

Enhanced Scope of Practice model of care



Introduction

In many rural areas, including Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD), healthcare workforce shortages occasionally result in the situation where a facility is left without a medical officer. This requires patients to travel outside their local area.

Expanding a nurse's Scope of Practice (SoP) to enable Registered Nurses (RN) to care for low acuity conditions (ATS4 and 5), can improve a range of patient outcomes such as reducing the time to treatment and fewer patients requiring transfers.

Expansion of the nursing SoP requires that the quality of care provided to the patients does not decline. This poster reports the results of the program to expand SoP in MLHD and monitors patient's outcomes, patient and nurse satisfaction.

Key activities

The program sought to develop the rural nursing workforce to ensure patients in small communities were able to receive timely appropriate treatment by competently trained RN's.

This was achieved by developing the unique Enhanced Scope of Practice (ESOP) Program, which uses different modalities to deliver the education and training. It uses technology and provides a variety of approaches to education delivery such as interactive online learning modules and videoconference education sessions.

It is an opportunity for rural RN's to receive education and training, delivered to their door. Also offering an opportunity for participants to consolidate knowledge and skills in their own sites and gain supported experience in a larger base hospital within MLHD.

The model was initially implemented in five sites, with 12 RNs successfully completing the ESOP Program and undertaking the role at their facility.

Key achievements

A total of 163 patients were treated as part of the new model and 100 per cent received the care they needed in their community.

An evaluation found that 90 per cent of patients were either satisfied or very satisfied with their overall experience.

The model improved access to health services and improved patient satisfaction.

The RN's felt they are able to provide a better service to the community.

Acknowledgements

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