

BETTER, SAFER CARE

Delivering a world-leading
healthcare system

October 2016





STATEMENT FROM THE MINISTER

It is well known that Victoria has one of the most efficient health systems in the world, supported by some of the best doctors, nurses and health workers in the world.

Targeting zero, the review of hospital safety and quality assurance in Victoria found that while our hospitals provide world-class care, the Department of Health and Human Services has failed to provide adequate oversight of quality and safety across our health services.

There are gaps and failings in our quality and safety systems that have been overlooked, and the action and leadership required from the department to achieve change and prioritise patient safety has not occurred.

All Victorians should have confidence in our health system and expect that where avoidable harm does occur, lessons are learnt and every effort is made to ensure it never happens again.

Our response to *Targeting zero, the review of hospital safety and quality assurance in Victoria* provides the blueprint for us to achieve this.

We have accepted in principle all recommendations made by the review, with work already underway to implement them.

These reforms will be the most significant overhaul of Victoria's health system in decades and builds on the work already undertaken by the Victorian Government to strengthen quality and safety.

Access to safe, high-quality care is a core right of all Victorians. I want to assure Victorian patients their safety is our highest priority and we are doing everything we can to reduce avoidable harm in our hospitals.

A goal of zero avoidable harm is an ambitious target, but one we have an obligation to do everything we can to achieve.

World-class care must be matched by a world-class quality and safety system, and that is exactly what we will deliver.

The Hon Jill Hennessy
Minister for Health

The review of hospital safety and quality assurance in Victoria

The *Review of hospital safety and quality assurance in Victoria* was commissioned by the Minister for Health following the discovery of a cluster of tragically avoidable perinatal deaths at Djerriwarrh Health Services.

The review was a detailed and extensive analysis into how the Department of Health and Human Services oversees and supports quality and safety of care across the Victorian hospital system.

It consulted widely, seeking the views and experiences of patients, clinicians, hospital managers and boards about how to make Victoria's healthcare systems safer.

It highlights cases of excellence and success that have not been shared across the health system as a missed opportunity to strengthen statewide systems and better protect patients.

The Victorian Government and the Department of Health and Human Services accept in principle all the recommendations of the review, with work already underway to implement them.

Our vision for quality and safety in Victoria's health system

- The world-class care patients receive is supported by a world-class system of quality and safety assurance.
- Patient views and experiences are heard and shared at every point of our health system to drive continuous improvement.
- Individual safety and quality success is shared and built into our statewide system.
- Health services and their boards get the information and training they need to best serve their communities and provide better, safer care.
- Frontline healthcare workers have a real say on how to make the system safer and lead the way on improvement and best practice.
- The health service leaders of the future are identified and supported, with a focus on getting the right skills, knowledge and experience.
- Data is collected, analysed and shared so the community is better informed about health services and health services receive better information about their performance.
- People with mental illness, their families and carers receive access to high quality, integrated services that can provide coordinated treatment and support.

Our priority actions

New organisations will be established to simplify the current system and better respond to the needs of patients and healthcare workers:

- **Safer Care Victoria** will work with health services to monitor and improve the quality and safety of care delivered across our health system, with the goal of achieving zero avoidable patient harm.
- A new **health information agency** will analyse and share information across our system to ensure everyone has an accurate picture of where the concerns are, and where we're getting it right.
- The **Victorian Clinical Council** will put clinicians front and centre to provide clinical expertise to the Government, the department and health services on how to make the system safer and provide better care to all Victorians.
- The **Ministerial Board Advisory Committee** will ensure our hospital and health service boards have the right mix of skills, knowledge and experience to strengthen local governance and decision making.

We will also:

- consult on the introduction of a **Duty of Candour** where health services must apologise to any person harmed while receiving care, and explain what has gone wrong and what action will be taken
- introduce a new **Quality and Safety Bill** into Parliament next year to address a number of the review's recommendations with a major review of the Health Service and Ambulance Service Acts to follow
- ensure **public and private hospitals** are held to the same quality and safety standards and reporting requirements – because patients deserve to feel safe wherever they receive care
- examine the option of extending **no-fault medical insurance for healthcare injuries** – similar to compensation schemes for injuries in the workplace and from motor vehicles
- develop **master plan options for Thomas Embling Hospital**, along with staging and delivery considerations in line with the current and future needs of the service
- increase the mental health workforce by **funding an additional 130 mental health staff**.

What does this mean for patients, families and carers?



Victorians deserve a system where patients have the information they need to know they are getting the best possible care. They need to be assured their voices are heard.

We will improve patient experiences by:

- listening to patient views and experiences of care at every point of the system and taking action to address their concerns
- ensuring all hospitals have an identified person responsible for addressing patient concerns, who is visible and accessible to patients, and able to meet a patient within a week of initial contact
- ensuring boards will be better connected to their communities to gain and maintain a broad perspective
- providing patient representatives with relevant personal experience to be part of clinical networks and the Victorian Clinical Council to help drive service improvement
- improving complaints management through better sharing of information between the Health Complaints Commission and Safer Care Victoria
- ensuring for the first time, mental health patients' experience of care across all levels of the mental health system will be measured to better understand what is working well and what areas need improvement
- using data provided in the first ever mental health services annual report to ensure we know where services are improving and expanding to meet growing demand and diversity, and where more needs to be done.



What does this mean for healthcare workers?



Healthcare workers are the frontline of quality and safety in Victoria's health system, and we need to do more to support them and share their knowledge and experience.

We will support frontline healthcare workers by:

- involving clinicians every step of the way as we implement these reforms
- establishing the Victorian Clinical Council, comprising up to 60 senior clinicians, to provide critical advice, and making sure their views and advice are heard and received by Victorian Government, the department and across the health system
- ensuring healthcare workers have access to the data and information they need to compare their performance and results
- Safer Care Victoria supporting the clinical leaders of the future with the training and knowledge they need to drive improvement within their health services
- Safer Care Victoria working side-by-side with the Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency (AHPRA) to respond to clinician concerns
- delivering the mental health workforce strategy – our plan to attract, develop and retain the best possible mental health workforce so they are supported to provide the best care and treatment
- increasing the mental health workforce by funding an additional 130 mental health staff.

What does this mean for rural health services?



Victoria's small rural health services work tirelessly to keep people close to family in times of illness and vulnerability.

Our locally-managed rural health services must be supported to meet the community expectation that they provide the same quality and safety of care as larger regional and metropolitan services.

We will better strengthen and support rural health services by:

- ensuring that wherever possible rural and regional Victorians receive their care close to home, but those with complex conditions will be supported to travel to receive safe, quality care in an appropriate hospital setting, usually in a regional hub
- better connecting clinicians working in small and rural health services with clinicians in larger health services by establishing clinical partnerships in core areas such as maternity, cardiac, mental health and surgery services
- enhancing board skills and capabilities in clinical governance in rural and regional areas so that boards are better equipped to identify and address issues
- providing boards with the information they need to ensure quality and safety of care and the training they need to use it.



STATEMENT FROM THE SECRETARY

Targeting zero, the review of hospital safety and quality assurance in Victoria focuses its attention on the performance of the Department of Health and Human Services.

This review makes it clear that we need to elevate safety and quality in the Victorian hospital system, so we can ensure the care that patients receive is consistently world-class, continuously improving and supported to achieve the best outcomes for patients.

The review finds that the department must take a stronger role as system leader and system manager.

The department is addressing the entirety of the review's recommendations under four areas of emphasis:

- setting the goal that no one is harmed in our hospitals
- supporting strong leadership in hospital governance
- sharing excellence across our health system
- collecting data about patients' experiences and feeding that across the system.

This will mean change for the department, which we welcome.

We've already increased the priority we place on safety, quality assurance and improvement in Victorian health services.

We're committed to providing greater oversight and stronger leadership, working with our hospital boards, our clinicians, and with our healthcare workforce.

We must share our learnings, we must share our insight if things go wrong, and share the knowledge from our successes.

Victorians deserve to know that should things go wrong, their needs will be dealt with swiftly and transparently, and any lessons learned and shared across the hospital system. Patients, families and carers need to be empowered to be partners in their own health and healthcare.

Every Victorian should expect that no avoidable harm will come to them, their families or loved ones when they are in the care of a Victorian hospital.

I want to thank the panel that delivered this important review: its chair and Director of Health Programs at the Grattan Institute, Dr Stephen Duckett; Kyneton District Health Service Chief Executive Officer, Ms Maree Cuddihy; and Clinical Program Director of Emergency and Acute Medicine and Director of General Medicine at Alfred Health, Associate Professor Harvey Newnham.

This review, and the actions we are taking, will drive our goal of zero avoidable harm.

Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services

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