



An Australian Government Initiative

Clinical Governance Framework
Abridged Version for Commissioned Services November 2020



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1. Introduction

Clinical governance ensures accountability and transparency across all disciplines of health care, supporting staff to ensure patients and the community receive high standards of quality care and service provision, and quality improvements are continuously reviewed, monitored and implemented.

Good clinical governance ensures that the community and the health service organisation can be confident that systems are in place to deliver safe and high-quality care and continuously improve services.

The purpose of the Clinical Governance Framework is to provide best practice guidance in clinical governance with strong emphasis on leadership, culture and improvement as being fundamental to high-quality, safe care and service. The framework identifies the five domains and systems required to develop and maintain a high performing organisation and service.

This framework is designed to provide the organisation and its commissioned health service organisations practical guidance on the systems and processes needed for sound clinical governance; the framework components can be tailored and scaled to best suit health services circumstances and best meet the needs of their consumers.

The framework aligns closely with the Victorian Clinical Governance Framework¹ and the National Model Clinical Governance Framework².

1.2 Reference Documents

- Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) 2008, Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights, ACSQHC, Sydney.
- Delivering high-quality healthcare, Victorian Clinical Governance Framework (Safer Care Victoria) June 2017, Department of Health and Human Services, State of Victoria.
- National Model Clinical Governance Framework 2017, Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, Sydney.

2. Definitions

Clinical Governance: the integrated systems, processes, leadership and culture of an organisation that are at the core of providing safe, effective, accountable and person-centred healthcare underpinned by continuous improvement.³

High Quality, Safe, Effective, Person-Centred Care: where avoidable harm during delivery of care is eliminated; where appropriate and integrated care is delivered in the right way at the right time, with the right outcomes, for each consumer; where people's values, beliefs and their specific contexts and situations guide the delivery of care

¹ Delivering high-quality healthcare, Victorian Clinical Governance Framework (Safer Care Victoria) June 2017, Department of Health and Human Services, State of Victoria

² National Model Clinical Governance Framework 2017, Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, Sydney

³ Delivering high-quality healthcare, Victorian clinical governance framework, Safer Care Victoria, DHHS, June 2017



and organisational planning and where the organisation or health service is focused on building meaningful partnerships with consumers to enable and facilitate active and effective participation.⁴

A 'just' culture: a just culture is a culture of trust, learning and accountability constantly improving and oriented toward patient safety.⁵

3. Scope

Gippsland PHN can deliver services through three modalities - commissioning, direct, and composite delivery. All services, regardless of their delivery modality are required to respond to the Gippsland PHN Clinical Governance Framework.

Commissioned Service Delivery:

Clinical service delivery is undertaken by a second medical/health care organisation under a contracting arrangement. The clinical service is delivered within the clinical governance framework of that organisation. Gippsland PHN has a clinical governance monitoring role, and as such, is responsible for ensuring that service providers have effective systems in place for achieving clinical governance in accordance with best practice.

All commissioned clinical services contracted by Gippsland PHN are required to have in place a Clinical Governance Framework that reflects Gippsland PHNs Clinical Governance Framework and to have effective structures, systems and processes to implement that framework. Service providers will be expected to participate in service reviews with Gippsland PHN and to provide regular reports on the quality and performance of their service.

Composite Service Delivery:

Gippsland PHN staff embedded into the organisational systems and governance framework of a second medical/health care organisation undertaking service delivery. Service delivery is undertaken by a second medical/health care organisations with Gippsland PHN retaining some programmatic functions (for example workforce development/planning). Composite services are undertaken within the clinical governance framework of Gippsland PHN and the second organisation. Clinical governance responsibilities are negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

Direct Service Delivery:

Direct service delivery is undertaken by Gippsland PHN staff within the Gippsland PHN Clinical Governance Framework. This mode will only be implemented in situations of market failure.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Boysen, P. G. Just Culture: A foundation for balanced accountability and patient safety, *The Ochsner Journal*, 2013; 13(3):400-406

The Gippsland PHN Clinical Governance Framework and associated policies and procedures are the system of safeguards that govern clinical practice within programs commissioned and/or delivered by Gippsland PHN.

The Clinical Governance Framework responds to five domains of Clinical Governance and corresponding systems⁶; it is reflective of contemporary clinical practice codes, frameworks and standards. The five domains of the framework are:

1. Leadership and culture
2. Consumer directed care and partnership
3. Clinical risk management
4. Clinical effectiveness and appropriateness
5. Effective workforce and staff education

Within the five domains, key systems and practices are required to support safe, effective, person-centred care for every consumer.

The domains are interrelated and integrated into the organisations broader governance arrangements (for example clinical risk management is a component of broader risk management, leadership and culture is a component of the organisations purpose and culture governance framework).

Quality improvement is a foundation element of the clinical governance domains, systems and processes as depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The interrelated five domains of clinical governance



⁶ Delivering high-quality healthcare, Victorian clinical governance framework, Safer Care Victoria, DHHS, June 2017

4. Clinical Governance Principles

The following principles will guide effective clinical governance systems and are adopted from the Victorian Clinical Governance Framework (Safer Care Victoria)⁷.

- **Excellent consumer experience**
 - Commitment to providing a positive consumer experience
- **Clear accountability and ownership**
 - Accountability and ownership displayed by all staff
 - Compliance with legislative and appropriate departmental policy requirements
- **Partnering with consumers**
 - Consumer engagement and input is actively sought and facilitated
- **Effective planning and resource allocation**
 - Staff have access to regular training and educational resources to maintain skill set
- **Strong clinical engagement and leadership**
 - Ownership of care processes and outcomes is promoted and practised by all staff
 - Health service staff actively participate and contribute their expertise and experience
- **Empowered staff and consumers**
 - Organisational culture and systems are designed to facilitate the pursuit of safe care by all staff
 - Care delivery is centred on consumers
- **Proactively collecting and sharing critical information**
 - The status quo is challenged and additional information is sought when clarity is required
 - Robust data is effectively understood and informs decision making and improvement strategies
- **Openness, transparency and accuracy**
 - Health service reporting, reviews and decision making are underpinned by transparency and accuracy
- **Continuous improvement of care**
 - Rigorous measurement of performance and progress is benchmarked and used to manage risk and drive improvement in the quality of care

⁷ Ibid.