Professional skill-sharing: community based service with emergency department in-reach
Drivers for change

• Tension between supply and demand for services
  - increased volume of work
  - operating at capacity
  - difficulty recruiting to positions
• Long travel distances
• Low population density
Key elements of role

• Physiotherapist and occupational therapist expanded scope of practice
  - Skills from each other’s professions
  - Plus skills from dietetics, podiatry, speech pathology, and social work

• Target cohort most likely to benefit from allied health intervention using skill-sharing
  - Patients ≥65 years of age with functional decline
  - Community setting
Evidence of impact

• Clinical and cost effectiveness – randomised controlled trial, health economic analysis

• Staff perceptions – focus group identified enablers and barriers to implementation

• Patient experience – qualitative, grounded theory study
Outcomes: Clinical

• Measures
  – Functional independence
  – Quality of life
  – Mobility

• No statistically significant differences in patient outcome between uni-professional care and professional skill-sharing model
Outcomes: Patient experience

• Sense of engagement with healthcare system pivotal to patient experience
• Allied health seen as smoothing patient journey, enhancing sense of engagement
• Recipients of skill-sharing model expressed preference for having only one clinician involved in their care under skill sharing approach
Outcomes: Staff perception

• Implementation dependent on
  – organisational leadership
  – attention to anxieties and agendas within professions

• Benefits of skill-sharing model
  – patient outcomes
  – service efficiency
  – team functioning and clinical practice

• Suitable settings
  – acute care in regional and remote areas with limited access to full range allied health services
  – community-based services for subacute or chronic conditions
Outcomes: Cost effectiveness

- Health economic analysis
  - identify healthcare resource use and cost from societal perspective
  - direct and indirect costs included
  - median and mean costs
- Data collection ongoing
- To be reported in peer reviewed journals upon completion