

Establishment, Implementation and Sustainability of the Western Health Allied Health and Community Services Clinical Governance Framework

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Background: It is essential that an Allied Health and Community Services (AH&CS) workforce who have responsibility for independent patient care and treatment are appropriately credentialed. Moreover, a system of professional development, clinical supervision and performance development ensures appropriate care is delivered by a competent workforce. The introduction of innovative and increasingly advanced and complex roles within this workforce require detailed definition in accordance with individual practitioner's levels of skill and position requirements. A robust clinical governance framework was required to ensure safe and effective patient care.

Methods: A literature review and external benchmarking of Health Professional workforce and clinical governance frameworks was conducted. Review of the Department of Health Allied health: credentialing, competency and capability framework and Western Health (WH) clinical governance framework was incorporated. Drafts of the framework, and associated policies, procedures, committee structures and resources were established and modified with close consultation with key stakeholders.

Results: The AH&CS clinical governance framework addresses the increasing need for flexibility around service delivery, optimal and efficient use of existing human resources and skills whilst maintaining the quality of care and improving access to health. It recognises that not all AH&CS professionals have a national registration structure and provides depth and breadth in terms of credentialing and standards. Moreover, the AH&CS clinical governance framework assists in identifying, developing, sustaining and monitoring the appropriate credentials, skills, competencies and minimum requirements of the workforce essential for the provision of Best Care within WH.

Discussion: The establishment, implementation and ongoing sustainability of the WH AH&CS clinical governance framework has been highly successful. A wide and varied suite of policies, procedures, practices and resources for the workforce has been introduced in fulfilling the project objectives. Bi-annual clinical auditing, targeted education and a move towards an electronic clinical governance system is underway.