

2021

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR
THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

**BIANNUAL UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FINAL REPORT: INDEPENDENT
REVIEW INTO THE WORKPLACE CULTURE WITHIN ACT PUBLIC
HEALTH SERVICES**

**Presented by
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Minister for Health
31 March 2021**

This statement respects the commitment made by the former Minister for Health and Wellbeing on 16 May 2019 to provide the Assembly with biannual updates on the actions being taken in response to the Independent Review into the Workplace Culture within ACT Public Health Services.

In August 2020, I provided members with the third update on the substantial work that had progressed against the recommendations.

Significant work continues against these recommendations, at a system-wide level and within each of the three arms of the public health system – the ACT Health Directorate, Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce.

Strong Governance

A strong governance framework continues to oversee the program of work. The Culture Review Oversight Group (Oversight Group), which I Chair, has met on seven occasions with the purpose of the group being to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the Final Report. The Culture Review Implementation Steering Group (Steering Group), chaired by the Director-General of the ACT Health Directorate, facilitates the implementation of the recommendations of the Review and has met 16 times.

As recommended in the Inaugural Annual Review conducted in April and May 2020, the Oversight Group held a strategic workshop on 25 August 2020 to consider the roles and responsibilities of committee members, the Oversight Group's future focus and how it will operate as a group collectively committed to delivering real and sustainable improvement in culture across the ACT health system.

A further workshop was held on 18 March 2021 where the conversation continued to focus on sustainable culture reform across the system and how we will measure our success into the future.

As noted in the Inaugural Annual Review, significant culture reform requires sustained effort over several years for the full impact of the investment in the system to be felt. However, improvements are being seen and more is on the way.

Engagement with key stakeholders across the health system continues through a range of forums including the:

- NGO Leadership Group;
- Clinical Leadership Forum; and
- Professional Colleges Advisory Committee.

Progress over the last six months

Over the last six months, effort on a range of initiatives has progressed, and will continue to develop over the coming months.

All three organisations in the ACT public health system continue to embed and incorporate their vision, values and desired behaviours into organisational and people-related practices. This has also included deliberate integration into organisation-wide strategic planning, cascading through to division and business unit planning, and ultimately being integrated into individual performance discussions and planning.

Calvary Public Hospital Bruce launched its Values in Action Framework in February 2021. The Framework builds on the Calvary's values work and defines the behaviours the organisation and people require to be successful, and it establishes a common language for staff.

Canberra Health Services has developed an Awards and Recognition program that recognises and acknowledges staff who embody the organisation's vision and values. The inaugural CEO awards ceremony was held in November 2020 and 40 staff were recognised for their contribution.

The rollout of the 'Speaking up for Safety' program continues at Calvary with more than 500 staff being trained in the program to date. There is an ongoing investment with the program and all remaining staff will be trained over coming months. Evaluation of the program will commence in August.

In January, Canberra Health Services also commenced implementation of the 'Speaking up for Safety' program. An initial expression of interest has been completed and staff representatives have been identified who will undertake the train-the-trainer program. The staff representatives will then undertake training sessions with the entire CHS workforce throughout 2021 and 2022.

Calvary Public Hospital Bruce officially launched its Framework for Preventing and Managing Occupational Violence on 22 February. This included a presentation from the Nurse and Midwives: Towards a Safer Culture project to talk about the linkages.

Madam Speaker, clinician engagement was a theme across a number of recommendations.

To this end, senior clinicians and administrators from across the public health system came together in early February at a networking event to discuss clinical service coordination and collaboration.

This networking event was a pre-cursor to the formal Summit that is planned for June 2021. The networking event provided a significant opportunity for discussion and engagement across the system.

Given the investment so far made in culture reform and the incredible clinical engagement we have seen in management of the COVID-19 response in the ACT, the networking event aimed to explore and update the purpose of holding a Summit with clinicians. We ultimately needed to understand what approach is perceived to have the most positive impact to enhance engagement. Feedback is currently being collated and will inform the approach for the Summit in coming months.

Discussion continues between the ACT and NSW Governments in renegotiating the Memorandum of Understanding for Regional Collaboration. This is a significant commitment requiring ongoing and continual engagement.

I spoke in August last year about Canberra Health Services' engagement with Choosing Wisely. CHS is a champion health service member of Choosing Wisely Australia and established a Choosing Wisely Low Value Care Steering Committee. Several initiatives are being trialled, designed to engage clinicians in the Choosing Wisely principles and improve the quality and safety of care.

The Choosing Wisely initiative is helping to drive improvements in patient care and improve the safety and quality of care for hospital patients through the implementation of projects to reduce unnecessary tests, treatments and procedures for both inpatients and outpatients.

The review of the Human Resource functions in the three organisations in the ACT public health system has been finalised, with each organisation currently considering the findings.

The HR Review has enabled the assessment of each organisation's current state and outlines recommendations to support the maturity of HR models and their capacity to meet future organisational requirements. Further information on the HR Review will soon be available online.

A total of five recommendations from the Workplace Culture Review have been completed and significant progress has been made on other recommendations. As an indication of the amount of work happening across the system, there are a total of 92 discrete actions to deliver on the recommendations and 50 of them have been completed.

ACT Public Health System Workplace Culture Framework

Sustainable organisational and cultural change takes time.

The partnership with the Australian National University's Research School of Management to develop the ACT Public Health System Workplace Culture Framework provided an evidence-based approach to inform organisational and cultural change. This has been an important part of our deliberate investment in a systematic and coordinated approach to improving the 'people' aspects of ACT public health services.

Members will recall that in early December 2020 I tabled the Executive Summary of the Investing in our People Report and the supporting Rapid Evidence Assessments.

The Workplace Culture Framework is designed to act as a guide to develop and implement evidence-based practices that foster respect, inclusion and trust. It guides each organisation's approach to key cultural changes that support the system in the continued delivery of high-quality healthcare to our community and to be an employer of choice, both now and into the future.

Canberra Health Services has developed their Fostering Organisational Culture Improvement Strategy (FOCIS) that identifies key initiatives against each of the five workplace change priorities identified in the Workplace Culture Framework:

- Organisational Trust,
- Leadership and People,
- Workplace Civility,
- Psychological Safety, and
- Team Effectiveness.

The Workplace Culture Framework and the supporting Workplace Skills Development Model provide the scaffolding for the health system to progress recommendations 13 and 16.

In response to recommendation 16, the health system engaged Fyusion Asia Pacific Pty Ltd to undertake a review of a number of people management training programs delivered by each of the organisations. This work included assessing the training programs' alignment with the Workplace Culture Framework and the project was finalised in mid-March 2021. Organisations are now reviewing their training programs in light of the report's findings.

Work is also progressing on the development of management and leadership training programs with procurement activity underway to engage expertise in the design and development of training programs for the health system. There has been significant collaboration across the system to understand the gaps in training and ensure that any investment in training will have an immediate impact for our workforce.

Data informed decision-making has become another area of focus for the health system. Managers are being supported with access to workforce data via dashboard reports. These dashboards are being further developed and matured over time, incorporating data from a range of sources, including pulse surveys, which are being conducted in Canberra Health Services.

It is essential that our workforce feel safe, supported, valued and engaged. For that to occur, communication needs to be frequent and relevant. The current Communications and Engagement Strategy is supported by an Action Plan for each phase of the program. A key topic of conversation at the Oversight Group workshop on 25 August 2020 was how to better communicate the connection between the changes staff are seeing on the ground and system-level reform.

There is a significant amount of work underway and planned for the coming months, with deliberate investment in developing and shaping positive workplaces across the ACT public health system. The gains achieved to date have been supported by the findings of the Inaugural Annual Review, but we note that there is more to do.

Assembly Resolution — Health Workers

Madam Speaker, last year I also committed to providing the Assembly with an update on the progress of reducing junior doctor burnout and exhaustion, particularly at Canberra Health Services.

The Government is committed to providing the best possible environment for junior doctors and regularly assesses its performance and monitors feedback from the junior medical workforce through a variety of resources including but not limited to:

- A review commissioned in late 2019 of the ACT Physician Training Network.
- Satisfaction surveys of trainees through the ACT Physician Training Network.
- The 2020 Medical Board of Australia's Medical Training Survey.
- Clinicians and staff across CHS through our *Workplace Culture Pulse Survey*.

These sources indicate that the bulk of the training offered is tracking in the right direction. For example, demand for Junior Medical Officer (JMO) positions at CHS remains very high, with an applicant to position ratio of four to one for 2021, and ACT's pass rate for JMO exams improved in 2020, with 80 per cent passing their exams in the ACT compared to 75 per cent nationally.

According to the Medical Board's survey, improvements have been made in terms of JMOs recommending CHS as a place to train, and knowing how to raise a concern about bullying, harassment or discrimination. There has also been an improvement in JMOs reporting good work/life balance in the ACT. Do we have more to do? Absolutely, but we are moving in the right direction.

MBA satisfaction results for the training and professional development plans of prevocational and unaccredited trainees' showed the ACT is on par with or better than the national result, with more than 90 per cent agreeing that their plan is helping them to develop as a doctor, prepare for medical practice, and advance their knowledge.

Doctors in training in the ACT also highly rated the quality of formal education programs, team or unit-based activities, simulation teaching, online modules, and bedside teaching for patient care.

The Medical Board results also showed positivity and collegiality among clinical staff, which is critically important to building trust and competence for doctors in training. Doctors in training highly rated the support and availability of other senior medical staff during work hours and after hours.

Despite difficulties highlighted by the physician training review, the number of trainees in the ACT Physician Training Network has grown year on year. As of March 2021, ACT Basic Physician Trainees are undertaking two sets of exams. The 2020 exams which were delayed due to the pandemic will likely be completed by the end of April.

All registrars who trained in the ACT Network in 2020 have so far been successful in progressing from stage 1 to stage 2 of this exam. In the 2021 cycle of exams, the written exam has been completed with 88 per cent of local physician trainees being successful. This is above the national benchmark of 78 per cent in 2021.

Canberra Health Services accepted all 54 recommendations of the physician training review, and most have now been implemented with many more partially addressed.

A comprehensive plan to address and monitor the recommendations has been developed with stakeholder consultation, overseen by the Physician Training Committee. Where recommendations require extra resources, the ACT Network Director of Physician Education is undertaking benchmarking with comparably sized hospitals to determine appropriate resource requirements.

More broadly, specialist training programs at CHS are very successful. For example, the pass rates in emergency medicine and general surgery are consistently at or very near to 100 per cent and among the highest in Australia, and 100 per cent of ACT trainees passed various components of exams in the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia in 2020.

The results from radiology training exams in late 2020 were very positive, with all junior radiology registrars passing. Five out of seven senior radiology registrars passed all or most components, noting that most radiology trainees complete their full examinations in more than one attempt. The first round of exams for 2021 commenced in March.

Significant work is underway across the health service to address bullying, harassment, and discrimination. For junior doctors, CHS is addressing workplace concerns by proactively monitoring and assessing workload issues and ensuring the rostering and leave arrangements are managed appropriately for a training setting. This includes and is not limited to ensuring that leave is taken and used within appropriate timeframes, that JMOs do not do more than three on-call shifts per fortnight, and that there is clarity on overtime expectations during orientation.

Conclusion

In closing, Madam Speaker, I would like to thank everyone across the ACT public health system for their commitment to developing initiatives and approaches to support positive culture change. In particular, I thank the members of the Steering Group and Oversight Group who are driving and overseeing this work, and the professional colleges, non-government organisations, clinical leaders and consumer and carer representatives who are closely engaged in the process and outcomes.

In doing so, I acknowledge the very important role Kylie Jonasson has played in driving this work as the Director-General of the ACT Health Directorate over the last 12 months. I know her positive, collaborative approach has been very much embraced not only by Directorate staff but across agencies, stakeholders and the wider community. I have certainly appreciated Kylie's warmth, humour and deep engagement with the health portfolio, as well as the leadership she has displayed in responding to a range of unique challenges.

We all recognise that cultural change will not only benefit the entire workforce of the three services, but also patients, their families and carers and our non-government partners.

Our goal continues to be creating an environment where our workforce feels supported, valued and empowered to deliver exceptional health care and enhance patient and consumer outcomes and experiences.