

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Clinical Governance

In 2007–08 the Clinical Governance team audited the consent information given to patients regarding their illness and treatment. The project compared the information patients received from clinicians at Austin Health with the Australian Government's National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recommended guidelines.

FOLLOWING THE INTRODUCTION OF 12 KEY POINTS FOR CLINICIANS TO DISCUSS WITH PATIENTS, A SUBSEQUENT SURVEY SHOWED AN IMPROVEMENT OF PATIENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF THE NHMRC RECOMMENDED ELEMENTS OF INFORMED CONSENT.

Aligned with acknowledged surgical best practice, Clinical Governance initiated a time out protocol that introduced procedures for cross checking patient information before angiography and radiology procedures were performed. The practice ensures patients are correctly identified, that the procedure is scheduled correctly, that their consent has been recorded, and that the correct part of their body for their procedure has been marked.

Risk Management

While Austin Health has been an industry leader in clinical governance, or patient safety, a greater emphasis on business risk management was delivered through creating a Risk Manager role in June 2007. As a result, an organisation wide risk management framework was developed and implemented. The framework focussed on providing staff with consistent tools and processes for assessing, managing and communicating risk issues.

The framework is reflected in the revised risk management policy and procedure documents and a staff education program is underway to support the change in practice.

"THE AUSTIN HEALTH 2007 QUALITY OF CARE REPORT WAS DISTRIBUTED TO OVER 170,000 HOUSEHOLDS"

Quality and Planning

Quality improvement is important for any health care organisation. As such, Austin Health is accredited under the Evaluation and Quality Improvement Program from the Australian Council of Healthcare Standards (ACHS), the principal independent authority for measuring and implementing quality improvement systems in Australian health care organisations.

The accreditation process is based on a systematic, external peer review. It operates on a four-year cycle of self assessment, an organisation-wide survey and a periodic review to ensure Austin Health meets ACHS standards. During 2007–08 Austin Health successfully completed the organisation-wide survey and was awarded the maximum four year accreditation. This is an outstanding achievement as the organisation was assessed against ACHS' newly-released standards addressing the safety and quality of care at Austin Health. In their report the survey team noted, "Quality patient care is a clear focus of Austin Health".

The Austin Health 2007 Quality of Care Report was distributed to over 170,000 households.

Community feedback was positive. Many readers rated the layout, readability and range of articles as excellent, with one reader noting, "Overall, I'd say it makes us locals proud of our local hospital".

As Austin Health's strategic plan reaches the end of its lifespan, a number of strategic priorities were progressed. A new, integrated safety and quality framework was developed including a revised committee structure. A new business planning process was developed and piloted, and supporting software is currently under review.

Occupational Health and Safety

Austin Health's health and safety systems provide the organisation with a framework that helps to maintain a healthy and safe environment for staff, patients, contractors and visitors. Working safely is a priority for all staff, who are supported by a safety culture and dedicated team of occupational health and safety (OHS) professionals.

The role of managers in improving workplace safety was a particular focus in 2007–08. By clearly communicating the responsibilities of all managers in providing and maintaining a safe and healthy work environment, they are equipped to promote safe working practices through leadership.

Austin Health remained committed to continuous improvement and last year undertook a comprehensive review of how dangerous goods are handled and stored resulting in a more consistent organisation-wide approach.

The organisation's systems and procedures are regularly audited by both internal and external agencies, including Worksafe, to ensure full compliance with OHS legislative requirements. An internal analysis of the claims management processes led to improvements and cost savings.

The return to work rate following an injury improved significantly after a dedicated manager was employed in 2007.

LAST YEAR, 97.5 PER CENT OF CLAIMANTS RETURNED TO WORK TO PERFORM EITHER FULL OR PARTIAL DUTIES. IN ADDITION, THE NUMBER OF DAYS LOST DUE TO INJURY WAS REDUCED BY 39 PER CENT. THIS ACHIEVEMENT IS A TESTIMONY TO THE ONGOING, ORGANISATION-WIDE MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY.

SUPPORTING OUR PEOPLE

Human Resource Services

A major project was undertaken during 2007–08 to introduce an internally-managed salary-packaging program for staff. Staff participating in Austin Advantage now receive better service and Austin Health retains fees that would otherwise have been paid to an external provider. Importantly, Austin Advantage has been well received by staff, whose feedback describes the service as timely and accurate.

WHEN AUSTIN ADVANTAGE COMMENCED ON 1 APRIL 2008, AROUND 4,500 STAFF HAD SIGNED UP TO USE THE SERVICE. THE PROGRAM NOW PROVIDES SALARY-PACKAGING SERVICES TO 4,900 STAFF, WITH MEAL ENTERTAINMENT BENEFITS PROVIDED TO 2,350 STAFF.

The Employment Unit experienced increased levels of activity, processing 1,564 letters of appointment, 2,476 variations to employment contracts and 2,344 recruitment requests, while placing 594 job advertisements in print media and on the internet.

Employee relations

The Employee Relations Unit continued to provide strategic and operational advice and support to managers working through industrial relations, performance management, attendance and disciplinary matters. The unit accessed the Australian Industrial Relations Commission to work through union and staff concerns about the roster changes required to improve the quality of services provided by Austin Pathology laboratories.

Workforce Data			
			2007-08
Labour Category	June current month FTE	June YTD FTE	June current month head count
Nursing services	1,882.20	1,823.09	2,932
Administration and clerical	714.72	701.62	1,047
Medical support	599.54	605.68	872
Hotel and allied services	634.70	639.76	837
Medical officers	130.10	129.21	182
Hospital medical officers	323.59	308.73	755
Sessional medical officers	83.87	76.78	338
Ancillary support Sservices	386.77	367.74	649
Total	4,775.49	4,652.61	7,612

Learning and organisational development

The Learning and Organisation Development Unit undertook a significant project to develop Austin Health's new staff performance management program. With the assistance of an external agency and senior staff, the program aims to deliver improved performance culture through employee engagement and a limited pilot will be introduced over the next six months.

The unit developed and introduced Austin Health's new emerging leaders program, aiming to develop the key leadership skills of senior staff such as nurse unit managers and other senior clinicians. The program enabled participants to understand their individual leadership style, and to engage their teams in learning about successful leadership strategies. In addition the unit introduced a popular lecture series that explored common workplace issues at Austin Health.

An organisation-wide staff satisfaction survey returned 2,145 responses. The results showed that staff rated Austin Health highly. In addition, the survey questions were compared against a benchmark set by responses to identical questions by staff at three other similar hospitals. Austin Health outperformed in almost 70 per cent of comparable questions.

Child Care Centre

The Austin Child Care Centre is a 59-place centre that provides quality day care for the children of Austin Health staff. Plans are underway to redevelop the centre and expand to include an additional 11 places while improving the physical infrastructure. Staff and families are encouraged to be actively involved in continuing improvement and striving for the highest standards of quality care.

Highlights of the year included participating in community events such as NAIDOC Week in July to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and ANZAC Day celebrations.

BUSINESS SUPPORT

Information Technology

Austin Health continued its focus on improving clinical efficiency and patient safety through using information technology. A clinical systems planning day, attended by 40 senior staff, was held in August 2007 to determine priorities.

The electronic discharge summary system for inpatient episodes was introduced in more clinical units, reaching 60 per cent of units by mid-2008.

A NUTRITION RISK PILOT PROJECT DEMONSTRATED IMPROVED ASSESSMENT OF THE ALMOST 40 PER CENT OF PATIENTS WHO ARE FOUND TO BE MALNOURISHED ON ADMISSION.

A smartcard identification system was developed for clinicians working in The Surgery Centre to improve speed of access to electronic medical record information.

Major human resource systems, particularly rostering, salary packaging and an upgraded training records system, were implemented during the year.

“THE DEMAND FOR MEDICAL SERVICES CONTINUED TO GROW WITH OVER 250,000 PATIENT RECORDS MOVING ACROSS SITES IN THE PAST YEAR”

Demand for new network services and the need to replace ageing information technology infrastructure continued to present a challenge for funding and staff capacity. During 2007–08, the number of servers on Austin Health’s network increased from 101 to 163 and the amount of data in storage area networks grew from 23 terabytes to 38 terabytes.

Health Information

Health Information Services revised the medical record audit tool to ensure it covers the continuum of patient care. The new tool was piloted by a number of Austin Health’s clinical service units and was subsequently rolled out to all units.

The demand for medical services continued to grow with over 250,000 patient records moving across sites in the past year.

To simplify the process, a policy was developed to allow patients, in certain circumstances, to take their records with them when they have multiple appointments on different sites on the same day.

Staff from Health Information Services participated in a range of benchmarking studies with major Melbourne hospitals and The Health Roundtable to assist with national initiatives to identify best practice management of medical records.

The Clinical Information Unit (CIU) is responsible for collecting, linking, auditing and reporting the costs and revenue for patient care at Austin Health. In 2008, the unit provided patient costing data to the mandatory state government Victorian Cost Weight Study, which is used to determine hospital funding. The unit also provided data and analysis for the Department of Human Services’ Specified Grant Reviews and its data was used to help secure new technology funding and additional funding for some clinical services. In addition, the unit provided costing, performance and benchmarking information to a number of internal and external reviews to ensure continuous improvement.

The Management Information System Development and Support Unit continued to provide timely decision support information to the executive and managers. Major projects included developing a clinical audit database for the general medicine units, providing information for the hospital service plan and initiating a project to review and improve the management information reporting infrastructure within the health service.

Clinical Photography

Each year Clinical Photography provides a range of photographic services to Austin Health. During 2007–08 its activities included providing patient photography to assist in managing wounds and facilitating research by providing poster publications for Austin Health Research Week and international and national conference presentations.

DEVELOPMENT, CAPITAL AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Capital Works

The Capital Works Division appointed a new Director of Capital Works and Infrastructure. A departmental restructure during the year provided the opportunity to improve the process for the delivery of capital works within Austin Health.

Funding was approved for a number of major capital projects, which include \$25 million for the Olivia Newton-John Cancer and Wellness Centre and \$15.5 million for the new Centre for Trauma Related Mental Health on the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital site. Planning and detailed design are underway for these two projects.

Projects under construction included The Surgery Centre, the Health and Rehabilitation Centre, staff relocation from the 3KZ building which will be replaced by the new Florey Neurosciences Institutes Building and the Australian Bio-Resources Centre.

A range of infrastructure projects has also commenced. Some of these projects were: refurbishment of two wards at Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital; provision of a new transformer and switchboard in the boiler house on the Austin Hospital site for power to the new Bio-Resources building; and upgrading of the electricity infrastructure to provide additional capacity for the Harold Stokes Building.

NEW PROJECTS IN THE PLANNING PHASE INCLUDE THE PROPOSED 122 BED MEDIUM-SECURITY MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY ON THE HEIDELBERG REPATRIATION HOSPITAL SITE AS WELL AS CLEARANCE PROJECTS AT THE SAME SITE; THE PATHOLOGY DEPARTMENT REDEVELOPMENT AT AUSTIN HOSPITAL; AND REDEVELOPMENT OPTIONS FOR THE MELLOR WARD ON THE ROYAL TALBOT REHABILITATION CENTRE SITE.

Biomedical Engineering

Biomedical Engineering continued to provide management, support and technical advice in medical equipment safety during 2007-08. More than 9,500 tasks were completed including commissioning, repair and maintenance of equipment. In addition, the unit provided support during the commissioning and bedding down of the Surgery and Endoscopy Centre's new equipment, systems and procedures. Additional support was also provided in procuring and preparing the new medical equipment for The Surgery Centre.

Food Services

The Food Services Department introduced a decentralised management structure following the recommendations of an independent review in 2007. The department secured a three-year contract to provide a plated meal service to The Royal Women's Hospital, which has allowed the potential to upgrade the existing facility to cater for additional volume.

The Central Production Unit's (CPU) Food Safety Program was accepted by Banyule Council and is currently registered as a 'class 1' food premises. The CPU standardised and tested all recipes to ensure Victorian nutritional specifications were met.

Stericlean

Stericlean Linen Service successfully consolidated its services eliminating the need to operate the plant on Saturday mornings. As a part of its strategy to ensure water is used efficiently, the service's water management plan was upgraded within Yarra Valley Water guidelines. A HydroShare web-based meter was installed to provide real-time water meter consumption data, reports and graphs.

WATER USAGE WAS REDUCED BY 21 PER CENT IN 2006-07, AND A FURTHER 12 PER CENT IN 2007-08.
