staff navigating the pandemic themselves, including a suite of internet resources around the themes of wellbeing, virtual environments, and leading in uncertain times.

The Pandemic Kindness Movement website, developed in 2020 by the Agency for Clinical Innovation with national partners, also continued to support health workers with peer-reviewed resources. The Pandemic Kindness Movement forms part of the NSW Health focus on elevating the human experience for everyone involved in receiving and providing care. The site has had over 100,000 views since its launch.

Achieving a fit-for-purpose workforce

A sustainable health system that delivers outcomes that matter to patients means providing a workforce able to rapidly respond to community needs. To achieve this goal, a horizon scanning process is assisting in workforce planning to identify workforce requirements towards 2030.

Enhancing the workforce to meet the needs of the community

The NSW Health Professionals Workforce Plan aims to ensure a fit-for-purpose workforce to provide a quality health service to NSW citizens. A record 51,794 full-time equivalent nurses and midwives were working in NSW Health hospitals and facilities as at June 2021 – 41,994 nurses, 1677 midwives, and 8123 nurses and midwives with dual registration.

NSW Health supports the development of the enrolled nurse workforce through scholarship positions linked to areas of workforce need; 219 scholarships were awarded to support students to undertake enrolled nurse training in 2021. NSW Health has also committed \$3.7 million in funding over four years to recruit six additional Breast Care Nurses for the McGrath Foundation.

The NSW Government committed \$46.8 million over four years in the 2020-21 state budget to create 100 additional Wellbeing Nurse positions through the Wellbeing and Health In-reach Nurse Coordinator Program. The program is a partnership between NSW Health and the NSW Department of Education and provides a Wellbeing Nurse position in selected metropolitan, regional and rural communities in NSW.

These roles will work with identified secondary and primary schools' existing wellbeing and learning teams and local health and social services to support students and their families on health and wellbeing issues, including mental health, social and behavioural support, physical health, and peer or family relationships. In June 2021, 28 of the first tranche of 50 positions had been filled and 23 Wellbeing Nurses were working in schools.

The Student Placement Agreement was updated in 2021 to broaden the scope of student placements in clinical and non-clinical areas across facilities and Health Administration Corporation organisations. This will enable NSW Health to build a pipeline of students in new and emerging fields to ensure we continue to attract a fit-for-purpose workforce.

Throughout the year, NSW Ambulance used assessment centres in its recruitment to allow applicants to demonstrate their capabilities through a range of methods. Robust evaluation has provided insight into the diversity of applicants and enabled the organisation to identify, upskill and recruit future leaders.

Increasing diversity in the workforce

NSW Health welcomes people of diverse backgrounds and remains committed to maintaining a workforce that reflects the community it serves. We launched the Diversity Inclusion Belonging Resource Hub in December 2020 to provide direction to NSW Health organisations in meeting the diversity and inclusion targets set under the Premier's Priorities.

The Diversity Inclusion Belonging guide acknowledges the elements of diversity and inclusion and the positives that come from individual differences, and recognises the crucial role a sense of belonging plays in delivering an effective, functioning, diverse and inclusive workplace.

Building pathways for Aboriginal employees

Employing Aboriginal staff within the health system is vital to ensure that culturally appropriate care is provided to Aboriginal people. To improve employment and career opportunities, NSW Health:

- promoted and advocated for an enhanced Aboriginal Workforce Dashboard platform for improved visibility on the Aboriginal workforce data against targets
- embedded Aboriginal workforce targets in all NSW Health Service Performance Agreements
- scoped a refresh of the Good Health – Great Jobs Aboriginal Workforce Strategic Framework in 2021
- continued to improve pathways for entry for Aboriginal people into the mental health workforce. This included implementation and monitoring of the Aboriginal Mental Health Workforce Program.

The Aboriginal Nursing and Midwifery Strategy supports the NSW Health commitment to increase the Aboriginal nursing and midwifery workforce. In 2021:

- 105 Aboriginal cadetship positions were awarded, with more than half of the cadets located in rural and regional areas
- 68 undergraduate and 14 postgraduate Aboriginal scholarships were awarded to support nursing and midwifery studies.

As part of its 2025 strategy, NSW Health Pathology has established a target of having three per cent of its workforce be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. The current proportion grew to 1.35 per cent in June 2021.

Improving the rural and remote health workforce

NSW Health continued to support and grow our workforce where it was needed most. To enhance the workforce to provide better care for rural and regional citizens we:

- launched a pilot for a four-year incentive package focused on the recruitment and retention of allied health professionals to areas of critical need in rural and remote regions. As part of the package, eligible early-career allied health professionals can receive an incremental annual contribution to a HECS-HELP loan. One of 10 HECS/HELP incentive packages has been taken up to date and Far West Local Health District is in the process of identifying suitable positions
- provided Rural Learning Pathways, aimed at strengthening pathways from education to employment for people in rural and regional NSW. The first phase of the project included investigating ways for existing staff to access on-site upskilling opportunities and student training through vocational education and training in schools, and student-based apprenticeships and training
- recruited four psychology positions across drought-affected areas as at June 2021, part of the six positions identified in the 2019 NSW Government election commitment funding. Recruitment activities are continuing
- worked with Southern NSW Local Health District and Murrumbidgee Local Health District to develop a pilot of the Leading for Innovation Program with rural workforce participants to foster leadership capabilities and workplace innovation.

The Nursing and Midwifery Office supported improved rural and regional services in 2020-21 by:

- coordinating recruitment, with more than 25 per cent of graduate nurses and midwives recruited in rural and regional areas, and more than 25 per cent of registered nurses recruited into midwifery training positions in rural and regional areas
- awarding more than 1000 scholarships to NSW Health nurses and midwives to support postgraduate education across specialties, with one-third awarded in rural areas
- awarding more than 600 clinical placement grants to NSW nursing and midwifery students to support diversity of clinical experiences across rural and metropolitan areas
- funding 10 rural postgraduate midwifery student scholarship positions.

Developing the allied health workforce

Allied health provides vital clinical and community health services to NSW citizens. Workforce planning projects for five different allied health professions were completed in 2020-21: audiology, music therapy, art therapy, child life therapy and diversional therapy. The projects explored challenges experienced across NSW for these smaller workforces, including limited profession-specific education and limited opportunities for career progression. They also explored opportunities to grow and support these allied health workforces in a discipline-specific context. For example, they explored the benefits of embedding child life therapists in multidisciplinary teams, and delivery of culturally appropriate therapies. The reports are located on the NSW Health allied health webpage.

Growing the genomics workforce

Genomics applies knowledge of genes and genetic information for the benefit of human health. The NSW Health Genomics Strategy forms the beginning of a long-term commitment by NSW Health to ensure the potential benefits of genomics are incorporated into the system effectively. Key workforce development achievements included delivery of career marketing materials on the Map my Health Career and Centre for Genetic Education sites, workforce scenario modelling using data insights and an approach to support genetics integration into other models of care across the system.

NSW Health Pathology has recruited a skilled workforce for the provision of a statewide Clinical Genome and Exome Sequencing Service. Exome sequencing provides answers and enables improved management plans for many families with serious genetic conditions and couples planning a family.

A workforce of nine full-time equivalent staff including clinical laboratory scientists, ICT development engineers, project and operations managers and a bioinformatician have developed the infrastructure and systems, including an in-house designed analysis pipeline required to support human exome and genome sequencing at scale.

Genomics is also used to better understand the origin of pathogen-based outbreaks and how infectious diseases spread, most recently seen with COVID-19. The COVID-19 Genomic Surveillance Program, established by the NSW Health Pathology Institute of Clinical Pathology and Medical Research, is enabled by 11 full-time equivalent staff and supported by eight postgraduate research secondments.

From July 2020 to June 2021, the genomic surveillance team produced 49 reports describing 105 NSW clusters. Genomic analysis of individual COVID-19 cases enables better understanding of potential links.

People and Culture Award winner

Keeping Staff Safe - Reducing Needlestick Injuries

Hunter New England Local Health District

Healthcare workers are at increased risk of being exposed to blood-borne viruses through needlestick injuries. This was recognised as a risk at Hunter New England Local Health District. Despite a range of safety awareness initiatives being implemented, there was no significant reduction in exposures. The project aimed to reduce needlestick injuries through mandated use of standardised Safety Engineered Sharps Devices for subcutaneous and intramuscular injections across the District. Since the completion of the project, there was an overall reduction in needlestick injuries from hollow-bore needles of 31 per cent in 2019 compared with 2018, and this continued with a 60 per cent reduction (average) in 2020. Implementation of this strategy has the potential to save Hunter New England Local Health District \$328,000 for the implementation year and more than \$500,000 ongoing. The Hunter New England Local Health District won the 2020 People and Culture Award for their achievement.



Staff at Hunter New England Local Health District, including, from left, Lyn Lovell, Trish Robertson, Jillian Martinelli and Jenny Greig, implemented a project to reduce needlestick injuries.

This supports contact tracing and the identification of clusters to provide actionable information to inform public health. The team works closely with Health Protection NSW, local public health units and other jurisdictions to enhance skills of healthcare professionals in pathogen genomics and optimise the utility of COVID-19 genomics for pandemic control.

Managing talent and increasing capability

NSW Health is focused on supporting staff to improve care and services for NSW citizens. As part of this, our talent management roadmap included leader success profiles to demonstrate 'what great looks like' in key leadership positions across the system.

During 2020, leader success profiles were developed for general managers. Success profiles for Director Allied Health, Director Nursing and Midwifery and rural site managers (Health Service Manager – Multipurpose Services) have been commissioned and will become part of the NSW Health Talent Strategy. These tools have assisted to foster talent in the current workforce, ensuring it is fit for purpose into the future.

Options to progress award reform to support the Future Health Strategy are currently being developed. Following further internal stakeholder consultation within NSW Health and across NSW Government, a broader process of consultation with employees, unions and other stakeholders is being planned.

The Aboriginal Population Health Training Initiative

The Aboriginal Population Health Training Initiative supports Aboriginal people to develop and apply public health skills by offering three years of workplace-based training and postgraduate study. In 2020-21, four trainees were recruited and two staff graduated with a Master of Public Health.

Developing workforce talent

NSW Health is committed to developing leadership capability in our workforce. To improve leadership opportunities for the Aboriginal workforce, a whole-of-NSW Health stretch target was established aimed at 16 Aboriginal people in senior leadership roles by 2025. The previous goal of doubling the number of Aboriginal people in senior leadership roles from five to 10 by 2025 has already been exceeded, with 11 Aboriginal senior leaders in place by December 2020.

NSW Ambulance continued to develop a structured series of evidence-based programs and resources for all levels of leadership, as outlined in the NSW Ambulance Leadership Development Strategy. The strategy provides structured development for each level of leader, from potential future leaders to executive leaders. It provides a clear articulated program of cumulative leadership development where staff can readily identify their current level and also their aspirational target, with each development step in between.

This strategy has been shown to:

- define the expectations of leaders in NSW Ambulance
- provide clear career pathways for staff who want to pursue a leadership career
- provide development opportunities for leaders at all levels and capabilities
- identify a talent pool of up-and-coming leaders at different levels
- develop effective, engaged and compassionate leaders.

Increasing the skills and capabilities of our workforce

The NSW Health Workforce Forum 2020 was held virtually with over 840 registrations from across NSW Health and other government agencies. The forum focused on workforce restoration, recognising the inspiring work of NSW Health staff in 2020 amid extraordinary pressures from bushfires, floods, earthquakes and the pandemic.

To enhance the mental health workforce, the Nursing and Midwifery Office partnered with the Health Education and Training Institute to develop the Mental Health Pathways in Practice program. This program supports mental health nurses and allied health professionals to develop their clinical capabilities to deliver best care to those with lived experience of mental illness. Three pathways have been published with a further two to be released in late 2021.

The Health Education and Training Institute employed new training and workplace arrangements in response to the pandemic. These included rescheduling of face-to-face training to respond to system staffing pressures, converting and adapting face-to-face training and workshops for virtual delivery, and developing online resources to assist managers adapting to an online environment.

The Aboriginal Workforce Unit has engaged with workforce planners to support the development of tools, practices and priorities that enable the growth and development of the broader Aboriginal workforce.

The Public Health and Biostatistics Training Programs

The Public Health and Biostatistics Training Programs offer three years of supervised workplace-based training and provide a surge workforce able to respond to public health risks. In 2020-21:

- 26 public health and 18 biostatistics trainees supported the NSW Health COVID-19 response
- 13 new trainees were recruited
- nine people completed their training, including four trainee biostatisticians who graduated with a Master of Biostatistics.

Building allied health workforce capability

The Allied Health in Mental Health (AHMH) Workforce project report explored the current workforce to identify opportunities to deliver care that best meets the health needs of people with a lived experience of mental illness, their families and carers. This report has been developed to inform local health districts and networks, AHMH workforce and leaders, mental health executives and Ministry branches and pillar agencies to inform workforce planning strategies. Growth of this workforce will increase access to allied health expertise and benefit patients by improving physical healthcare, emotional wellbeing, functional recovery, social participation and inclusion.

Developing financial staff capability

To meet emerging workforce capability needs, the NSW Ministry of Health continued to develop financial staff through secondment programs and workplace rotations, and continues to support the NSW Health Finance Executive Development Program. These activities provided staff from entry level to executive with new professional experiences and allowed them to develop the necessary skills to create value, support decision making and enhance financial sustainability in a rapidly evolving environment. After a successful pilot, the Health Education and Training Institute engaged the University of Technology Sydney to co-design and co-deliver a program for senior finance staff, with completion contributing towards a Master of Business Administration. Twenty-four staff have been selected for the cohort.

Using data to improve decision making

NSW Health completed a range of economic appraisals to inform current and future investment decisions. These included economic appraisals for the treatment and management of wounds, direct access colonoscopy, renal supportive care, virtual care and hypofractionation for breast cancer, which allows patients to receive radiation treatment in fewer sessions.

Improving health and wellbeing and strengthening culture for staff

Improving workplace health and safety

Ensuring the safety of our staff at work continued to be a high priority. In 2020-21, NSW Health participated in the NSW Government Work Health and Safety Sector Plan led by SafeWork NSW. Work began across NSW Health to implement its recommendations for improvements to security in hospitals, including toolkits, checklists and templates to help prevent and manage violence. Other ways to foster continuous improvement in security risk management and greater compliance with NSW Health security standards included a revised NSW Health security manual and a new security audit tool.

NSW Health continued to provide work health and safety advice to health organisations and unions to manage issues arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

As part of its learning culture, NSW Ambulance established the multi-stakeholder monthly Helicopter Mission Review Group to enhance collaborative operational and safety governance.

Strengthening culture to reflect CORE values

NSW Health strives to continuously improve workplace culture, with the CORE values of collaboration, openness, respect and empowerment as our foundation. In 2020-21, the Respecting the Difference staff training program content was reviewed, and a new web portal was developed to support managers across NSW Health to address staff grievances, concerns and potential misconduct quickly and constructively.

Public health organisations continued to implement their workplace culture and safety action plans, expanding these to include a range of COVID-19-specific wellbeing initiatives such as wellness support webpages and resources, workshops partnering with the Black Dog Institute and various webinars focusing on mental health in lockdown. NSW Health contributed more than \$4.6 million to local health districts, networks and statewide services to fund this work.

Cultural responsiveness training was provided for 35 employees, including allied health professionals, and Aboriginal Allied Health Cadetship Managers and supervisors to develop key capabilities and action-oriented approaches to addressing cultural safety for Aboriginal employees and patients, and their communities.

Fostering regulation, governance and accountability

Legal and Regulatory Services Branch core business is providing regulatory and compliance services across medicines, drugs and private hospitals. In 2020-21, compliance activities including receipt and management of complaints, conduct of investigations, and where appropriate regulatory action continued in a timely way. The NSW Health Regulators Forum met to focus on particular projects designed to address future challenges, including the increasing complexity and number of health-related complaints.

Work on the revision of the delegations model has continued, with final review and approval delayed to 2021-22 due to the prioritisation of the management of the pandemic response.

NSW Health introduced a new statewide risk reporting framework in December 2020, with a focus on drawing from system expertise to identify potential statewide risks and their impact.

Using this new structure, the Ministry has facilitated discussion forums attended by NSW Health Executive, NSW Health Board Chairs and members, Audit and Risk Committee Chairs and members, and risk practitioners, seeking to identify emerging risks and to review the control environment.

NSW Health has also worked closely with NSW Treasury to review existing whole-of-government risk management policy and guidelines.

Patient Safety First Award winner

Reducing Inappropriate Arterial Blood Gas Testing in a 58-Bed Quaternary Intensive Care Unit

Northern Sydney Local Health District

Arterial blood gas (ABG) analysis is the most frequently performed test in intensive care units (ICUs). Blood tests are expensive and contribute significantly to anaemia, which affects more than 95 per cent of ICU patients by day three of their admission, with half requiring blood transfusions. This program involved bi-weekly case-based in-service training over 12 weeks, departmental meetings, local ICU newsletter articles and closed social media group discussions. ABG testing reduced from 4.9 to 3.1 per bed per day and was sustained for 20 months. There was a 71 per cent absolute reduction in the number of inappropriate ABGs. This intervention will decrease cost, anaemia, need for transfusions, infection risk, sleep disruption and delirium. The Northern Sydney Local Health District won the 2020 Patient Safety First Award for their achievement.



Reducing inappropriate arterial blood gas testing in the intensive care unit was a focus for the Royal North Shore Hospital Intensive Care Unit team including, from left, Dr Oliver Walsh, Katelyn Davis, Larissa Sirotti, Ashleigh McInnes, Helen Ganley and Dr Jonathan Gatward.

Priority 5

Support and harness health and medical research and innovation

NSW Health prioritises and invests in innovative health and medical research. We remain at the forefront of clinical trials and translational research, building on scientific discoveries to make life-changing medical advancements.

This year, we invested significantly in world-leading research projects and programs to inform the development of new technologies and approaches to directly support the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With a continued focus on leveraging research funding to drive outcomes, maximising opportunities for research collaboration both in Australia and internationally, and improving data sharing to facilitate research, we are maintaining a culture of healthcare innovation for the benefit of NSW citizens.

Our priorities

- 5.1 Drive the generation of policy-relevant translational research
- 5.2 Drive research translation in the health system
- 5.3 Make NSW a global leader in clinical trials
- 5.4 Enable the research environment
- 5.5 Leverage research and innovation opportunities and funding
- 5.6 Drive COVID-19 research towards improving the pandemic response

Key achievements

- The COVID-19 Research Program was launched to generate research evidence to support the health system response. More than \$28 million was invested in 2020-21, including \$4.5 million in emergency priority research projects, including investigation of transmission in schools and aged care facilities, vaccine safety, and serosurveillance to measure the prevalence of SARS-CoV-2-specific antibodies.
- The Cancer Institute NSW enrolled 2760 participants into all cancer clinical trials, which included industry-funded studies.
- NSW Health continued to strengthen the focus on Aboriginal health in the Translational Research Grants Scheme. For round six of the scheme an additional expression of interest was accepted if it focused on Aboriginal or rural/remote health. The maximum number of submissions for each local health district was otherwise five.
- To attract talent to the field of advanced therapeutics, \$3.2 million was awarded for 10 PhD scholarships and early-mid career fellowships, with projects supporting capability development in gene, cell and phage therapies.
- As part of the Spinal Cord Injury Research Grants program, launched in 2019, seven innovative NSW research projects were awarded almost \$15 million in funding over four years to improve the health of people with spinal cord injuries.

Maximising opportunity for translational research

Priority projects were rapidly funded this year to inform public health action in response to the ongoing pandemic. Work was also underway to expand the Co-Creating Evidence approach across NSW Health to maximise the use of data assets to inform decision making. The successful Co-Creating Evidence pilot showed that the approach facilitated collaborative partnerships with researchers to use existing NSW Health data to create evidence that informed health policy.

Excellence in the Provision of Mental Health Services Award winner

Reducing Time in Seclusion in the Mental Health Intensive Care Unit

Northern Sydney Local Health District

The Mental Health Intensive Care Unit (MHICU), based on-site at Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital, is a tertiary referral centre that provides 12 beds for consumers who require an intensive, multidisciplinary treatment program in an environment that cannot be provided in a standard acute mental health facility. Baseline data of 20 seclusion episodes from mid-December 2017 to January 2018 showed a median seclusion time of 120 minutes. Through improvements in documentation, specialised staff and consumer training, the median time a patient in the MHICU spent secluded was reduced by 42 per cent (70 minutes) within six months. Seclusion rates have been steadily decreasing and continue to be among the best in NSW, with times decreasing from six hours (Q2 - 2015-16) to 1.3 hours (Q2 - 2019-20). The Northern Sydney Local Health District won the 2020 Excellence in the Provision of Mental Health Services Award for their achievement.



Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital's Mental Health Intensive Care Unit, which James Wall is part of, made a range of improvements to help reduce seclusion rates.

Driving research to improve the pandemic response

NSW Health rapidly launched the competitive, merit-based COVID-19 Research Grants Program and other initiatives to generate research evidence to support the health system response.

More than \$28 million was invested in COVID-19 research in 2020-21. This included:

- \$4.5 million on emergency priority research projects including urgent investigation of transmission in schools and aged care facilities, vaccine safety, and serosurveillance to measure the prevalence of SARS-CoV-2-specific antibodies
- \$8 million towards 17 research projects under the COVID-19 Research Grants Program
- \$2 million to support medical device companies affected by the pandemic
- \$13.5 million to fund research collaborations, clinical trial infrastructure and innovative projects in which leading NSW scientists addressed urgent priority issues. These included the Vaccine, Infection and Immunology Collaborative Research Group, NSW RNA Production Research Network, Waratah Vaccine Trial Alliance, and NSW Adaptive Platform Trials.

An interim impact evaluation conducted by the Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence found that within nine months of receiving funding, the COVID-19 Research Program demonstrated early evidence that it was contributing local knowledge to the response by funding priority research and rapidly translating findings. In addition, it was strengthening the NSW research ecosystem to minimise the health and social impacts of COVID-19.

Health sustainability research

The future sustainability of the health system is integral to ensure continued excellence in healthcare in an evolving environment. To support this, NSW Health is one of four key industry partners with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Partnership Centre for Health System Sustainability. Current and planned research is informing a range of work across the NSW health system, including the reduction of adverse drug events, understanding the impact of COVID-19-delayed elective surgery, and the use of patient-reported measures along the continuum of care. Themed workshops and learning opportunities based on the research have been delivered by the Partnership Centre and made available to NSW Health staff and clinicians.

Supporting research led by and benefiting Aboriginal people

In support of culturally appropriate research activities with Aboriginal people, the Centre for Aboriginal Health:

- supported the submission of Translational Research Grants Scheme applications through advice to applicants on the implementation of guidance in the education module developed by the Centre. It also presented to scheme coordinators about developing and conducting Aboriginal health research. For round six of the scheme, an additional expression of interest per local health district was accepted if it focused on Aboriginal or rural/remote health
- supported applications to the COVID-19 Research Grants Program
- supported the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW to enable culturally inclusive research activities by delivering training and development to Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services staff, including approved continuing professional development training for general practice
- collaborated with the Mental Health Branch to conduct an evaluation of the Building on Aboriginal Communities Resilience Initiative, which provides culturally safe and trauma-informed suicide prevention programs designed and led by Aboriginal people.

Positioning NSW to attract research funding and collaboration

Assessing the effectiveness of research helps to ensure high-quality research in the future. NSW Health has developed key performance metrics to measure the performance of research investments that best represent the grant programs as a whole. These metrics enable NSW to report on overarching outcomes of its research investments, including outputs, efficiency, effectiveness and equity.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted several areas of research strength, including emergency response preparedness, diagnostics, genomics, clinical trials and advanced medical manufacturing capability.

NSW is a globally recognised leader in developing and delivering advanced therapeutics, including gene phage and cell therapies such as CAR T cells. NSW Health is strategically investing in tools, talent and translation of gene, phage and cell therapies to accelerate research progress and patient access to these potentially life-saving therapies. To attract talent to the field, \$3.2 million was awarded for 10 PhD scholarships and early-mid career fellowships, with projects supporting capability development in gene, cell and phage therapies.

In 2020-21, NSW Health continued to promote these strengths to health and medical research communities internationally through our International Desk activities including Asian Medical Week and the BIO Digital annual conference.

NSW Health has begun planning for an advanced viral vector manufacturing facility to support this work. External consultants were engaged to complete early stage design and feasibility assessment for the manufacturing facility, as well as develop a business case and plan, and begin a market sounding process.

Funding and support to maximise research opportunities

Supporting research ultimately fosters innovation and improved care. In 2020-21, NSW Health provided \$1.8 million to the Sax Institute to improve decision makers' use of research evidence, including brokering evidence reviews on health system priorities and building skills in appraising evidence.

Since 2014, NSW Health has provided a Health Cluster Evaluation Schedule to NSW Treasury outlining evaluation activity undertaken. In 2020-21, the schedule was replaced by an evidence bank reporting process designed to share evidence generated through evaluations across NSW Government.

Funding for spinal cord injury research

As part of the Spinal Cord Injury Research Grants program, launched in 2019, seven innovative NSW research projects were awarded almost \$15 million in funding over four years to improve the health of people with spinal cord injuries.

Facilitating high-impact research

In line with the NSW Health focus on delivering better outcomes for patients and building research capability, round six of the Translational Research Grants Scheme required applicants to demonstrate how their research would support the delivery of value based healthcare.

In 2020-21, a guide was developed to identify system priority areas for which NSW Health needs further evidence to support the design and implementation of value based healthcare across the state. The guide aims to inform researchers seeking to align their work with contemporary and practical policy challenges faced by the healthcare system and support researchers seeking partnership with NSW Health on value based healthcare research.

Connecting industry innovation and research

eHealth NSW continued to undertake digital health research in partnership with stakeholders across NSW Health, external researchers and partner organisations. New processes were introduced to improve coordination and partnering in research projects. A key focus was research requiring information and communication technology integration with NSW Health business and clinical systems and translating research into practice.

In parallel, eHealth NSW continued to work with the Agency for Clinical Innovation and the Ministry to develop a blueprint and business case for the Healthcare Innovation Venture Enablement (HIVE) service and consortium. HIVE seeks to outline how NSW Health can support a thriving healthcare innovation ecosystem. Its vision is to make NSW Health a centre of innovation, leveraging and enhancing existing programs to catalyse innovation more effectively and efficiently.

Driving translational research

Translational research involves applying discoveries generated during laboratory research and preclinical studies to a clinical setting. It also aims to promote best practices in the community.

Over 20 Translational Research Grants Scheme projects have been completed and have started implementing findings. NSW Health is documenting barriers and enablers to implementation to inform decisions about an ongoing governance structure.

To drive translational research forward, the Office for Health and Medical Research:

- built health system research and evaluation capacity by supporting the rapid rollout of urgent COVID-19 research to inform the pandemic response, by piloting research impact assessment methods and by educating researchers and clinicians to focus on implementation strategies from project inception
- worked with the Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence to adapt a research impact framework with the Hunter Medical Research Institute to measure research translation and impact of research funding. The framework has been applied to the Prevention Research Support Program, COVID-19 Research Program and round one of the Translational Research Grants Scheme.

The Agency for Clinical Innovation supported and assessed several translational research grant proposals. Strategies for building health system research (HSR) capacity included leading the COVID-19 Critical Intelligence Unit's Research Intelligence Group, participating in developing a priority list of Office for Health and Medical Research COVID-19 grant round themes, and initiating a NSW HSR Steering Committee. The agency also partnered with advanced health research and translation centres on several implementation science proposals and funded studies for the NHMRC, the Medical Research Future Fund and other grants.

The Population and Public Health Research Group supported and promoted a number of strategies to build research and evaluation capability in NSW Health. Workshops on evaluation, economic evaluation and program logic were attended by 270 NSW Health staff. Checklists on planning and reviewing economic evaluations were developed and are available online within the Population Health Guidance Series.

Leading the way in clinical trials

Conducting clinical trials provided important opportunities for NSW researchers and citizens to participate in the development of innovative medical treatment. In 2020-21, NSW Health established an Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care Clinical Trials Governance Framework working group, which included representatives from local health districts and specialty networks. It was designed to support a consistent and collaborative approach to implementation of the framework, including best-practice sharing. The pilot sites – St Vincent's Hospital Sydney, Sydney Local Health District and Orange Base Hospital – presented their experience to the NSW Health Embedding Quality Research in Local Health Districts meeting in early 2021.

ClinicaltrialsNSW continued to implement a range of strategies to enable clinical trial capacity, capability and collaboration and deliver a mature clinical trial sector within the NSW public health system.

The Cancer Institute NSW:

- had 184 portfolio (investigator-initiated) cancer clinical trials open to recruitment in NSW, with 1348 participants enrolled into portfolio trials
- enrolled 2760 participants into all cancer clinical trials, which included industry-funded studies
- released a Canrefer feature to assist users to find cancer clinical trials in their area that were currently or about to recruit participants.

Linking data to enable research

Enabling access to data

The Centre for Health Record Linkage released 2.46 billion records to support research and analytics including to successful applicants for the Biospecimen Collection Grants. The Centre also worked to refine governance arrangements to enhance researchers' access to data.

The Cancer Institute NSW gained ethics approval to link patient reported measures data into linked datasets for future analysis, and commenced an amendment to add smoking cessation to the Master Linked Dataset.

The Institute developed and agreed to a 2021 data linkage schedule with the Centre for Health Record Linkage, which will increase the number of annual linkages of the NSW Clinical Cancer Public Health Register and the National Master Linkage Key with NSW cancer incidence data.

The Agency for Clinical Innovation established a working group to scope minimum data requirements for clinical quality registries (CQRs), ensuring that clinical, administrative and patient data is captured to improve outcomes. Further work is underway to determine the exact data-capture mechanisms of the prioritised cohorts and future opportunity costs for supporting the approach to CQRs.

NSW Health Pathology launched its Research Governance Framework in January 2021. A five-year implementation plan will guide the framework's development and included the release of up to 33 procedures, guidelines and forms. These will set standards to improve research quality and safeguard the public by promoting best practice and performance, as well as enhancing ethical and scientific quality. They included the:

- Research Code of Conduct
- Research Complaints Form
- Data Management procedure
- Research Governance procedure
- Site Specific Assessment (SSA) Checklist/Form
- Tissue Block release policy
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Clinical Trials.

Transforming Patient Experience Award winner

Finding Help for Multicultural Alcohol and Drug Use

Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District

This project created co-designed films in 16 languages and implemented a best practice model for culturally and linguistically diverse communities to enhance statewide support and access to drug health services. Multicultural consumers and groups were proactively involved in every aspect to identify need, messages, scripting, filming, editing and promotion. The co-design methodology enhanced trust and built sustainable partnerships to develop resources that address health literacy, stigma and cultural barriers to help improve harm-minimisation conversations. The Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District won the 2020 Transforming Patient Experience Award for their project.



Connecting with culturally and linguistically diverse communities was the main motivator for an Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District team. Health Education Officer Dianne Woods was among the drug health team's staff to create multicultural resources.

Priority 6

Embed a digitally enabled healthcare system

Information technology continued to play an integral role in evolving the ways in which NSW Health provided care. Activities included deploying new systems, enhancing health analytics and access to digital health information, and improving infrastructure and cyber security to enhance and protect our systems.

A digitally enabled healthcare system means developing systems to improve insights and analysis, ensuring our clinicians, support workers and management have health data to make well-informed and data-driven healthcare decisions for NSW citizens.

Additional investment was made in augmenting virtual care and videoconferencing for the delivery of health services to meet the changing needs of the community and to ably respond to the needs of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our priorities

- 6.1 Progress the implementation of paper-lite key clinical information systems
- 6.2 Foster eHealth solutions that support integrated health services
- 6.3 Enhance systems and tools to improve workforce and business management
- 6.4 Develop and enhance health analytics to improve insights and decision making
- 6.5 Enhance patient, provider and research community access to digital health information
- 6.6 Enhance systems infrastructure, security and intelligence

Key achievements

- eHealth NSW and the Agency for Clinical Innovation worked together on the Virtual Care Accelerator initiative to support local health districts and specialty networks to optimise their use of virtual care across NSW Health.
- In 2020, NSW Health was allocated \$39.8 million to implement the real-time prescription monitoring system SafeScript NSW; enhance regulatory tools; and undertake a program of proactive regulatory reforms as part of NSW's national commitment to reducing harm associated with the misuse of monitored medicines. SafeScript NSW will support prescribers and pharmacists to identify at-risk patients by providing information about medication history.
- The Clinical Excellence Commission continued work on the Quality Improvement Data System (QIDS) to provide tools and resources for clinicians and managers to monitor data about hospital-acquired complications and improve the delivery of safer care. By June 2021, the QIDS had more than 36,100 users, 14,651 improvement project topics and around 15,000 reports generated every month.
- More than 28,000 patients benefited from better care with the electronic record for intensive care (eRIC) system. Funding has been secured to extend eRIC to 11 neonatal and paediatric intensive care units over the next two years.
- The business case for the Single Digital Patient Record (SDPR) was developed and budget funding was secured for three years. SDPR will transform the way health information is captured across hospitals and health services.

Deploying new information technology systems across NSW Health

NSW Health is committed to continue enhancing our technology to support better patient care. eHealth NSW implemented its new radiology information system, picture archive and communication system in eight hospitals across Nepean Blue Mountains, Northern Sydney and Central Coast local health districts. It also successfully piloted the electronic transfer of care (eTOC) medications reconciliation application in four hospitals.

The ongoing rollout of the electronic record for intensive care (eRIC) system enabled more than 28,000 patients to benefit from better care. Funding has been secured to extend eRIC to 11 neonatal and paediatric intensive care units over the next two years.

The second phase of the Clinical Health Information Exchange (CHIE) onboarded the Enterprise Patient Registry, Sydney Children's Hospitals Network, and Western Sydney and Nepean Blue Mountains local health districts. The patient and clinical information shared in the CHIE supports patient care across these districts.

The electronic medication management (eMeds) program neared completion, with go-lives at Barraba Multiple-Purpose Service, Liverpool Hospital, Campbelltown Hospital and Camden Hospital.

Meanwhile, the Single Digital Patient Record program will transform the way health information is captured across hospitals and health services, improving patient safety and enhancing clinician experience with electronic medical record systems. This year, its business case was developed and budget funding was secured for three years. Tender documents for the program, including the proposed statewide laboratory information management system for NSW Health Pathology, were formally issued to the market in June 2021.

Building virtual care and videoconferencing capability

A focus for the future is ensuring virtual care and videoconferencing allow the delivery of health services to meet the changing needs of the community.

In 2020-21, eHealth NSW and the Agency for Clinical Innovation worked together on the Virtual Care Accelerator initiative to support local health districts and specialty networks to optimise their use of virtual care across NSW Health. These activities included:

- upgrading 125 critical care cameras across NSW
- deploying 1800 iPads to various settings across NSW Health for frontline clinical functions relevant to caring for patients with COVID-19, particularly focused on isolated patients in hospitals, intensive care units and palliative care. iPads were also allocated to COVID-19 vaccination hubs across the state
- continuing the rollout of the virtual clinical waiting room solution, myVirtualCare
- supporting five new and eight existing remote patient monitoring programs
- documenting and sharing six virtual care initiatives to assist local health districts and specialty networks to implement local virtually enabled models of care.

A virtual care dashboard and application were launched to provide the system with data on the volume of non-admitted services for patients involving videoconferencing or telehealth at the local health district, facility and clinic level.

Improving the Electronic Medical Record

We continued to deliver initiatives to enhance the functionality of our current electronic medical records (eMR). This year, these included:

- the Drug Burden Index (DBI) tool, which was piloted at Royal North Shore Hospital. The tool is included in a patient's eMR and is used to measure the functional burden of an older person's medications to reduce adverse drug events including falls, poorer physical function, frailty, mortality and cognitive impairment
- the Heparin Infusion Management module, which was piloted at Nepean, Westmead, Blacktown, Mt Druitt and Auburn hospitals. This solution supports clinical workflows to prevent and manage venous and arterial thromboembolism
- the Oncology Information Systems Integration Project, which was completed.

eHealth NSW also developed an eMR strategy and future state for NSW Ambulance, in partnership with the Agency for Clinical Innovation and local health districts. This work included:

- developing a suitable solution following 2021-22 budget funding to deliver in-ambulance monitor/defibrillators that improve eMR integration capabilities between NSW Ambulance and hospital emergency departments across the state, including regional areas
- developing a business case to stabilise the existing NSW Ambulance eMR platform before it is replaced with a mobile solution.

Improving experiences of outpatient services

NSW Health is the largest provider of outpatient services in Australia, with more than 8000 outpatient service units providing over 18 million clinical service events in 2020-21. Outpatient services are a critical interface between the hospital and primary care systems, and an important ongoing component in a patient's care pathway.

NSW Health has prioritised the development of information technology systems, improvement of data quality and development of clinical referral criteria for referrers. These initiatives will contribute to improving the patient and referrer experience when accessing outpatient services.

In 2020-21, eHealth NSW, with the NSW Ministry of Health and local health district clinicians, started to build a statewide digital outpatient referral management and simplified appointments system. This system will ensure referrals from a general practitioner to a hospital outpatient clinic are more efficiently created, delivered and managed.

Supporting integrated health services and information sharing

To improve clinicians' and patients' experience of care and their health outcomes, eHealth NSW partnered with the Ministry's Integrated Care team to shape the direction of the shared care planning system. A working group published recommendations for a statewide approach for the system across health, consumer and social care settings. To drive the implementation of a digital solution to support shared care planning, stakeholders will come together in 2021-22 to oversee system road mapping.

Supporting maternal and child health

eHealth NSW continued to lead the National Children's Digital Health Collaborative in partnership with Sydney Children's Hospitals Network, Western NSW Local Health District and the Australian Digital Health Agency. The Child Digital Health Record 0-4-year-old pilot, which enables health check assessments from GP and community centres to be sent to a parent's mobile phone, onboarded 141 mothers and 202 children to test and evaluate the system.

Work also continued on the Digital Pregnancy Health Record, with antenatal data captured from GP and private hospital visits and displayed in the consumer app.

Monitoring medications

The Real Time Prescription Monitoring (RTPM) Management Portal went live in June 2021, providing the NSW Health regulatory team real-time access to prescribing and dispensing events for monitored medicines.

In 2020, NSW Health was allocated \$39.8 million to implement the real-time prescription monitoring system SafeScript NSW; enhance regulatory tools; and undertake a program of proactive regulatory reforms as part of NSW's national commitment to reducing harm associated with the misuse of monitored medicines.

SafeScript NSW interacts with the National Data Exchange and will support prescribers and pharmacists to identify at-risk patients by providing information about medication history.

A phased rollout will begin in late 2021 across the Hunter New England and Central Coast regions. By early 2022, all eligible health practitioners in NSW will be able to access the system.

NSW Health continues to engage with consumer organisations, general practitioners, community pharmacists, pain management specialists, and drug and alcohol specialists to ensure the solution meets their requirements.

Enhancing health analytics

To improve insights and decision making, eHealth NSW developed a pool of raw data to facilitate rapid, secure and appropriate access to NSW Health data contained within frontline clinical and corporate systems. This has enabled local health district chief executives and chief information officers to improve local accessibility to their raw clinical and corporate data and make data-driven, local decisions.

eHealth NSW worked with the Agency for Clinical Innovation to facilitate design and requirements workshops that explored the possibility of centralising NSW Health's clinical quality registries to improve accessibility.

NSW Health Pathology progressed initiatives to ensure pathology is used to maximum advantage across the NSW Health system. The Pathology Atlas of Variation merged pathology testing with emergency department and intensive care unit data to give clinicians statewide, peer-based analysis. The initial phase identified variation and initiated improvement projects.

Patient Flow Portal

The Ministry has delivered numerous updates to the Patient Flow Portal to:

- support the NSW Health COVID-19 response with managing COVID patients in and out of hospital
- provide a modern, data-driven solution that is easily scalable and adaptable to meet NSW Health's business needs around care coordination, patient flow and the performance of the NSW Health system in real time
- streamline the bed cleaning process and communication between clinicians and support staff
- integrate data from numerous systems to provide the visibility of all incoming patients into a facility to remove the need for paper and faxes, with this functionality being rolled out to 23 facilities
- support the Integrated Care Program, to risk stratify the population to determine the likelihood of previous NSW Health patients presenting to a public hospital in the next 12 months who could benefit from a community care program.

Development of quality improvement data

The Clinical Excellence Commission continued work on the Quality Improvement Data System (QIDS) and Quality Audit Reporting System (QARS), which are electronic tools to improve the quality and safety of healthcare provided by local health districts, specialty health networks, pillars and NSW Health service providers.

By June 2021, the QIDS had:

- more than 36,100 users
- 14,651 improvement project topics
- around 15,000 reports generated every month.

In collaboration with HealthShare NSW the Commission conducted 196 reviews totalling 430 personal protective equipment product assessments and delivered weekly personal protective equipment audits via the QARS for local health districts and specialty health networks.

EDWARD implementation

Enterprise Patient Repository (EPR) and the Enterprise Data Warehouse for Analysis, Reporting and Decision support (EDWARD) program worked together to provide linkage across NSW Health clinical datasets. This work includes increasing data quality reporting on identifier data issues and collaborating with local health districts to address missing or incorrectly recorded data.

Violence, Abuse and Neglect, and Child, Youth and Family services

eHealth NSW collaborated with the Ministry, local health districts and specialty networks to develop clinical system solutions to improve insights using data. The Violence, Abuse and Neglect data assets were established, and forms were rolled out to capture data on NSW Health's responses to all types of violence, abuse and neglect.

NSW Health is strengthening the availability of data for Violence, Abuse and Neglect and Child, Youth and Family services by extending the essential data warehouse capacity. This will increase capacity to report on admitted and non-admitted patient data. The build into collection systems is underway and the collection will be rolled out in 2021-22.

Enhancing community access to digital health information

Enhancing HealtheNet and My Health Record

NSW Health continued to increase the number of documents and amount of information submitted to My Health Record, so that consumers have more comprehensive information about their care. It also meant that NSW Health clinicians and GPs had more information to inform their care of patients.

In 2020-21:

- 1,838,675 discharge summaries were delivered to My Health Record
- 16,214 letters were delivered to My Health Record
- 23,802,418 pathology results were delivered to My Health Record
- 1,559,115 radiology reports were delivered to My Health Record
- 1,668,057 discharge summaries were delivered to GPs
- 1,346,403 letters were delivered to GPs.

To drive the increased use of My Health Record, eHealth NSW partnered with the Australian Digital Health Agency on two initiatives:

- to develop emergency department speciality-based views in the HealtheNet Clinical Portal, bringing together the most relevant clinical information from My Health Record and NSW clinical systems
- to operationalise and promote the new Clinical Document Delivery service by enabling local health districts to electronically transfer health and outpatient discharge summaries, event summaries and specialist letters to HealtheNet.

In addition, eHealth NSW collaborated with other jurisdictions to contribute to the draft National mHealth Assessment Framework. It also published a user guide in July 2020 to provide guidance for clinicians for the safe use of My Health Record and the HealtheNet system.

To measure and benchmark eMR feedback from clinicians, a KLAS survey was conducted to investigate ways of optimising the use of eMR systems. All local health districts and specialty networks contributed, with 5914 responses submitted. Survey data provided key insights into the eMR user experience, which will be used to improve clinician satisfaction and usability of eMR systems.

Ensuring the safe use of My Health Record

NSW Health understands the privacy concerns of NSW citizens. To ensure privacy of health records remained a priority, the Clinical Excellence Commission collaborated with eHealth NSW to monitor and improve the safety and quality of use of all electronic health records across the continuum of care. This includes the use and contributions to My Health records and launch of electronic tools such as the Patient Friendly Medication List. The Safety and Quality Oversight Committee, which is co-chaired by eHealth NSW and the Commission, is the peak body reviewing the safety and quality of electronic health records. The review process includes regular reporting of risk mitigation strategies related to incidents which may result in harm.

Publicly available data from NSW Health

The NSW Health Open Data website was launched in March 2020. It includes a search function and navigation to NSW Health open data sources and key reports. Since July 2020, the site has had 26,000 visitors.

HealthStats NSW provides open access to a wide range of health data. Enhancements in 2021 included more interactive data visualisation and analysis tools and greater ability to download customised reports. In 2020-21, the HealthStats NSW website had around 60,000 users and more than 550,000 webpage views. HealthStats NSW is regularly updated as new data becomes available and there are currently around 70,000 dynamically generated links to downloadable data files.

In June 2021, the Bureau of Health Information launched its new Data Portal, part of a transition to a digital-first way of reporting healthcare performance results in NSW to make them more accessible. *Healthcare Quarterly* results were the first to be included in the new portal. The Bureau publishes all its results on its website in accessible formats, including a hospital performance dashboard. There were more than 80,000 visits to the Bureau website in 2020-21.

Improving corporate services and systems

HealthShare NSW began implementation of an auto reconciliation and automated financial task management system, which enhances the user experience by reducing the time taken on routine manual tasks. Five fixed asset categories and 13 accounts receivable reconciliations have been implemented so far.

New platforms and systems

In 2020-21, improved systems were rolled out to continue to increase efficiency for our stakeholders. For example:

- a new statewide pathology billing system was launched, replacing multiple legacy billing applications
- NSW Health Pathology published and improved its information governance framework in 2020-21. Enterprise architecture standards were also published, and a chief Security Architect was employed to update security management processes and achieve ISO27001 certification
- the statewide deployment of a staff Performance and Talent (PAT) system was completed following extensive consultation with local health districts and NSW Health organisations
- in April 2021, eHealth NSW launched a new recruitment and onboarding project for Junior Medical Officers
- a mobile app was deployed for NSW Health in February 2021, enabling Junior Medical Officers to create, submit and monitor their unrostered overtime and call-back claims more easily
- ServiceNow/SARA was rolled out across NSW Health as our workflow and services management platform. Staff used it to raise 456,000 IT incidents, 1,141,000 HR cases, 106,000 finance cases and 28,000 IT changes. The platform also hosted an additional 4550 knowledge articles. The SARA Virtual Assistant was launched in August 2020 to provide a new channel for staff to find information 24/7, on any device. The statewide service desk answered 508,622 calls
- the digital system to fast-track frontline worker vaccinations was made available for public bookings, and by mid-2021 was in use at 64 clinics across 14 local health districts and specialty networks, capturing more than 675,000 registrations
- our Vaccination Administration Management system was launched. By mid-2021, more than 21,000 appointments had been booked and 3646 people had been vaccinated using the system.

Enhancing infrastructure, security and intelligence

With a focus on meeting our future needs, eHealth NSW continued to work closely with NSW Health organisations towards sustainable ICT infrastructure solutions to support a digitally enabled healthcare system.

The Health Grade Enterprise Network program piloted new operational and sourcing models for local ICT network infrastructure across Westmead Health Precinct, Coffs Harbour Hospital and our offices at St Leonards.

This year, eHealth NSW:

- continued to refresh critical ICT infrastructure platforms to cloud services. This included implementing Amazon Web Services, Azure Cloud services, and Microsoft 365 services and capabilities
- enhanced cyber security tools and operations capabilities across NSW Health. This included identifying and managing cyber incidents using global monitoring, email pattern analysis and collaboration with local health district IT teams
- continued to monitor statewide systems and worked with other government agencies to respond to cyber security issues and risks, which increased due to a rise in opportunistic attacks related to COVID-19
- provided support for a cyber security awareness and training program for all NSW Health staff. This included a new mandatory Cyber Fundamentals module as well as other cyber security modules and workshops for staff
- finalised a new NSW Health Microsoft Enterprise Agreement in June 2021. This will enable NSW Health to implement best-in-class security policies for staff.

Collaborative Staff Member of the Year Award winner

Rita Williams

The Sydney Children's Hospitals Network

Rita Williams worked for more than 30 years in the Social Work Department at the Children's Hospital at Westmead before she moved to the newly established Aboriginal Health Unit. An inspirational and proud Aboriginal woman, she made a journey of community collaboration across NSW to talk about kidney health and chronic disease. This led to the establishment of a public health surveillance program looking at kidney health in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children. Rita is always willing to share the painful history of Aboriginal health following her experiences of Aboriginal children being segregated from non-Aboriginal children at Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children at Camperdown. A testament to Rita's work was the establishment of the Antecedents of Renal Disease in Aboriginal Children and Young People Study in 2002, which progressed into an 18-year prospective, population-based cohort study, involving 3758 young people (2155 Aboriginal and 1603 non-Aboriginal) across NSW. This is an example of self-determination for communities to develop Indigenous-specific interventions to change the story of chronic disease in our mob. Congratulations to Rita for winning the 2020 Collaborative Staff Member of the Year Award.



Sydney Children's Hospitals Network's Rita Williams works in the Aboriginal Health Unit with a focus on kidney health.

Priority 7

Plan and deliver future-focused service models and infrastructure

NSW Health recognises the importance of building health facilities and service models to meet the current and future needs of communities in NSW. Through effective integrated planning for health infrastructure and increased digital capability, we are realising our long-term vision for the transformation of NSW Health and ensuring better-value outcomes to enhance care.

Delivering essential infrastructure creates jobs, benefits local businesses, ensures world-class facilities and improves the care we provide to the people of NSW. This year we achieved our largest-ever capital pipeline, with more than \$2.1 billion in infrastructure planning and construction, and 23 projects completed across the state. We also invested in technology to enable the increased uptake of virtual care across NSW and support the COVID-19 response.

Our priorities

- 7.1 Implement the 20-Year Health Infrastructure Strategy
- 7.2 Plan future-focused models of care and health strategy
- 7.3 Deliver agreed infrastructure on time and on budget
- 7.4 Deliver infrastructure plans and integrate with other agencies
- 7.5 Strengthen asset management capability

Key achievements

- The largest transformation of NSW Ambulance infrastructure was delivered through the \$132 million Rural Ambulance Infrastructure Reconfiguration Program and \$184 million Sydney Ambulance Metropolitan Infrastructure Strategy, including new ambulance stations at Cootamundra, Sawtell, Randwick and Mona Vale, and a Paramedic Response Point at Holroyd.
- Nine projects were progressed through the \$700 million Statewide Mental Health Infrastructure Program, which follows a co-design process and engages mental health consumers. In 2020-21, the state budget allocated \$30.2 million towards a range of specialist mental health services.
- Uptake of the myVirtualCare platform grew statewide, with 3148 clinicians connected to the platform providing 30,105 consultations. Pilots of myVirtualCare for rural endocrinology services were also launched at Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service and Broken Hill District Hospital.
- The NSW Telestroke Service celebrated its first anniversary, with 11 sites now available across the state at Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour, Lismore, Orange, Dubbo, Bathurst, Shoalhaven, Grafton, Griffith, Tweed Heads and Deniliquin.
- The Future Health Strategy will guide NSW Health service delivery over the coming decade.

Developing the Future Health Strategy

In 2020-21, we started developing a Future Health Strategy to guide NSW Health service delivery over the coming decade. It builds on the achievements of the NSW State Health Plan, which ended on 30 June 2021. Thousands of individuals across NSW shared their insights to help shape the strategy, including over 5000 NSW Health staff, primary health networks, Aboriginal community leaders, GPs, non-government organisations and consumer representatives. NSW Health will start to implement the strategy during 2021-22.

Bringing a 20-year infrastructure strategy to life

To ensure NSW continues to provide a world-class public health system that delivers value based, patient-centred healthcare, NSW Health worked with major stakeholders on the next steps towards implementation of the 20-Year Health Infrastructure Strategy. The strategy guides the use of our current built assets and decision making for use of our capital to maximise outcomes.

Implementing the Health Infrastructure Strategy

In July 2020, NSW Health finalised the State-wide Investment and Prioritisation Framework. The framework supports the Health Infrastructure Strategy and provides health organisations with guidance on the types of future investment proposals required to respond to the long-term challenges facing the health system. It sets out investment principles to guide local planning; a new collaborative planning approach; and criteria to assess and prioritise capital investment proposals from 2021. NSW Health has implemented these aspects of the framework through the 2021 Capital Investment Planning Process.

NSW Health also finalised the first implementation plan for the strategy. A key aspect is improving the tools and evidence provided to health service planners to support analysis of more options earlier in the planning cycle.

Major infrastructure projects making an impact

Health Infrastructure delivered more than \$2.1 billion in infrastructure planning and construction this year, completing 23 projects across NSW. Highlights included:

- Bankstown-Lidcombe Emergency Department Expansion
- Bowral and District Hospital Redevelopment Stage 1
- Central Coast Clinical School and Research Institute
- Grafton Ambulatory Care
- Inverell Hospital Redevelopment Stage 1B
- Manning Hospital Redevelopment Stage 1
- Mona Vale Hospital Redevelopment – Geriatric Evaluation and Management Unit and Palliative Care Unit
- St George Hospital Birthing Suite and Theatre Refurbishment
- Wagga Wagga Base Hospital Redevelopment
- nine projects as part of the \$297 million Multipurpose Service Program Stage 5 and \$100 million HealthOne Strategy, delivering contemporary facilities and services at Braidwood, Murrumburrah-Harden, Murrurundi, Yass, Lightning Ridge, Nambucca, Dapto, Ulladulla and Merrylands
- new ambulance stations at Cootamundra, Sawtell, Randwick and Mona Vale, plus a Paramedic Response Point at Holroyd.

Nine projects were progressed through the \$700 million Statewide Mental Health Infrastructure Program, which followed a co-design process and engaged mental health consumers.

In 2020-21, the state budget allocated \$30.2 million towards a range of specialist mental health services, with the following achieved:

- main works started for a new parent and babies' unit at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital
- site confirmation and planning advanced for the new mothers and babies' unit at Westmead Hospital
- the design stage was advanced for a new 10-bed Child and Adolescent Mental Health inpatient unit at Nepean Hospital
- a new 32-bed facility was announced to replace the existing inpatient mental health unit at Albury, following clinical service planning and model of care development
- a new five-bed Mental Health Intensive Care Unit within the Forensic Hospital at Malabar was commenced
- construction started for a 30-bed inpatient unit within Blacktown Hospital
- construction progressed on a 16-bed medium secure unit and 20-bed older persons unit at Campbelltown Hospital
- design began for a new 33-bed facility to replace the existing 25-bed Banksia Mental Health Unit at Tamworth
- tenders were requested to deliver new designed environments and 24/7 support services to transition long-stay patients to the community.

At 1 Reserve Road, St Leonards, where 10 NSW Health organisations now reside, measures were put in place to maintain a COVID-19-safe work environment in line with Safe Work guidelines. These included touch-free technology, reduced capacity limits, additional surface cleaning and QR sign-in codes.

Planning future-focused models of care and health strategy

NSW Health is investing significantly to equip the NSW health system for increased virtual care delivery. This year, eHealth NSW continued to collaborate with organisations across the state to digitally enable strategies and support this transformation.

Delivering virtual care

In June 2021, the Virtual Care Steering Committee endorsed the NSW Virtual Care Strategy. This strategy describes a coordinated and consistent approach to sustainably scaled virtual care, integrating it as an appropriate care delivery option across NSW Health services. It provides strategic focus areas to guide initiatives underway to embed virtual care at a state and local level. It also includes a high-level implementation plan and communications plan to increase public awareness of virtual care as a complementary care option.

To support this, a public-facing virtual care website was established and included patient, carer and clinician stories. Over 6000 people have viewed the site since its launch in January 2021.

Working with the Agency for Clinical Innovation, eHealth NSW supported local health districts and specialty networks to optimise the use of virtual care in line with the Future Health Strategy and the eHealth Strategy for NSW Health 2016-2026. The Agency partnered with the Ministry, eHealth NSW and other stakeholders to establish the Virtual Care Accelerator program, which has identified virtual care initiatives that could be expanded to support the COVID-19 response. The program worked to address gaps in capability and support change management across local health districts and specialty health networks, building a better foundation for future virtual care innovation to support clinical care and patient choice.

Uptake of the myVirtualCare platform grew statewide, with 3148 clinicians providing 30,105 consultations. Pilots of myVirtualCare for rural endocrinology services were also launched at Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service and Broken Hill District Hospital. Optimising provision of in-reach and outreach special virtual care across different care settings was prioritised in support of the NSW Health focus on value based healthcare and improving the patient and carer experience. The Virtual Care Accelerator also scoped opportunities to implement virtual care in non-admitted care settings and provided funding for Australia's first specific virtual paediatric service, virtualKIDS, managed through the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network.

Virtual care initiatives in response to COVID-19 included remote monitoring of COVID-19-positive patients and vulnerable high-risk COVID-19-negative patients in the community, and a major upgrade of the critical care camera network to augment emergency department capacity and services.

The NSW Telestroke Service celebrated its first anniversary, with 11 sites now available across the state at Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour, Lismore, Orange, Dubbo, Bathurst, Shoalhaven, Grafton, Griffith, Tweed Heads and Deniliquin.

Collaborative technology solutions continued to be deployed across the state. By end 2020-21, more than 80 per cent of NSW Health employees had been provided with virtual conferencing technology. eHealth NSW supported 3,888,949 audio/video calls and 3,300,334 scheduled audio/video meetings.

Infrastructure collaboration across the health system

The Ministry implemented a new collaborative planning approach in March 2021 with a series of capital investment planning meetings with each Health organisation. These meetings formed a key aspect of Stage 0 of the new Facility Planning Process, which ensures support services and precinct planning are integrated into capital planning and development from the outset of projects.

Participation from shared health services (Health Infrastructure, HealthShare NSW, eHealth NSW and NSW Health Pathology) allowed each organisation to explore, test and discuss service planning options with a wider group of stakeholders. This early and ongoing collaboration has informed the development of health organisations' capital investment proposals for 2021, which the Ministry will assess according to the State-wide Investment and Prioritisation Framework.

Working closely with Health Infrastructure, local health districts, specialty networks and pillars, eHealth NSW supported the introduction of a new asset management framework and the development of strategic asset management plans. eHealth NSW continues to review ICT strategies and plans contained within health organisation clinical service plans and business cases.

Support for integrated planning across government agencies

Place-based integrated planning with other NSW Government agencies remains a key focus for NSW Health. In 2020-21, Health Infrastructure developed a discussion paper on place-planning in a health setting, which will inform the development of a guide. It also completed a discussion paper that explores the issues, barriers and risks for precinct governance at Health Innovation Precincts in NSW. The overarching governance structure is now in place for NSW Health precinct interfaces and deliverables, with the establishment of the NSW Health Precinct Steering Committee reporting to the Future Health Program Delivery Board. In 2020-21, work continued at the four identified Health Innovation Precincts at Randwick, Tech Central (incorporating Camperdown), Westmead and Liverpool to progress plans, including the Randwick precinct's four-year strategy.

Health Infrastructure also completed the draft Health Precinct Strategy that defines its approach to place-based planning, along with a timeline for developing a new framework for strategic partnerships and investments.

Work has begun on a new commercial framework to guide the identification, planning and delivery of commercial partnerships and related transactions for health places and precincts.

In addition, Health Infrastructure has worked with Investment NSW and Greater Sydney Commission to identify and promote economic development opportunities within precincts and contributed to the COVID-19 Recovery Plan with support into the OneGov group.

It also continued coordination of the NSW Health input into updated state strategies on land use, infrastructure, transport, jobs creation, industry attraction and services.

HealthShare NSW collaborated with other statewide Health agencies to adopt a more holistic approach to infrastructure planning and asset management. Through its Capital, Assets and Service Planning group, it has ensured support service delivery is considered during the earliest stages of health infrastructure planning. This facilitates better-value outcomes and, more importantly, ensures more effective delivery of hospital services to enhance patient care.

NSW Health Pathology led and participated in meetings about integrated capital redevelopments involving the NSW Ministry of Health, Health Infrastructure, local health districts and others. Promotion of its Clinical Services Plan and Laboratory Design Guidelines to these groups resulted in six capital investment proposals, one investment decision document draft and inaugural NSW Health Pathology strategic asset management and asset management plans.

Asset management planning

In 2020-21, significant progress was made with the Asset Management Policy for the NSW Public Sector through the development of the NSW Health Asset Management Framework. Key achievements included development of foundational assessments and plans to guide a coordinated, consistent approach to asset planning and management across NSW Health.

Work also progressed to integrate asset management and new requirements in Health Infrastructure capital project planning and delivery through the Facility Planning Process Implementation Project. This project will continue in 2021-22 to ensure capital assets are fit for purpose, future focused, and enable high-quality and safe care.

Volunteer of the Year Award winner

Rupesh Udani

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

Rupesh Udani bravely shares his personal story as the father of a young organ donor at workplaces, seminars, religious and community groups to raise awareness and increase understanding of organ and tissue donation in the Sydney Indian-Australian community, throughout NSW and beyond. He has provided outstanding support for families through the power of education, conversation and connection. Rupesh has also held several Donate Life awareness initiatives, resulting in hundreds of immediate registrations and thousands of meaningful conversations. Congratulations to Rupesh for winning the 2020 Volunteer of the Year Award.



South Eastern Sydney Local Health District's Rupesh Udani supports other families who take the path of organ donation.

Priority 8

Build financial sustainability and deliver business improvements

In 2020-21, NSW Health continued to build financial sustainability and staff capability across the health system.

In doing so, we strengthened service provisions, achieved value in procurement, improved governance, accountability and risk management, and commissioned non-clinical services for better value. A priority was to enhance our financial systems to ensure the efficient and effective management of healthcare services for the people of NSW. In mid-2020, 10 health organisations were brought together within one location at St Leonards to further improve collaboration and productivity.

Our priorities

- 8.1 Deliver financial control in the day-to-day operations
- 8.2 Develop sustainable funding for future growth
- 8.3 Drive value in procurement
- 8.4 Deliver commercial programs
- 8.5 Enhance productivity using new ways of working with the relocation to 1 Reserve Road

Key achievements

- NSW Health achieved an overall procurement financial savings of \$31.4 million during financial year 2020-21.
- NSW Health data committees continued to collaborate across functional areas to identify links and enhance and drive best practice in data governance. The NSW Health five-year vision for corporate analytics continued to create value and improve decision making through enhanced data insights.
- In 2020-21, NSW Health continued to support the application of activity based management and better understand the cost of services provided to patients and the community.
- HealthShare NSW is developing a Sustainability Strategy in collaboration with the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. The strategy includes actions to improve resource efficiency and deliver operational cost savings.
- In mid-2020, 10 NSW Health organisations were relocated to new premises at 1 Reserve Road, St Leonards. Benefits of the new activity-based agile working environment have included standardised technical support with the eHealth NSW Connect IT hub and knowledge-sharing through centralised groups including the Young Professionals Network and Communities of Practice.

Delivering financial control through enhanced budgeting and reporting

NSW Health continued to prioritise outcome-based budgeting methodology in line with the NSW Government framework to provide an enhanced platform for governance and system financial sustainability. This focus supported a strategic financial view, enhanced budgeting, and performance indicators aligned with State Outcomes. Outcome-based performance and budget information was part of the 2021-22 budget process.

NSW Health continued to implement Outcome Budgeting in 2020-21 in line with NSW Treasury Policy and Guideline Paper - Outcome Budgeting, TPP 18-09 (TPP), which sets the framework for the way resources are managed and budget decisions are made across the NSW public sector.

The NSW Ministry of Health and Health Infrastructure have developed a framework to capture the recurrent impacts of capital investment, with the resulting data used for budget negotiations with NSW Treasury. This has increased understanding of the impacts of these investments across the health system to address associated costs.

NSW Health continued to support the application of activity based management. Managers, clinicians and other staff across NSW Health organisations were supported to better understand the cost of services being provided to patients and the community by comparing their services and service trends with other Health organisations, and by identifying areas where patient care could be improved. This enabled evidence-based operational and management decisions.

NSW Health's focus on revenue declines was largely put on hold this year because of the ongoing COVID-19 response.

Embedding new accounting standards

In 2020-21, one new accounting standard was implemented: AASB 1059 Service concession arrangements: Grantors (AASB 1059). This standard applies to service concession arrangements where an external party is engaged to provide public services on behalf of a grantor, which is a NSW Health organisation.

The NSW Ministry of Health coordinated a review of service concession arrangements across NSW Health to determine the extent to which AASB 1059 should apply. For each material arrangement identified, the Ministry prepared an accounting assessment paper. A centralised approach was taken to calculate the transition impacts, process the necessary accounting journals and prepare the required disclosures for the annual financial statements.

Workshops and training seminars were conducted to educate and train accountants to facilitate compliance with the new standard. Sessions were also conducted with impacted Health organisations to discuss the appropriate accounting for these arrangements on an ongoing basis.

In addition, independent post-implementation reviews were arranged for three new Accounting Standards which were implemented in 2019-20: AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers, AASB 1058 Income for Not-for-Profit Entities, and AASB 16 Leases.

The Secretary's Award – Integrated Value Based Care Award winner

Aged Care Rapid Assessment and Investigation Unit (ARIA)

South Western Sydney Local Health District

The Aged Care Rapid Assessment and Investigation Unit (ARIA) provides targeted, streamlined, multidisciplinary care for older patients. Its aim is to provide truly integrated care and improve patient outcomes by providing the right care in the right place at the right time. An embedded service since 2018, ARIA is a specialist-led multidisciplinary team which actively case-finds older patients in emergency departments for admission to the ARIA unit. This enables priority assessment, investigation and integrated care planning. To show the impact of the service, analysis was undertaken of 370 patients (185 in each group for ARIA and non-ARIA) of similar age, sex, culturally and linguistically diverse background, domicile, frailty and co-morbidity. Results showed ARIA patients had a shorter hospital length-of-stay compared with non-ARIA patients. The unit's targeted, integrated, multidisciplinary approach to frontline aged care services can also be associated with improved patient outcomes. For their work, the Aged Care Rapid Assessment and Investigation Unit at South Western Sydney Local Health District won the 2020 Secretary's Award for Integrated Value Based Care.



Providing integrated care for older people is key to the work the South Western Sydney Local Health District Aged Care Rapid Assessment and Investigation Unit is doing.

Creating value and improving decision making through data analysis

NSW Ministry of Health data committees continued to collaborate across functional areas to enhance and drive best practice in data governance. The NSW Health five-year vision for corporate analytics ensures alignment between functional areas to continue to create value and improve decision making through enhanced data insights.

Financial leadership and sustainable resource allocation

NSW Health remains focused on providing financial leadership, including sustainable resource allocation across the NSW public hospital system. In 2020-21, NSW Health continued to work closely with NSW Treasury to assess key budget pressures.

NSW Health also continued to enhance the governance and reporting framework to improve the measurement and evaluation of an investment's effectiveness from both a service delivery and financial perspective. An enhanced NSW Health evidence bank database and capital database is being developed to capture initial economic impact appraisals, which will support evaluations. Work continued in 2020-21 to develop the requirements of the evidence bank and to finalise data requirements for the capital database, which will be hosted in the eHealth NSW corporate analytics platform.

Assessing the economic impact of the Leading Better Value Care program

Economic analyses aim to improve patient outcomes and experience of care by ensuring available resources are used more efficiently. Three early implemented and scaled Leading Better Value Care initiatives (Osteoporotic Refracture Prevention (ORP), Osteoarthritis Chronic Care Program and High Risk Foot Services) were assessed and the 2019-20 results indicated that as provision of patient-centred care in outpatient settings increased, the demand for hospitalisation overall flattened against business-as-usual projections.

For example, ORP, which provides fracture patients with support and care to reduce the probability of refracture resulting in hospitalisation, was estimated to have avoided around 4900 patient admissions for refractures in 2019-20.

For the 10-year period starting in 2018-19, year-to-year cost-avoided benefits of \$290 million (cumulative cost-avoided benefits of \$2.1 billion) have been estimated across the program. NSW Health is on track to achieve this, with year-to-year costs avoided in 2019-20 for Tranche 1 and 2 initiatives of \$50 million and \$86 million respectively for first two years (2018-19 and 2019-20) compared with business-as-usual activity projections.

Developing funding models to support innovation in care delivery

NSW continued to work with all Australian governments to develop options for future funding models to support innovation in care delivery. NSW has led the establishment of refreshed governance arrangements for collaboration, and led implementation of the reform commitments made in the 2020-2025 Addendum to the National Health Reform Agreement.

In addition, in line with existing government responsibilities for the health system, NSW secured a Commonwealth financial contribution to the COVID-19 response. The contribution supported additional hospital costs, public health measures and private hospital sector viability payments to ensure sufficient hospital capacity to respond to the ongoing pandemic.

Prioritising sustainability across the health system

HealthShare NSW has included sustainability as one of three pillars in its 2020-2024 Strategic Plan and is developing a Sustainability Strategy in collaboration with the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. The strategy includes taking actions to improve resource efficiency and deliver operational cost savings, for example reducing waste at health facilities statewide and reforming food services to reduce food waste while offering patients increased choice. Initiatives are underway to reduce waste in meal service delivery and preparation; reduce transport emissions via supply chain optimisation; and embed procurement measures and tools to drive sustainable industry practices.

Driving value in procurement

NSW Health achieved an overall procurement financial savings of \$31.4 million during financial year 2020-21.

Key foundation work began for implementation of the NSW Health Procurement Reform Program during 2020-21, including strategies for medical consumables and pharmaceuticals. In addition, the NSW Health procurement model was refined to enhance governance, and facilitate improved cluster-wide coordination, contract management and procurement outcomes.

This included the following initiatives:

- a review of the procurement framework and organisational structure to improve and clarify roles and responsibilities across NSW Health, with implementation expected in 2021-22

- a review of pharmaceutical procurement to develop a strategy framework governing the usage of pharmaceuticals to deliver optimum clinical governance and better-value healthcare, with phased implementation expected in 2021-22
- initiated development of IT Systems and Data Strategy to enhance IT systems that support the end-to-end procurement process
- supply chain foundation work, including the identification of principles and objectives, with further enhancement of the business case and requirements in 2021-22.

The DeliverEASE program

A pilot for the DeliverEASE program was effectively rolled out with South Eastern Sydney Local Health District in February 2021. DeliverEASE improves visibility of medical consumable stock and reduces the risk of nil stock situations. In doing so, it supports the seamless provision of clinical care to patients and drives value in procurement. Other benefits include improved availability of medical consumables and personal protective equipment through the right items being delivered in the right quantities to the right place at the right time, which reduces waste. South Eastern Sydney Local Health District staff were able to view a dashboard that provides visibility of estimated stock levels at ward level to determine the priorities for deliveries. This saved staff time and effort, and received positive staff feedback.

Enhancing productivity through new ways of working

From mid-2020, 10 NSW Health organisations were relocated to new premises at 1 Reserve Road, St Leonards. eHealth NSW designed and provided technology solutions to prepare and support the office moves from various locations. The agencies involved have benefited from streamlined processes, and an activity-based agile working environment that has promoted diversity, flexibility and knowledge-sharing through centralised groups including the Young Professionals Network and Communities of Practice.

The co-location of health organisations has also enhanced opportunities for:

- standardised technical support with the eHealth NSW Connect IT hub
- simplified onboarding of new staff
- automated workflow solutions using AFM Online and SARA.

Premier's Award for NSW Woman of the Year and the NSW Woman of Excellence Award

Dr Kerry Chant PSM

Chief Health Officer

The Chief Health Officer, Dr Kerry Chant PSM, won the Premier's Award for NSW Woman of the Year and the NSW Woman of Excellence Award announced 10 March 2021 at the NSW Women of the Year Awards. Kerry's achievements were highlighted during NSW Women's Week to celebrate the diverse contributions and achievements of women across the state.

Not only has Kerry led the state's public health strategy to keep the community safe since the COVID-19 outbreak began, but she has notably combined that role with being the public face for our hardworking NSW Health teams. Kerry would be the first to say that she has not done this alone; she has worked alongside our State Health Emergency Operations Centre, the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre, pathology, clinical and shared services teams and other key partners to deliver our health system response. In doing so, Kerry has epitomised our values of collaboration, openness, respect and empowerment, earning the community's trust and becoming a role model and inspiration to many.



Dr Kerry Chant PSM received two distinguished awards this year for leading the state's public health strategy during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Elevating the Human Experience

NSW Health launched *Elevating the Human Experience: Our guide to action for patient, family, carer, volunteer and caregiver experiences* this year. The statewide blueprint emphasises the importance of people's experiences of using health services and the link between a good experience of care and positive health outcomes.

Seven enablers across the three key areas of people, process and place support NSW Health's aspiration to deliver positive experiences for patients, families, carers and staff, guiding priority initiatives on where the health system can be most effective.

Patient Experience Week recognised the incredible staff who positively impacted care provided in our hospitals and health settings.

To mark World Kindness Day, NSW Health participated in the #KindnessWorksHere campaign to celebrate the small acts of kindness. The campaign kickstarted a conversation on kindness, compassion and care, and the importance of continuing to build the culture of these values in elevating the human experience.

