

Metro South Health Allied Health Workforce Research & Innovation Strategic Directions 2014 – 2016



Allied Health Workforce Research and Innovation Strategic Directions 2014-2016

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It is my pleasure to present the Metro South Health Allied Health Workforce Research & Innovation Strategic Directions 2014-2016.

The vision of Metro South Hospital and Health Service is *to be renowned worldwide for excellence in healthcare, teaching and research.*

This vision aligns with the *Queensland Government's Blueprint for better healthcare in Queensland* principle – Investing, innovating and planning for the future – which highlights the central role of research in improving health care practices, and in contributing to high quality patient experiences and outcomes.



Over the past five years, research leaders and allied health professionals across Metro South Health have successfully leveraged the substantial opportunities that the Health Practitioner Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (1) afforded us to build a sustainable and successful research strategic direction underpinned by:

- Establishment and growth of the Centre for Functioning and Health Research – building on the firmly established research profile embedded by allied health professionals across PAH;
- Support to the allied health workforce through the Research Workforce Development Officer Role and,
- Promoting the Health Practitioner Research Collaborative across Metro South Health.

Our research achievements and commitment to research and evidence-based practice across allied health in Metro South Health is clearly demonstrated over the past five years with:

- *40% of the HP Research Grant funding allocated to Metro South Health since 2009 – 2015.*
- *More than 300 number of peer-reviewed publications and book chapters, and 150 conference and seminar presentations.*
- *Successful research grants totalling almost 4 million dollars.*
- *Approximately, 30 Research Higher degree students supported.*
- *Opportunities for approximately 65 allied health professionals to present their innovative research projects at the Metro South Health Allied Health Showcase 2014.*

We are attracting and promoting a workforce that is equipped with the knowledge, understanding and practical abilities to engage with the full scope of research activities from capable consumers of research to research generators – this is a way forward for better health and health care.

The *Allied Health Workforce Research & Innovation Strategic Directions 2014-2016* provides a clear vision and strategies to support our allied health workforce to further develop and utilise research to drive clinical innovation and effectiveness.

Gail Gordon

Executive Director Allied Health
Metro South Hospital and Health Service

Vision

Transforming Health Care through Priority-driven Allied Health Research Excellence and Innovation.

Purpose

The purpose of the Allied Health Workforce Research and Innovation Strategic Directions is to be visionary in its approach to research, innovation, and evidence-based practice to transform and improve health care and health outcomes. This strategy ensures that research and innovation is embedded in all health services and by all allied health professionals and is aligned with the current Metro South Strategic Plan, the Centre for Functioning and Health Research Business Plan, and the Metro South Health Allied Health Professional Plan. The strategy aims to:

1. Influence and guide allied health directors, line managers, and staff in research, innovation and evidence-based practice approaches;
2. Coordinate and integrate current research structures and systems and high performance and promote continued steps to research capacity building and governance; and,
3. Promote research excellence and innovation as drivers of better health and better health care.

Background

A strong and innovative allied health workforce oriented to research, innovation, and evidence-based practice is more important than ever. Economic and social pressures to reform health care are driving the need for research active health services, with the McKeon Review (Department of Health & Aging, 2013) calling for research to be priority-driven and embedded into the health system at all levels.

The Metro South Health vision is to be renowned worldwide for excellence in health care, teaching, and research (Metro South Strategic Plan 2012-2016). The Metro South Health Strategic Plan outlines teaching and research as a strategic priority and allied health are committed to excellence through continuous improvement, education, and research (Metro South Allied Health Professional Plan 2014-2016). Specifically, in Metro South Health, the Centre for Functioning and Health Research is a prolific exemplar of an alignment of research and clinical practice, leading the way in building the research capacity of the allied health workforce as well as evidence-based clinical practice.

For definitions of key terms, please refer to the Appendix.

Scope, Implementation, and Reporting

The Metro South Health Allied Health Workforce Research and Innovation Strategic Directions 2014 – 2016 will ensure that Metro South Health is well positioned to achieve its vision – to be renowned worldwide for excellence in health care, teaching, and research. The Allied Health Workforce Research and Innovation Strategic Directions contribute an allied health vision for research, evidence-based practice, and innovation and specific goals and objectives to achieve the vision.

Scope & Implementation

The scope of the Metro South Health Allied Health Workforce Research and Innovation Strategic Directions is inclusive of all allied health departments and professionals at all levels in Metro South Health. All allied health department directors and teams have a responsibility to work towards the three goals by implementing one or more strategies as appropriate. The strategies provided are possible options departments and teams may already be implementing or may like to consider. Departments and teams may request support in decision-making related to implementing new objectives via the Research Workforce Development Officer and/or the Centre for Functioning and Health Research team <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/cfahr/>.

Implementation therefore requires:

- Executive support for implementation and reporting;
- Shared accountabilities amongst all allied health professionals for research, evidence-based practice, and innovation.

Reporting & Evaluation

All department heads and professional directors/leaders across Metro South Health will report annually against the three goals, as this will provide structure for reporting against research activity and outputs. Department heads/professional directors can refer to the six goals, and associated Key Performance Indicators in their summary. This process will incorporate regular monitoring and review by the Allied Health Directors as part of usual scorecard or monthly reporting processes (see example in the Appendix). The Allied Health Directors will coordinate the collation of the data and compile a report to summarise the key findings which will be presented at the Allied Health Directorate and Metro South Health Executive where appropriate, with assistance from the Research Workforce Development Officer, if required.

An evaluation team will evaluate the intended outcomes and measures of success between September – November 2016. The team will consist of one representative from the Allied Health Directorate, the Centre for Functioning and Health Research, the Research Workforce Development Officer, and an allied health professional.

The Allied Health Workforce Research and Innovation Strategic Directions highlights three overarching goals and six specific objectives (see Figure 1 for a summary). A brief description of the goals proposed to achieve the vision Transforming Health Care through Priority-driven Allied Health Research Excellence and Innovation are outlined below.

Research close to practice

Bridging academic and clinical practice environments is central to a stronger connection between research and the delivery of healthcare services. Research that is translated and generated in clinical settings and supported by research systems, policy, and structures has the greatest potential to sustain and enhance research impact. Allied health is at the forefront of patient care and is well-placed to use and drive research to solve the increasingly complex problems in health service delivery. Research close to practice will be achieved by the following two objectives:

1. Enable rapid translation of evidence from research to practice and policy
2. Mobilise and integrate research governance and infrastructure

Research as core business

Building and supporting the capacity of allied health professionals is key to enhancing research quality and productivity, and evidence translation. Research is central to delivering the best patient care, featuring from the first point of contact with Metro South Health through to everyday routine health care delivery. At all levels, we are responsible for creating a culture of continuous improvement and research successes and rewards. Research as core business will be achieved by the following two objectives:

3. Build and support research capacity, culture, and productivity
4. Support a culture of innovation and research success

Research in partnership

Working together towards improved health outcomes involves greater and more valued linkages and partnerships. Collaboration and partnerships with key stakeholders including consumers, health professionals, researchers, universities, and research organisations, for example, and strong leadership in research and innovation will enable sustainable and prioritised research directions that are focused on real solutions for the community. Research in partnership will be achieved by the following two objectives:

5. Enhance research partnerships and collaboration
6. Strengthen leadership in research and innovation

Overview of the Allied Health Workforce Research and Innovation Strategic Directions



Goals, Objectives and Strategies 2014-2016

Below is an outline of the possible strategies departments and teams may implement as part of achieving the allied health workforce research and innovation goals and objectives. In addition, suggested Key Performance Indicators have been provided.

Research Close to Practice

Objective 1 – Enable rapid translation of evidence from research to practice and policy

We will promote and facilitate the rapid translation of research to practice and policy decision making, enabling an EBP-oriented allied health workforce that prides itself on best practice.

Strategies		Example Key Performance Indicators
1.1	Implement and/or participate in training and mentoring approaches that focus on practice-based research including critical appraisal, research translation, systematic syntheses, data mining, evaluation, and translating evidence into policy decisions.	Number and type of training and mentoring sessions provided/attended. Quality and outcomes of training and mentoring sessions provided/attended.
1.2	Consolidate and develop new communication pathways to disseminate the latest research in various clinical practice areas.	Number of consolidated and/or new communication pathways. Number of peer research/clinical practice networks.
1.3	Support and promote the adoption of Action based on Clinical reasoning and Evidence (ACE) framework, and/or other research translation models, resources and tools such as journal clubs.	Number of applications of the ACE framework to practice development. Number of journal clubs. Number of case presentations integrating research literature.

Objective 2 – Mobilise and integrate research governance and infrastructure

We will provide sustainable and coordinated research governance and infrastructure systems to enable and support high quality research within and across the allied health workforce.

Strategies		Example Key Performance Indicators
2.1	Align data systems and develop and implement new systems (where appropriate) to assist in coordinating research across Metro South Health.	Number and type of quality improvement activities. Development and implementation of facility-based research registers.
2.2	Improve access and pathways to statisticians and other research Library resources (e.g., statistical databases/software)	Frequency and type of use of databases. Number and type of pathways to statistical support.
2.3	Develop and implement systems for timely and consistent dissemination of grant funding opportunities.	Plan for consistent grant funding information dissemination. Number of grant applications submitted. Number and type of successful grant applications.
2.4	Participate in the Metro South Health Practitioner Research Committee (HPRC) meetings.	Attendance and engagement in the HPRC meetings.
2.5	Develop and implement policy documents to assist in streamlining research governance and support.	Number and type of policy documents developed and implemented.
2.6	Introduce new conjoint clinician-research positions as part of departmental/team structure.	Number and type of new conjoint positions.

Goals, Objectives and Strategies 2014-2016

Research as Core Business

Objective 3 – Build and support research capacity, culture, and productivity

We will build a stronger research culture and support research capacity building and productivity of the allied health workforce through a multi-level (clinician, team, and organisation) approach.

Strategies		Example Key Performance Indicators
3.1	Facilitate and promote a common language for allied health staff engagement along the research continuum including developing expectations for allied health staff as research participants, consumers, and/or generators ¹ .	Increased staff awareness and knowledge of expectations related to research along the continuum, in line with the Capability Development Framework. Number of staff participating in research, as participants, consumers, and generators.
3.2	Facilitate research projects consistent with clinical practice and health service priority areas.	Number of research peer reviewed publications, book chapters, and conference presentations. Number and type of quality improvement projects that have transitioned into research projects.
3.3	Engage in and/or implement applied learning approaches that includes profession-specific and inter professional to enhance research translation, research skills and outputs.	Number and type of profession-specific and inter professional training/education programs provided/attended.
3.4	Develop and implement systems and databases to monitor and review the allied health workforce in relation to research qualifications, skills and training to examine the research capacity and skill mix to enable workforce planning.	Number of allied health staff with research qualifications, skills, and experience.
3.5	Engage research champions including staff with research qualifications and/or skills and PhD students to grow a team of research mentors/consultants, in collaboration with CFAHR experienced researchers.	Number and staff who nominate as research champions, mentors. Number of staff who are affiliates of CFAHR.
3.6	Examine current recruitment and retention practices and ongoing professional and operational requirements (such as Performance and Appraisal Development) in relation to research skills and activities.	Number of PADS and/or recruitment and selection practices that include references to research, EBP strategies, and quality projects.

¹ In the allied health context, *research participants* refer to allied health professionals, who are involved in some aspect of supporting research projects, (e.g., project coordination, assisting with data collection, or as a participant in the research itself). *Research generators* refer to allied health professionals, who lead research projects and involvement usually includes being part of the research team as an investigator. *Research consumers* refer to allied health professionals, who translate research evidence into practice.

Objective 4 – Support a culture of innovation and research success

We will support an allied health workforce culture that embraces innovation and research successes.

Strategies		Example Key Performance Indicators
4.1	Create opportunities for allied health to develop and implement innovative solutions to complex problems.	Number of opportunities provided for staff to develop innovative solutions to improve clinical effectiveness.
4.2	Support and engage in the strategic use of data project.	Attendance and engagement in the strategic use of data project.
4.3	Provide opportunities to promote and reward research achievements, at local events (the Metro South Allied Health Showcase, PAH Annual Report), and conferences.	Participation in the Metro South Allied Health Showcase and other events such as conferences. Number and type of other reward systems, achievements at various levels (novice, advanced).

Research in Partnership

Objective 5 – Enhance research partnerships and collaboration

We will strive for research and innovation through partnership and collaboration at local, national, and international levels to ensure research sustainability.

Strategies		Example Key Performance Indicators
5.1	Map key current local, national, and international existing partnerships and assess future opportunities for inter professional and/or multi-site collaborations.	Frequency and type of new and existing research partnerships.
5.2	Develop and implement an allied health research in partnership groups (<i>Metro South Health Research Connections</i>) that provides a first point of contact and consultative group for external stakeholders (e.g., Universities) to enable research partnerships, links to encourage students engaging in health services research, or consult on research project, and links to encourage clinicians towards research careers.	Number and type of Metro South Health Research Connections groups.
5.3	Improve the quality, scale and impact of our research through ongoing marketing and promotion.	Number and type of marketing promotions, including maximising social media opportunities (e.g., Metro South Health Facebook/Twitter sites, e-Bulletin)
5.4	Enhance accessibility and processes of consumer engagement in all aspects of research, from knowledge translation, conceptualisation of a research proposal, to disseminating the research findings, including consumers as research investigators.	Number and type of consumer consultations in research.

Objective 6 – Strengthen leadership in research and innovation

We will strengthen leadership in research and innovation to ensure research and innovation is priority-driven and a business priority.

Strategies		Example Key Performance Indicators
6.1	Develop and implement research priorities for allied health that are focused on real benefits for consumers and the community, and align with Metro South Health strategic directions, Diamantina Health Partner's broad themes, and the Blueprint.	Number and type of research priorities.
6.2	Identify research leadership opportunities by assessing and classifying current research strengths and streams with higher research activity and support.	Number and type of departmental/divisional strengths.
6.3	Develop and implement training and mentoring approaches for Directors, senior staff in supporting and leading research.	Number and type of education programs developed and implemented for managers/directors.
6.4	Introduce the concept of clinician-researchers and promote the value and benefits of research as part of clinical practice.	Reference to the value of research generated by clinicians and the term clinician-researchers.
6.5	Develop and implement incentive systems to increase research activity and outputs.	Number and type of incentive systems.
6.6	Develop and promote research career pathways as well as opportunities for staff to supervise research students.	Number of staff undertaking research higher degrees. Number of staff supervising research higher degrees, Masters, and honours research students. Number of staff leading projects.

Definitions of Key Terms: Research, Evidence-Based Practice, and Innovation

There is no generally agreed definition of research; however, it is widely accepted that research includes at least investigation undertaken to gain new knowledge. The British Research Assessment Exercise definition of research is somewhat wider and:

'... includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction.'

Research excludes routine testing and routine analysis of materials, components and processes such as for the maintenance of national standards.

The concept of evidence-based practice has its foundations in medicine (Sackett et al., 1996). Evidence-based practice is an approach to clinical decision-making and refers to:

"the integration of the best research evidence with clinical expertise and patient values" (Sackett, et al. 2000).

Innovation is generally defined as the introduction or implementation of new ideas, processes, or products. According to West and Farr (1990), workplace innovation is

"...the intentional introduction and application within a role, group or organization of ideas, processes, products or procedures, new to the relevant unit of adoption, designed to significantly benefit the individual, the group, the organisation or wider society".

In line with this definition, innovation in healthcare refers to:

"...the introduction of a new concept, idea, service, process, or product aimed at improving treatment, diagnosis, education, outreach, prevention and research, and with the long term goals of improving quality, safety, outcomes, efficiency and costs" (Omachonu & Einspruch, 2010).

Addendum to Existing Scorecard Reporting Processes

Research Activity & Outputs

The vision for the research across the allied health workforce is *Transforming Health Care through Priority-driven Allied Health Research Excellence and Innovation*.

Using the overarching three goals, please comment on your department/team's research performance and achievements. You may reference the six objectives if you wish.

Research Close to Practice

[insert comments]

Research as Core Business

[insert comments]

Research in Partnership

[insert comments]