



Health
South Western Sydney
Local Health District

Community & Consumer Participation

A Strategic Direction Statement for Primary and Community Health

July 2016



Background:

Primary and Community Health (P&CH) is committed to consumer and community participation and values the positive contributions consumers and community are making to improve health service quality, equity and management. The importance of developing health systems and health services that are based on partnerships with patients, families, carers and consumers is reflected in national and international quality frameworks¹.

P&CH has developed this document to strengthen and improve the practice of consumer and community engagement processes across P&CH as it recognises its position regarding the significance and value of engaging with consumers and community.

This Strategic Direction Statement is underpinned by the South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) Consumer and Community Participation Framework (2016-2019) which has provided the overarching framework for P&CH. Both documents are equally valuable in providing a comprehensive guide in enhancing consumer and community engagement at a local and district level.

Statement:

Primary and Community Health is committed to:

- Ensuring there are mechanisms in place to actively engage with consumers and the community in order to identify their needs and develop appropriate services
- Partnering with consumers and the community in the planning, implementation and evaluation of its services
- Strengthening responsiveness to the differing perspectives and needs of a diverse range of consumers and community members
- Providing accessible engagement strategies that are acceptable to a broad range of consumers and the community
- Developing a culturally responsive primary health care system
- Ensuring the methods and practice of consumer engagement are guided by current best practice.

Scope:

The Strategic Direction Statement for engaging with consumers and the Community is to be used by all P&CH staff to strengthen and improve the practice of consumer and community engagement process across all Directorates within P&CH.

The accompanying resources will assist staff who are planning, managing or implementing consumer and community quality improvement projects, programs or activities. The resources are based on current best practice consumer participation methodology toolkits and resource guides.

Elements of Consumer Engagement:

Effective partnerships with consumers and the community exist when they are treated with dignity and respect, as equal partners. Effective partnerships rely on shared information and when the consumers and communities are supported throughout the engagement and collaboration process. Delivering care that is based on partnerships provides many benefits for the health consumer, provider and organisation.

Elements of consumer engagement and partnering with consumers and the community comprise of a set of principles, standards, scales, levels of engagement and health literacy. All of these elements are outlined in the SWSLHD Consumer and Community Participation Framework <http://www.swslhd.nsw.gov.au/ccp/framework.html> in addition to the references listed in the 'useful resources' section.

As a partner with P&CH, consumers and the community should be involved in making decisions for service planning, developing models of care, measuring services and evaluating systems of care.

Model for Primary & Community Health:

The Consumer and Community Participation model for Primary and Community Health consists of four key elements that focus on: Governance, Models of Care Development, Consumer Engagement and Capacity Building.

1. GOVERNANCE

Engagement with consumers, their families and carers is a key activity for public health organisations, as required both in Local Health District functions under the Health Services Act and through Standard 6 in the corporate governance framework, which emphasises the importance of consumer engagement in decisions that affect them.

Effective and meaningful consumer engagement is fundamental to achieving P&CHs objectives in the planning, development and delivery of improved outcomes to our consumers and their families.

The Audit Office of NSW³ stated that government organisations need to engage with key consumers to 'shine a light on who they are, how they operate, what they are doing and how well they are doing it'.

It is important to recognise that as P&CH provides a range of community-based early intervention, assessment, acute/post-acute treatment, health maintenance and continuing care services designed to improve or maintain the health and wellbeing of individuals across all population groups in South Western Sydney (SWS) and providing these services at multiple health facilities and in pre-schools, schools, non-government organisations and homes, establishing one community participation network that is reflective of the current population groups accessing these services and that are located across SWS will not ensure effective consumer and community

participation. Hence, a number of other equally valuable strategies have been identified to address this gap.

What Primary and Community Health will DO:

- Involve consumers and carers in governance through committee membership, including quality and risk management and advisory committees
- Ensure that all new and revised publications/policies for consumers and carers will have the 'gold tick of approval'
- Support active involvement with the existing SWSLHD Consumer Participation Networks (Bankstown, Fairfield, Liverpool, Macarthur, Wingecarribee) to ensure that P&CH is linked into the existing Community Participation frameworks for each hospital as well as at a District level through the Consumer and Community Council
- Work with partner agencies including Local Government and Non-Government Organisations to consult with and ensure the input of consumers is recognised
- Include accountability for patient care experience in all job descriptions and provide feedback in all performance reviews
- Communicate this vision - develop and promote an organisation mission statement that embodies patient based care
- Allocate funds annually to support the seeding grant model to equip staff with additional resources to carry out innovative community participation projects with the aim of increasing consumer engagement and improving the services provided.

2. MODELS OF CARE DEVELOPMENT

A "Model of Care" broadly defines the way health services are delivered. It outlines best practice care and services for a person, population group or patient cohort as they progress through the stages of a condition, injury or event. It aims to ensure people get the right care, at the right time, by the right team and in the right place².

Within the P&CH team there is a wide skill set to enable the team to develop innovative Models of Care in collaboration with clinicians, patients, health care partners and the community.

What Primary and Community Health will DO:

- Promote and utilise its 'Critical Friends Network' strategy across P&CH to increase the engagement of consumers. The Critical Friends Network is an 'opt-in' email/SMS group that can be used for simple consultation or to invite more extensive consultations. Consumers and their families can comment on or provide advice on service planning and provision.

- Develop specific strategies to enhance community engagement with hard to reach consumer groups i.e. young people, sexual health clients, Aboriginal people, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities, families accessing the sustained home visiting program etc.
- Work in partnership with relevant stakeholders to carry out targeted community consultations to promote community participation and to seek input in relation to service delivery and community needs.

3. CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

Health consumers actively participate in their own healthcare and in health policy, planning, service delivery and evaluation at service and District levels.

What Primary and Community Health will DO:

- Involve consumers and carers in relevant forums and training where they are invited to share their experiences about the health care system
- Develop a welcome kit for consumers in partnership with CCP members as part of their orientation to P&CH
- Involve staff and CCP members in projects to improve the physical access and patient care for people with a disability
- Involve CCP representatives and staff in carrying out patient and carer interviews and ensure their input around service improvement
- Develop a clear organisational flowchart to illustrate the organisational structure and how consumers can be involved and provide feedback.
- Utilise Critical Friends Group to consult members and provide updates on services on a regular basis
- Develop a social media engagement strategy for P&CH on community participation

4. CAPACITY BUILDING

The development of sustainable skills, organisational structures, resources and commitment to improving health services.

What Primary and Community Health will DO:

- Ensure all health workers complete the on-line training on patient-centred care (Person Centred Care – 43392513 – HETI) as a baseline minimum in community engagement training

- Provide annual funding to support the community participation seeding grants program to equip staff with additional resources to identify and implement innovative strategies to further engage consumers in decision making about their own health care as well as involvement in service planning and development with the ultimate aim of improving the delivery of care.
- Hold quarterly professional development and information forums for all Community Health staff and incorporate the theme of community engagement and transforming the patient experience in a minimum of two forums per calendar year.
- Raise awareness of patient experience week by holding interactive and reflective activities with staff and consumers in marking this annual event and utilising it as a strategy to further engage with patients/consumers.
- Ensure there is input from the Community Participation unit into orientation programs for newly recruited staff
- Further promote and engage staff to participate in the CP Champions Working Group and have representation from across all directorates
- Develop face to face training on consumer engagement and patient based care training for P&CH

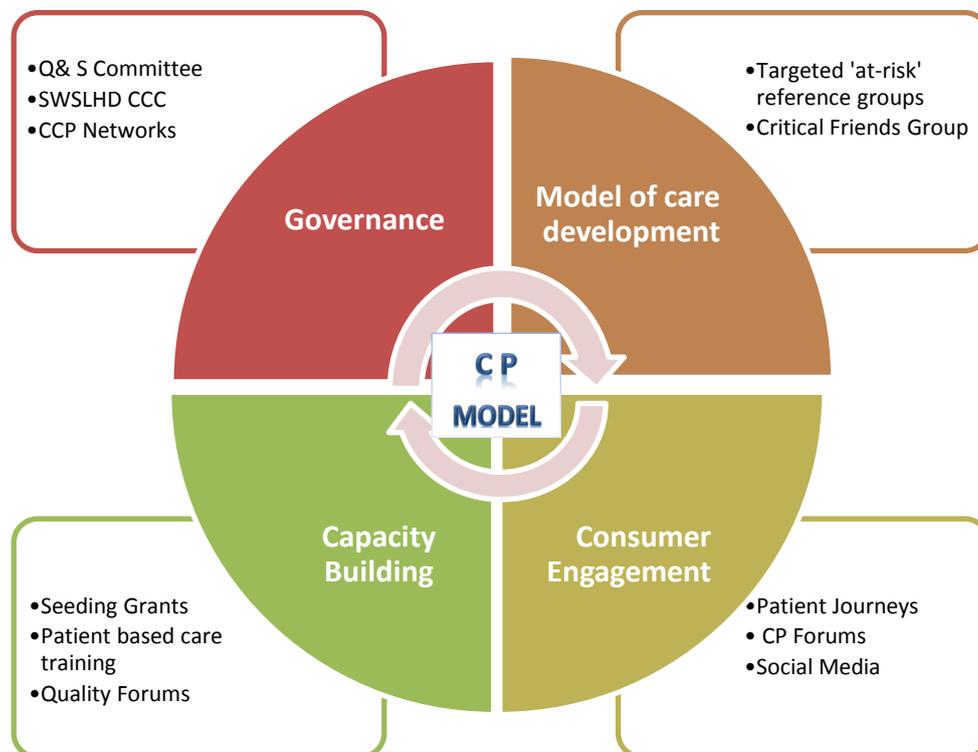


Figure 1: Model for Primary and Community Health

Useful Resources:

- South Western Sydney Local Health District Consumer and Community Participation Framework <http://www.swslhd.nsw.gov.au/ccp/framework.html>
- Health Consumers NSW <http://www.hcnsw.org.au/>
- Australian Commission on Safety & Quality in Health Care <http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/patient-and-consumer-centred-care/national-safety-and-quality-health-service-standard-2-partnering-with-consumers/>
- International Association for Public Participation <https://www.iap2.org.au>
- ACI NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation http://www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/resources/patient-experience/collect-stories/collect_stories
- Clinical Excellence Commission <http://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/programs/partnering-with-patients>
- Effective engagement toolkit <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/effective-engagement/toolkit>
- The Patient Based Care Challenge <http://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/pbcc>
- Consumer Engagement in the Agency for Clinical Innovation https://www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/195830/ACI-AIHI_Community_Engagement_Research_Study.pdf
- Engaging Queenslanders: A guide to community engagement methods and techniques <https://www.qld.gov.au/web/community-engagement/guides-factsheets/documents/engaging-queenslanders-methods-and-techniques.pdf>
- Developing a consumer and community engagement strategy: a toolkit for hospital and Health Services <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/hcq/publications/hcq-toolkit.pdf>
- Consumer and community engagement: A review of the literature <https://www.unisa.edu.au/PageFiles/175312/Consumer-and-community-engagement-literature-review.pdf>
- Guide for engaging with consumers and the community 2013 http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/f8d1d0004e454788aa0caf8ba24f3db9/Guideline_Guide+for+Engaging+with+Consumers+and+the+Community_June2016.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=f8d1d0004e454788aa0caf8ba24f3db9

Definitions:

- **Consumers:** patients and potential patients, carers and organisations representing consumers' interests⁴.
- **Consumer advocate:** a person who advocates the consumer perspective and has the requisite experience to speak as an informed consumer
- **Community engagement:** refers to the connections between government, communities and citizens in the development and implementation of policies programs, services and projects. It encompasses a wide variety of government-community interactions ranging from information sharing to community consultation and, in some instances, active participation in government decision making. It incorporates public participation, with people being empowered to contribute to decisions affecting their lives, through the acquisition of skills, knowledge and experiences.
- **Consumer group:** group of consumers, carers and / or healthcare providers with experience and / or expertise relevant to your health care service. The group is convened to provide advice and feedback to your healthcare organisation on specific issues, including safety and quality improvement activities, patient experience and consumer centred care.
- **Consumer representative:** a person who represents a consumer organisation or group and is authorised to speak on behalf of that organisation or group, making them accountable to and responsible for reporting back to that organisation or group.
- **Patient and consumer centred care:** Patient and consumer centred care is healthcare that is respectful of, and responsive to the preferences, needs and values of patients, consumers and the community, with dimensions including respect, emotional support, physical comfort, information and communication, continuity and transition, coordination of care, involvement of family and carers, and access to care⁶.
- **Health literacy:** is the extent to which consumers can obtain, process, and understand information about health care, services and the health system. It also refers to a consumer's capacity to use that information to make decisions about their health care. This includes, but is not limited to, consumers with limited English proficiency, those from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) background, communities from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background, and children and young people.
- **Partnership:** working together collaboratively to make decisions, sharing responsibility for decisions and collectively owning outcomes.
- **Transforming your experience:** Improving and transforming the experience of patients, staff and communities by developing strategies that are underpinned by SWSLHD's core values (Collaboration, Openness, Respect and Empowerment).

References:

1. National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (2011), Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care
2. Government of Western Australia, Department of Health (2012)
<http://www.agedcare.health.wa.gov.au/home/moc.cfm>
3. NSW Auditor General's Report Volume 2 2011 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE – STRATEGIC EARLY WARNING SYSTEM 2011 P13.
4. National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards, Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare, 2011
5. Developing a consumer and community engagement strategy: a toolkit for Hospital and Health Services, Health Consumers Queensland.
6. Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care – Patient Centred Care: Improving quality and safety through partnerships with patients and consumers