

## Allied Health Clinical Council Activities 2020

The summary of key topics, discussions and contributions of the Allied Health Clinical Council over 2020 are outlined.

The year provided many challenges for the community requiring input and advice from Allied Health Professionals, most specifically relating to the bushfires and COVID-19 pandemic.

There were four meetings for AHCC originally scheduled for 2020, but due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, an additional meeting was held in April via Zoom. The contribution by all members of AHCC has been greatly appreciated.

Two new members were welcomed, Gobika Srikanthan (Pharmacist, Portland Pharmacy) and Rebecca Hannan (Exercise Physiologist, The Healthy Body Co.). The contribution and input of Bronwyn Reed, who resigned from the Committee, was acknowledged.

Wentworth Healthcare Board member Belinda Hill also attended and contributed regularly to the AHCC.

Various Guests attended AHCC during the year (other than Wentworth Healthcare staff) included Ally O'Rourke (Assistant Director, NSW/ACT Community Engagement, NDIA) Kim Packham (Manager, Primary Health Care and National Standards Program, Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care) and Alyssa Brewer (Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care) and Gary Smith (Chair, Joint Boards Integrating Care Sub-Committee).

The Chairperson of the Community Advisory Committee (Belinda Leonard) and the Chair of GP Clinical Council (Dr Michael Crampton) also attended meetings where topics were of interest to other Wentworth Healthcare Committees.

It is also acknowledged that Jillian Harrington as Chair of the Allied Health Clinical Council also attended most meetings of the GP Clinical Council (18 meetings held in 2020) to provide an Allied Health perspective into matters (mainly COVID-19 related) considered by the GP Clinical Council.

Dr Anne Lyell's role in supporting the HealthPathways program from an Allied Health perspective has been greatly appreciated.

### Covid-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 Pandemic was a significant issue for Wentworth Healthcare from March onwards. The following outlines the key issues considered and identified by AHCC over that time to support the work of Wentworth Healthcare, in addition to general updates of and sharing of new information from the Ministry of Health, the Department of Health, and the NBMLHD.

- Input into the development of the Wentworth Healthcare response for COVID-19

- Guidance on PPE for Allied Health professionals, and patients
- Impacts on waiting lists from surgery deferrals
- Practitioner exhaustion from high Telehealth (including video) use and as “informal councillors” by face to face practitioners was shared

## NDIS

A range of issues and concerns were raised through the year which resulted in having a representative of the NDIA present to the AHCC at its August meeting and extensive feedback was provided including accreditation, patient and provider support, and consistency of assessment.

## Proposed Health Standards – Primary Care

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care presented to AHCC as part of their consultation on the proposed Health Standards for Primary Care.

Valuable feedback was provided to the commission, and the discussion and issues raised formed the basis of a submission made by Wentworth Healthcare to the draft standards.

## Workforce Issues

This topic was an area of consistent concern of AHCC over the year, with concerns for both present and future workforce shortages expressed strongly. It was noted this is an area that Wentworth Healthcare can influence but not control or direct.

- Recruitment and retention issues
- Consider future Allied Health graduates will be in high demand
- Noted the workforce attraction video prepared by Wentworth Healthcare
- Suggested a careers evening targeting schools as an idea to promote the Allied Health professions
- Western Sydney City Deals Health workforce strategy was identified as a future topic for discussion and feedback
- Shortages of specific skills in the Nepean Blue Mountains region were identified throughout the year

## Other Matters

The AHCC also consider a range of other issues and topics, some of which were raised by members, and these are outlined below;

- A question of how well the new Lithgow Headspace was connecting with Lithgow High School was raised, including ensuring there is a common understanding of referral and triage processes
- Impacts of the Summer Fires and February heavy rain and flooding was shared, particularly the on Health professionals and emergency services personnel
- Provided feedback on planned wellbeing sessions being organised for Health professionals
- Requested training for Allied Health professionals on workers compensation

- The range of activities that Wentworth Healthcare is working with the NBMLHD towards integrating services was presented
- The update to the 2019 Health Needs Assessment was presented and discussed
- Updates to HealthPathways were regularly shared with input sought and provided

## SUMMARY

The outcome of all discussions were incorporated by Wentworth Healthcare Executive and Senior Managers into the various forums they are participating in, and where there were recommendations to the Board, these have been considered by the Board and response shared.