

### **300: THE EFFECT OF \$120 MILLION IN A FIVE-YEAR PROGRAM TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF HEALTHCARE IN QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA**

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#### **Objective:**

In 1998, Queensland Health, the State Department of Health, redefined its quality framework as the blueprint for the provision of quality services for consumers and providers of Queensland Health's services, and to meet requirements of the Australian Health Care Agreement (AHCA) 1998-2003. This multi-faceted and highly successful program finished on 30 June 2003.

#### **Method:**

Consultation with health service providers and consumers led to the development of a Quality of Health Services Framework which outlined the principles underlying the quality of services delivered in our public health services, and the Quality Improvement and Enhancement Program (QIEP) to address the improvement in safety and quality of these services. It provided a basis for quality improvement activities across the organisation by endorsing approaches to enhancement in the areas of both corporate and clinical service delivery.

#### **Results:**

The Program consisted of twenty-three "content" program areas whose foci included incident monitoring, clinical and non-clinical risk management, reduction in variation in service delivery, education and training of staff, particularly clinicians, and the use of an evidence base in the delivery of health services. The program areas were developed from submissions from services throughout Queensland Health. Submissions were favoured if they offered statewide solutions to quality-related issues with consideration of the entire continuum of health service delivery and showed their outcomes could be sustained beyond the life of this health care agreement, i.e. beyond June 2003. Substantial business cases and detailed project plans were required for each Program Area to ensure sufficient attention had been given to the true potential for the achievement of the outcomes proposed.

A regime of regular reporting against anticipated milestones, deliverables and expenditure was instigated, with a formal project closure report outlining any necessary handover of functions and responsibilities into existing parts of Queensland Health, and noting lessons learned in the program.

This paper will outline the process, outputs, and outcomes of the QIEP, and will delineate the major milestones and deliverables and the exciting opportunities which the program with its budget of \$120 million offered to articulate the fundamental principles of Queensland Health's quality framework, and to generate and reinforce a culture of continuous improvement in health service delivery in Queensland public health services for the life of the agreement and beyond. Links with the work of the Australian Council for Safety & Quality in Health Care, particularly in the areas of incident monitoring, credentialing and clinical privileging, informed consent, and falls prevention in hospitals and residential facilities, will also be addressed.

#### **Conclusions:**

The QIEP has been an extensive change management program within a relatively short period of time in Queensland Health. The impact of the Program on 63,000 health service providers in the State's health department, and Queensland's population of over 3 million is difficult to assess. However, early evaluation of the outputs and outcomes of the 23 program areas in QIEP have shown some immediate positive impact. An external review of the process undertaken and achievements to date is currently underway. This

review will reinforce any functions which must continue in the organisation and suggest how this may be arranged, and suggest how a program of this size may be better pursued if the next AHCA offers similar opportunities. A post-implementation review planned for at least 12-months post 30 June 2003 will indicate the longer-term effect.