

Knowledge, experience and training needs for independent allied health assistant practice.

Jacqueline Salway¹, **Lisa Somerville**², Kate Nayton³

1 Caulfield Hospital, Kooyong Road Victoria 3192, j.salway@alfred.org.au

2 Alfred Hospital, Commercial Road Victoria, 3191, l.somerville@alfred.org.au

3 Caulfield Hospital, Kooyong Road Victoria 3192, k.nayton@cgm.org.au

Introduction

This project mapped the core competencies of the allied health assistant (AHA) certificate III and IV training package and the applicable aspects of the Victorian Department of Health credentialing, competency and capability framework to existing AHA roles in a tertiary health service.

Objectives

The objective was to identify and address practice gaps in current assistant roles in order to develop on the job training that ensures AHAs are able to work to their full scope.

Methods

A mixed method approach was utilised that incorporated focus groups and the implementation of a standardised survey. A desktop analysis of Vocational Education Training Certificate III and IV AHA learning elements, and the National Common Health Capability Resource descriptors of expected behavioural capabilities were completed to create a Self-assessment document of AHA core competency and capabilities. Participating assistants completed the Self-assessment document to establish their level of experience in core AHA skills.

Collaboration of results were analysed and used to guide future learning and educational opportunities for assistants.

Results

Qualitative results suggest AHAs were extremely motivated to develop their working skills, and had strong validation of their assistant roles. Learning opportunities, specifically targeted for AHAs, however were lacking, with a limited framework for professional development. Completion of the Self-assessment tool by participating AHAs identified a significant need for on the job training to advance their core skills and enable them to work to their full scope of practice.

Conclusion

The AHA workforce is growing rapidly in response to health service demands. It is important to ensure this workforce is practice ready and continually developed in order to practice to full scope. This project demonstrates how a tertiary health service has utilised and applied existing frameworks to assess the needs, and implement appropriate on the job development training programs and development opportunities of the assistant workforce.