Allied Health Telehealth Capacity Building Project 2015 - 2017

Completion report

August 2017

Queensland
Government

Completion report: Allied Health Telehealth Capacity Building Project 2015 - 2017

Published by the State of Queensland (Queensland Health), August 2017

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Summary

The Allied Health Telehealth Capacity Building Project (May 2015 – June 2017) was a joint initiative of the Allied Health Professions' Office of Queensland (AHPOQ), Department of Health and the Cunningham Centre, Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service.

The project planned to develop, implement and evaluate strategies designed to increase the capacity of the workforce to use telehealth for the delivery of allied health clinical services in Queensland Hospital and Health Services (HHSs).

Outputs and deliverables

Three strategies were implemented that produced the following deliverables:

1. Allied Health Telehealth Education Package

    The education package was developed by the Cunningham Centre, using the experience and expertise of clinicians, managers, telehealth experts, researchers and other stakeholders engaged in the use of telehealth for clinical service delivery. The online, on-demand education package was launched in March 2017 following a successful piloting phase. It includes service development topics and allied health clinical examples of the use of telehealth. Queensland Health staff can access the package through QHEPS, with access for external individuals and organisations available through the Cunningham Centre.

2. Allied Health Telehealth Network and presentation series

    To facilitate networking and sharing of telehealth information, learnings and resources between health services an opt-in email group, website and video-conferenced presentation series were implemented. Membership of the network is available to Queensland Heath staff and external allied health professionals. The network was launched in October 2015 and in June 2017 had 164 members. The networking strategies were evaluated in June 2016. The network and presentation series are administered by the Cunningham Centre.

3. Telehealth Evaluation Resource Guide

    The telehealth evaluation resource guide provides information and tools to support allied health teams to develop a robust evaluation and monitoring process for new and existing telehealth services. It also includes a compendium of evaluation tools and indicators. The evaluation resource guide was published in September 2016 and was developed and managed by the AHPOQ.

Further information and access to the project outputs are available through the Cunningham Centre telehealth website at https://www.health.qld.gov.au/cunninghamcentre/html/telehealth.

Outcomes and ongoing management

All planned deliverables were completed within the allocated budget. The original project timeframe was extended from June 2016 to June 2017 to allow for longer instructional design and piloting stages of the education program.

The outputs of the project will remain available to the Queensland Health allied health workforce and have been transitioned to "business as usual" management and monitoring for the Cunningham Centre and AHPOQ.

1.   Overview

The Allied Health Telehealth Capacity Building Project 2015-17[1] was a joint initiative of the Allied Health Professions' Office of Queensland (AHPOQ), Department of Health and the Cunningham Centre, Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service. The implementation project progressed the recommendations of the Allied Health Telehealth Capacity Building Scoping Project ("the Scoping Project") that was completed in December 2014.[2]

Project outline

Project statement

The project planned to develop, implement and evaluate strategies designed to increase the capacity of the workforce to use telehealth for the delivery of allied health clinical services in Queensland Hospital and Health Services (HHSs).

Aim

1.   Support the expansion of allied health telehealth-supported clinical services in Queensland HHSs through coordinating collaborative activities by key stakeholders including the AHPOQ, Cunningham Centre, Telehealth Support Unit and HHSs.

2.   Develop, implement and evaluate telehealth capacity building strategies targeting high demand service areas, particularly those relevant to rural and remote communities. Strategies will primarily focus on the development of practical, work-relevant training programs and supporting resources.

Objectives

1.   Generate/collate, pilot and evaluate products/programs and resources to support the development and implementation of allied health telehealth services. Training and resource development will focus on service redesign and clinical redesign.

2.   Develop, implement and evaluate allied health telehealth collaborative networks that support peer learning, reduce duplication and enhance dissemination of information and resources between teams and clinicians state-wide.

3.   Develop and disseminate resources that support robust evaluation of current and emerging telehealth services.

Deliverables

1.   Training programs/products and supporting resources related to service and clinical redesign for telehealth implementation for a range of allied health professional service needs.

2.   Allied health telehealth collaborative network/s to support dissemination of successful service models.

3.   Evaluation resources and support structures for existing and new allied health telehealth services.

4.   Completion report outlining project performance, deliverables and outcomes, and recommendations for ongoing allied health telehealth capacity building requirements.

Term

May 2015 to June 2017. The original project term was to June 2016, with an extension approved by the sponsors on 12/2/16 (see section 3).

Project management

Governance and responsibilities

The project was co-sponsored by the:

- Chief Allied Health Officer, Allied Health Professions' Office of Queensland, Department of Health
- Executive Director Allied Health, Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service

Project management was provided by the:

- Principal Workforce Officer, Allied Health Professions' Office of Queensland, Department of Health
- Team Leader, Cunningham Centre, Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service

Responsibility for specific project objectives was allocated to a lead unit as follows:

- Allied health telehealth education package:
  Cunningham Centre
- Allied health telehealth network and presentation series:
  AHPOQ (May 2015 - Nov 2016); Cunningham Centre (Nov 2016 - ongoing)
- Allied health telehealth evaluation resource guide:
  AHPOQ

Project Governance Group

The governance group included the sponsors and project managers, and the:

- allied health representative, Statewide Rural and Remote Clinical Network
- Principal Project Officer, Telehealth Support Unit, Healthcare Improvement Unit, Department of Health

Reference / advisory groups

Six reference groups were formed to support the development of the education package. The groups included clinical and telehealth content experts from Queensland HHSs, the Statewide Telehealth Service, universities and collaborative research centres, non-government organisations and interstate allied health professionals. The reference groups contributed advice, examples and resources for the modules, and provided feedback at multiple stages of the development process. The primary modes of engagement and collaboration between the project managers and the reference groups were meetings coordinated by the Cunningham Centre and email.

A group of nine researchers were recruited as advisors to the development of the telehealth evaluation resource guide. Members included Queensland Health Allied Health Research Fellows, allied health professionals / researcher-clinicians from HHSs, and academics and a PhD student from the University of Queensland and James Cook University.

2. Project outcomes

Activities completed

Table 2   **Project activities completed for each project objective**

Deliverable	Project activities completed
1. Allied Health Telehealth Education Package	• Framework for training products approved by steering group in February 2016. • Existing programs / resources identified. • Working groups formed for six education program topics. • Content and structure reviewed and endorsed by working groups. • Content drafted including video example / interview production, instructional design, user testing, hosting arrangements. • Piloting, evaluation and revision. • Launch of Allied Health Telehealth Education Package March 2017.
2. Allied Health Telehealth Network and presentation series	• Network expression of interest and needs assessment survey was completed August 2015. A network email group was established. • Priority networking strategies, refined through feedback at an Allied Health Telehealth Network "start-up" meeting, were endorsed by the project steering group in October 2015. • Telehealth presentation series commenced November 2015. • Survey evaluation of the presentation series completed August 2016. • Ongoing management of network membership and the presentation series was transitioned from the AHPOQ to the Cunningham Centre in November 2016.
3. Telehealth Evaluation Resource Guide	• Telehealth evaluation resources (Queensland Health, published and grey literature) compiled. • Advisor group formed through a targeted recruitment process and an invitation to Allied Health Telehealth Network members. • Evaluation resource guide drafted and reviewed by advisor group. • Evaluation resource guide endorsed by the project steering group and approved for publication in September 2016.
4. Project coordination and management	• Project steering group formed and terms of reference approved by the sponsors in May 2015. The steering group met eight times during the project. • Project working group formed in May 2015 and met 14 times during project. • Project plan endorsed by the project steering group and approved by the sponsors in May 2017. • Project progress report endorsed by the project steering group and approved by the sponsors in September 2016. • Completion report drafted for submission to sponsors July 2017.

Outputs and outcomes

Allied Health Telehealth Education Package

The education package is an online training resource hosted on the Cunningham Centre eLearning portal.

Scope

The topics included in the education package were based on feedback from allied health professionals collected in the Scoping Project, and refined through consultation with key stakeholders and expert feedback from the reference groups. Where possible existing resources were identified and incorporated into the education package to avoid duplication. In the preliminary development stage the working group identified potential overlap with a concurrent speech pathology telepractice project in Metro North HHS that included the production of training resources. In consultation with the Metro North HHS project lead dysphagia management was not progressed as a clinical topic in the Allied Health Telehealth Education Package. Through negotiation between the Cunningham Centre and the University of Queensland, Centre for Online Health, existing 'ProAct' telehealth education content was adapted for allied health use and incorporated into the service redesign modules.

Output

The package covers telehealth service development and implementation topics, and provides examples of clinical applications of telehealth in the form of video demonstrations and interviews with clinicians. The topics in the package are listed in Table 3.

Table 3   Allied Health Telehealth Education Package outline

Service topics	Clinical examples (information, videos)
Telehealth service models	Diabetes management for allied health
Telehealth technology	Paediatric therapy for allied health
Planning for clinical telehealth	Hand therapy, burns management and compression garments
Managing risk	Home assessment and prescription
Queensland Health telehealth funding and activity reporting	Mobility and exercise programs
Considerations for particular client groups	
Conducting telehealth consultations	
Service sustainability and evaluation	

The education package was launched by the Chief Allied Health Officer and Cunningham Centre on 27 March 2017 via a statewide videoconference.

The education package can be accessed by Queensland Health staff via QHEPS (intranet) at https://www.health.qld.gov.au/cunninghamcentre/html/telehealth. Access for individuals and organisations outside Queensland Health can be negotiated through the Cunningham Centre.

Outcomes

At 30 June 2017 77 Queensland Health employees have registered for the education package. Feedback is collected from participants who register for the training via an online feedback portal. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of respondents indicate that the amount of time taken to complete the package is appropriate, and 100% indicate that the package is easy to use and covers all required content.

Five allied health services external to Queensland Health have enquired about accessing the education package.

Allied Health Telehealth Network and Presentation Series

The purpose of the networking strategy is to facilitate access to information for allied health professionals interested in telehealth.

Scope

The scope of the networking strategy was not completely defined in the Scoping Project. A web-based network recruitment and needs survey was undertaken between June and August 2015. Findings from the survey informed the development of networking strategies that were further refined in a network "start-up" meeting in October 2015. Three strategies progressed to implementation: an opt-in email group, website and presentation series.

Outputs

(a) Opt-in email group
The opt-in email group facilitates sharing of information relevant to telehealth services such as funding opportunities, training, presentations, and new research or project publications.

(b) Website
The Cunningham Centre and AHPOQ established telehealth sections of their respective internet and intranet websites:
Cunningham Centre: https://www.health.qld.gov.au/cunninghamcentre/html/telehealth
AHPOQ: http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/alliedhealth/html/strategies/rural-remote.htm

(c) Presentation series
The videoconference presentation series highlights successful models of telehealth-supported allied health services, or features specific topics such as scheduling or evaluation. Attendance is open to any Queensland Health staff, and to people in other organisations on request. Where possible videoconference presentations are recorded and made available for 14 days via QHEPS. Presentations are promoted through the Allied Health Telehealth Network email group, AHPOQ E-News and websites.

Outcomes

(a) Opt-in email group
At 30 June 2017 the Allied Health Telehealth Network includes 164 members. This includes 155 members from Queensland HHSs and Department of Health, and 9 members from other organisations. Ninety-one per cent (91%) of members identify as allied health professionals or managers, with the remainder holding a range of role including researchers and telehealth coordinators. This includes 3 nurses and 3 telehealth coordinators.

(b)   Presentation series
Nov 2015 – June 2016: five presentations with 82 registered sites and 47 people accessing a recording.
Jul 2016 –June 2017: five presentations with 75 registered sites and 44 people accessing a recording.

(c)   A survey of network members and presentation series site contacts was undertaken in late 2015/16. The results were presented in the Allied Health Telehealth Capacity Building Project Progress Report (Sept 2016).[3] The outcomes supported the transition from trial phase to an ongoing program. Management of the network and presentation series was transferred to the Cunningham Centre in November 2016.

Allied Health Telehealth Evaluation Resource Guide

The purpose of this strategy was to facilitate access to evaluation methods and tools for allied health teams using telehealth as part of their service model.

Scope

The scope of the strategy was originally framed as collating evaluation tools relevant to telehealth. Feedback from expert reviewers on this draft output in April 2016 identified that it was inadequate as information was required on developing an evaluation strategy in order to guide the selection of evaluation tools. The Evaluation Resource Guide was expanded and substantially revised to address this feedback.

Outputs

The Evaluation Resource Guide[4] was endorsed by advisors with allied health service and telehealth evaluation expertise in June 2016, and by the project steering group in August 2016. It was approved for publication to the AHPOQ website in September 2016.

Project presentations

The Allied Health Telehealth Capacity Building Implementation Project and the Scoping Project were presented in the following national forum:

- Shepherd M, Fuelling P, Nielsen I. Training and support for telehealth implementation in Queensland allied health services (poster). 14th National Rural Health Conference, Cairns, 2017.

- Shepherd M, Fuelling P, Kirkpatrick J, Nielsen I. Supporting telehealth delivered allied health services (oral presentation). 2nd National Rural & Remote Telehealth Conference, Toowoomba, 2016.

- Nielsen I, Kirkpatrick J, Shepherd S, Fuelling P. Supporting expansion of telehealth-delivered allied health services (oral presentation). 12th SARRAH National Conference, Port Lincoln, 2016.

- Kirkpatrick J, Nielsen I, Fuelling P. Building telehealth capacity in allied health services (oral presentation). Successes and Failures in Telehealth Conference, Brisbane, 2015.

- Nielsen I, Kirkpatrick J, Fuelling P. Telehealth capacity building in allied health services (poster). National Allied Health Conference, Melbourne, 2015.

3. Project performance and closure

Performance evaluation

Project management

The project produced all planned deliverables. Deliverables were endorsed by relevant reference / advisory groups and the project steering group, prior to approval by the project sponsors.

Risks were identified and managed consistent with the Queensland Health Risk Management Framework. The project risk matrix and project activity schedule were managed by the working group and reported at all project steering group meetings to support governance and decision-making.

Timeframes

The 12-month timeframe for production of the online education package was assessed by December 2016 to be inadequate for instructional design and piloting. The project steering group and project sponsors supported the extension of this work to June 2017. This also allowed the project scope to include the transition of the Allied Health Telehealth Network and presentation series from the AHPOQ, which had managed the pilot phase, to the Cunningham Centre for ongoing coordination.

Budget

Non-recurrent funding

2015-16 AHPOQ funding allocation $24,859   Training resource production costs

Other costs

Other than resource production costs that were within the budget allocation for the project, implementation activities were resourced as core business of the AHPOQ and Cunningham Centre.

Learnings

Key project learnings include:

- Preliminary scoping of complimentary work in other Queensland Health services and external agencies was effective in reducing duplication and building collaborative partnerships. As a result dysphagia management was removed from the scope of education resource development as the work was being undertaken by Metro North HHS, and negotiation with the University of Queensland, Centre for Online Health allowed use of their existing high quality resources in the education program.
- Allied health professionals consistently identified the need for practical examples that are easily applied and adapted in their workplace, rather than information and education resources that relate to broad general concepts or overarching principles. Templates, presentations and video-vignettes of real-world clinical examples from practicing clinicians, and service-ready tools or concise lists of key resources were in demand, and feature in the project outputs.

- Earlier scoping and engagement with instructional designers may have reduced the required extension to the project term. This learning will be considered for any subsequent online education materials production in other projects.

- Restricted options when choosing an e-learning platform resulted in some limitations in the use of interactive training content and may limit the ability to register large volumes of participants from organisations external to Queensland Health. Demand will require monitoring by the Cunningham Centre and strategies to address any enrolment capacity issues can be progressed to the Allied Health Learning and Development Governance Group.

- Telehealth technology, resources and terminology are evolving rapidly resulting in frequent updates and changes to funding and reporting requirements. This was noted in the development phase and needs to be integrated into project closure activities to maintain currency of the resources.

Project closure activities

Ongoing implementation and responsibilities

The three primary project outputs have been transitioned to 'business as usual' management and monitoring as follows:

- Allied Health Telehealth Education Package

  The education package will be monitored and reviewed consistent with the Cunningham Centre quality management process, including annual end of financial year reviews to reflect changes in telehealth funding and activity reporting requirements. Marketing of the program to potential Queensland Health participants will remain integrated in the Cunningham Centre program promotion calendar that includes QHEPS Spotlight features, Allied Health E-News features, HHS e-alerts and inclusion in the Cunningham Centre newsfeed. Opportunities for marketing the package to external agencies will be examined in 2017-18. Outcomes and ongoing management and maintenance activities will be reported through the Allied Health Learning and Development Governance Group that includes members from Darling Downs HHS and the AHPOQ.

- Allied Health Telehealth Network and Presentation Series

  The Cunningham Centre has integrated administration of the Network into unit outputs, with the activities being managed by a Senior Program Coordinator. The presentation series will be promoted to the workforce through the Cunningham Centre training calendar and monitored annually in line with Cunningham Centre quality processes.

  Outcomes and ongoing management and maintenance activities will be reported bi-annually through the Allied Health Learning and Development Governance Group.

- Allied Health Telehealth Evaluation Resource Guide

  The evaluation resource guide has been integrated into the web resources review schedule for the AHPOQ, and will be included as an episodic feature in the Allied Health E-News and other forum.

Document management

Project documentation relating to the education package and network is held by the Cunningham Centre. Documentation relating to the evaluation resource guide and overall project management / reporting is held by the AHPOQ.

Abbreviations / Glossary

AHPOQ   Allied Health Professions' Office of Queensland

HHS   Hospital and Health Service

QHEPS   Queensland Health intranet

Acknowledgements

Project working group

Ilsa Nielsen	Principal Workforce Officer, AHPOQ
Melody Shepherd	Team Leader, Cunningham Centre
Peter Fuelling	Team Leader, Cunningham Centre
Melinda Stone	Senior Program Coordinator, Cunningham Centre
Jayne Kirkpatrick	Senior Program Coordinator, Cunningham Centre

Project Steering Group

Julie Hulcombe	Chief Allied Health Officer, AHPOQ (Project sponsor)
Annette Scott	Executive Director Allied Health, Darling Downs HHS (Project sponsor)
Matt Page	Principal Project Officer, Telehealth Support Unit
Robyn Glynn	Director of Allied Health (North), Torres & Cape HHS; Allied health member, Statewide Rural and Remote Clinical Network

Reference group members, advisors and contributors

Telehealth Support Unit, Healthcare Improvement Unit, Department of Health

Centre for Online Health, University of Queensland

Evaluation advisors:

- Clare Burns (Metro North HHS)
- Michelle Cottrell (Metro North HHS)
- Dr Desley Harvey (Cairns and Hinterland HHS)
- Associate Professor Alison Pighills (Mackay HHS)
- Karen Rogers (Sunshine Coast HHS)
- Dr Anna Tynan (Darling Downs HHS)
- Professor Elizabeth Ward (Metro South HHS, University of Queensland)
- Professor Trish Wielandt (James Cook University)

Members of the education package reference groups: Diabetes management for allied health; Paediatric therapy for allied health; Hand therapy, burns management and compression garments; Home assessment and equipment; Mobility and exercise programs.

Teams profiled in and contributing to the education package clinical example videos:

- Mackay Hinterland allied health team (Mackay HHS)
- Dietetics department, Mackay Hospital (Mackay HHS)
- Atherton Hospital pharmacy team (Cairns and Hinterland HHS)
- Community Care Allied Health Team (Darling Downs HHS)
- Toowoomba Child Development Service (Darling Downs HHS)
- Podiatry department, Kingaroy Hospital (Darling Downs HHS)
- Occupational therapy department, Dalby Hospital (Darling Downs HHS)
- The Pegg Leditschke Children's Burns Centre (Children's Health HHS)
- Nuriyn Centre, Roma Hospital (South West HHS)
- Physiotherapy department, QEII Jubilee Hospital (Metro South HHS)
- Physiotherapy department, Princess Alexandra Hospital (Metro South HHS)
- Occupational therapy department, Cairns Hospital (Cairns and Hinterland HHS)
- Community Wellness Centre, Thursday Island (Torres and Cape HHS)
- LifeTec Brisbane

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4. Queensland Health, 2015. Evaluation Resource Guide: Allied Health Telehealth Capacity Building Project at https://www.health.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0024/451077/telehealth-evalguide.pdf

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