

It started as a good idea and grew into a wave of change

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Background

National health reform presents many challenges for health providers, particularly in rural and remote Australia. Country Health South Australia Local Health Network (CHSALHN) recognised that historically access to public health services across rural and remote South Australia was inconsistent, with a wide variety of existing eligibility and prioritisation criteria. What started as a project to improve consistent access to Allied and Community Health services across rural and remote South Australia has supported a tidal wave of change.

Method

As the next step in an ongoing repositioning process, a geographically diverse, multi-disciplinary working party was established to develop a consistent Access Framework for CHSALHN. This framework has then been trialled and implemented across CHSALHN utilising a supported, sequential methodology designed to engage staff at all levels in the organisation. By implementing some simple changes in data collection practices to support this framework the organisation is now able to present data in a way that engages staff in conversations about service planning and redesign at both the local and organisational levels.

Results

Early results indicate that the organisation now has an unprecedented ability to provide benchmarking data within the organisation in a way that engages clinicians and managers, and to use this information to redefine core service delivery from the ground up. The change management process used to introduce the framework and present the associated data is driving performance improvements across the organisation and commencement of the next project to improve capacity will provide further improvements.

Discussion

This South Australian rural initiative aims to improve the rural client journey by providing increasing clarity regarding available service delivery, and improve the initial service response provided to clients.

Word count – 275