

What Transforming Health means for:

Allied and Scientific Health Professionals

Highlights

South Australia's allied and scientific health professionals are dedicated to giving excellent care to their patients. Across our metropolitan health system, our doctors, nurses and midwives and allied and scientific health professionals have found ways to design our health system so that it delivers the best care, first time, every time. They have developed 284 Safety and Quality Standards, which if adopted would result in several changes to how and where we deliver health care.

The following highlights some important changes for allied and scientific health professionals, arising from the next step of Transforming Health:

Emergency care

Life-threatening emergencies, such as heart attacks, strokes and major accidents, need highly specialised teams to ensure people receive the right care at the right time. These teams need to be available whenever these major emergencies occur – day or night, weekday or weekend.

- > We will ensure patients have access to all relevant allied and scientific health professionals across our emergency sites, staff will work to their full and expanded scope of practice, and support rapid diagnosis, management and speedy recovery of our patients.

Older persons' care

Older people are at higher risk of fractures. Those with a fracture may not fully recover their mobility because of permanent injury or deconditioning while in hospital. Currently an older person with a fracture may wait many days on a ward before going to theatre, and it is not uncommon for some to remain in hospital for up to two weeks following surgery, with only limited allied health support.

- > We are establishing a single statewide care pathway that provides direct access to orthogeriatric services, and includes early assessment from all relevant allied and scientific health professionals.
- > This enhanced service will provide better coordination, and more timely input from the range of allied and scientific health team members, leading to more holistic management and better health outcomes for those patients.

Rehabilitation

Integrating acute, sub-acute and ambulatory (day) rehabilitation into our hospitals, with new or upgraded rehabilitation facilities, will support allied health professionals to deliver best practice care by allowing them to begin rehabilitation as soon as the patient is ready.

- > Implementing rehabilitation pathways across the system, including direct ward admission for allied health monitored chronic conditions, will increase the effectiveness of rehabilitation services by enabling patients to be seen sooner.
- > Expansion of Rehabilitation at Home services will mean that patients have increased access to allied health teams who provide rehabilitation across the hospital and home services, providing continuity of care and support for ongoing improvement.

Elective surgery

As most elective surgery is 'once-in-a-lifetime' for that condition, a specialist who has done the procedure many times provides the best care. This will result in shorter waiting times, shorter stays in hospital and better health outcomes for patients.

- > We are establishing specialist elective surgery streams across South Australia. Within each of the streams, access to appropriate allied and scientific health services will be critical for success. This will include supporting the triage process, working with patients before and following their operation, or providing treatment for patients not requiring surgery through allied health led clinics.

What are the key changes for allied and scientific health professionals under Transforming Health?

Under Transforming Health, allied and scientific health services will expand their services across the system so that they have a greater role in providing:

- > Multidisciplinary criteria led discharge programs.
- > Earlier input in interdisciplinary pathway-based care.
- > Direct ward admission for allied health monitored chronic conditions.
- > Greater support for elective surgery pathways across the system.

This means that allied and scientific health professionals will:

- > Work to full and expanded scope of practice more often and in more settings.
- > Work across seven days and over extended hours.
- > Be credentialed to make direct referrals to specialists in accordance with patient pathways.

Who are the allied and scientific health professionals in SA Health?

The allied and scientific health professions collectively provide a broad range of diagnostic, technical and therapeutic services across the South Australian healthcare system, and as such all will be affected by the changes under Transforming Health. Allied and scientific health professionals are identified by their application of complex skills and knowledge to build, rebuild and maintain optimal physical, sensory, cognitive and psychosocial function of patients, all the while keeping the patient at the centre of their care.

In SA Health, the group of allied and scientific health professionals includes but is not limited to: Social Workers, Medical and Grant Funded Scientists, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Pharmacists, Medical Radiation Practitioners, Psychologists, Dietitians, Speech Pathologists, Podiatrists, Audiologists, Exercise Physiologists, Genetic Counsellors, Art Therapists, Music Therapists, Optometrists, Orthoptists, Orthotists and Prosthetists, Dental Therapists and Hygienists, Medical Physicists, Epidemiologists and Perfusionists.

Workforce impacts

Our allied and scientific health professionals are devoted to delivering excellent patient care. Together, we want to design a system that allows our clinicians to meet the challenges ahead, and give best care, first time, every time. Our allied and scientific health professionals are vital to this.

Some of the workforce changes which arise from Transforming Health include rostering senior nurses, doctors and allied and scientific health professionals overnight and on weekends to support rapid admission, early intervention of deteriorating patients, timely treatment and timely discharge. We want senior nurses and allied health professionals supporting the active management of patients and criteria-led discharge.

As key members of the multidisciplinary team, allied and scientific health professionals play a major role in the delivery of safe, quality care, and have an important contribution to make in the design of new models of care. At present, within metropolitan SA Health, there are limited allied health services available on weekends, contributing to longer length of stay and increased potential for the patient to decondition. Increasing the availability of allied health professionals on the weekends so patients can receive the treatment they need on any day of the week, not just weekdays, is an important part of the changes.

What is the timeline for implementation?

Implementation of the main changes will take effect between 2014/15 and 2018/2019. Beyond this, Transforming Health will be a journey of continuous improvement applied across the healthcare system.

The first priority is to improve patient access and flow, which will create capacity in our system. This is a precursor to many service changes which will only occur once enough capacity has been created.

Targeted, site-specific implementation plans will be developed and will align with existing works and programs, such as the opening of the new Royal Adelaide Hospital, the upgrade of the Flinders Medical Centre and mental health reforms.

How will staff be involved?

Given the scope and degree of changes required, ongoing engagement with staff, unions, consumers and primary health, academic and industry partners is a priority to ensure the changes meet the identified Clinical Standards and reflect the views of all affected groups.

SA Health is committed to ongoing employee engagement and consultation. A formal Employee and Union Engagement and Consultation Strategy will be developed to support this, in collaboration with unions, which details our commitment, and how this translates in practice.

Where do I go for more information?

You can access the Deliver Transforming Health – Our Next Steps paper and fact sheets by site on the Transforming Health website at www.transforminghealth.sa.gov.au.

For more information

Email: transforminghealth@health.sa.gov.au

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