Social Work Assistant

Support worker model for hospital settings
Drivers for change

• Social workers spend significant amounts of time on low level tasks
• Important therapeutic work not being prioritised
• High levels of accrued time-in-lieu
• Poor staff morale due to fears of professional deskilling
• Lack of allied health assistant role out of step with other allied health disciplines
Key elements of role

• Social work assistant (SWA) tasks and competencies identified
• SWA operates within delegation model
• Social workers carry out more complex tasks as per task complexity hierarchy developed
Evidence of impact

- SWA tasks and competencies identified
- Social Work Task Complexity and Delegation model developed
  - SWA functions developed in terms of clinical service delivery, clinical governance, quality and safety, etc
  - Support for creation of SWA qualification
Outcomes

• Increased productivity and cost effectiveness
  – 20% increase in new patients seen
  – 47% reduction in time-in-lieu accrual
  – 11% reduction in cost per occasion of service

• Better alignment of resources i.e.. skill level matches task
  – 81% social worker time spent on more complex (Levels 3-5) tasks indicating full scope SW practice

• Increased social worker job satisfaction