

Allied Health Specialist Outpatient Clinics: Using data to ensure survival

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Background

In 2013, Metro North Hospital and Health Service (MNHHS) located in Brisbane had over 50 000 people on specialist outpatient waitlists. Innovative, feasible models were required to achieve MNHHS's goal of a 50% reduction in waiting lists within a 12 month period. Allied Health Practitioners (AHPs) are able to screen and manage a variety of conditions in several specialty areas and therefore this represented a significant opportunity to develop new, enhanced models of care. The aim of this study is to present the development and progress of AHP led models of care within MNHHS.

Methods

Ten new models of care were developed using AHPs in first contact roles to provide services to suitable patients on ENT, orthopaedic, plastic surgery, gynaecology, urology and neurosurgery outpatient waiting lists. In developing the models of care, AHPs worked closely with relevant stakeholders to develop clinical pathways and governance. A rigorous research and reporting framework was established to closely monitor outcomes and demonstrate productivity and efficiency.

Results

The new models have been operational since March 2014. The process followed has ensured strong stakeholder support for these models. Crucial to their ongoing survival is data collected according to the reporting framework which includes throughput, waiting times, clinical outcomes, health care utilisation, discharge outcome and adverse events.

Discussion

This project highlights the need to have proposals drafted and stakeholders engaged to quickly respond to funding opportunities. Financial data including cost and revenue projections has been weak or missing from allied health submissions to date and the input of a Health Economist facilitated the design of the reporting and research framework. This project offers a rigorous reporting framework that may assist others to demonstrate the value of AHP led services.