Leadership for Improvement and Innovation

Innovation Hub and Health System Improvement

Introduction

The case for investing in leadership development is clear. Health services with effective leadership have better organisational performance. Staff engagement is increased and in turn there are fewer errors, lower infection and mortality rates, stronger financial management, higher staff morale and reduced absenteeism (Kings Fund 2011).

The department’s Innovation Hub and Health System Improvement Branch (the Branch) is responsible for supporting health services to deliver measurable improvement in the quality, safety, efficiency and effectiveness of the services they provide.

The Branch supports the health sector to deliver better healthcare and patient outcomes in Victoria by:

- building leadership capability
- fostering a culture of innovation
- facilitating communication and collaboration,

Leadership for improvement and innovation strategy

The department’s Leadership for improvement and innovation strategy is about developing leaders who drive care, reform and innovation. The strategy guides departmental activities for health service improvement. It sets out a four year plan and identifies five priority areas: organisational approach to leadership; developing leadership capabilities of individuals and groups; tools and resources; research and dissemination of best practice; and strategic partnerships.

The strategy encompasses a leadership capability framework based on the UK National Health Service (NHS) leadership qualities framework. The strategy includes a range of programs and approaches to support leadership development across four groups from Victoria’s publicly funded health services: newly appointed CEOs; health service executives; senior managers; and senior clinicians in management positions and emerging leaders.

The strategy:

- supports leadership skills and development
- fosters a culture of innovation
- develops professional networks
- inspires leaders to support each other and share knowledge.

Moreover, the strategy aims to develop a shared view of the skills and capabilities required of leaders at different levels and roles in health services in Victoria.

Leadership activities

Target groups

The Leadership for improvement and innovation strategy targets multiple leadership groups from across the health sector.

Various approaches have been developed for each of these four groups in recognition of their different demands and requirements, as well as the diversity of their skills and experiences.
Strategic LINK – Enhancing health CEO leadership

The first 100 days for a new CEO are critical to establishing their leadership role and setting the tone for the future. The broad objectives of Strategic LINK are to:

- provide support to CEOs that encourages adaptive leadership
- ensure CEOs are well briefed and confident in working within the Victorian system
- focus CEOs on stewardship of both the health service and health system
- prepare CEOs for effective board chair and stakeholder relationships.

Strategic LINK allows for a flexible approach that can be tailored to the individual requirements of each new CEO. This program is particularly beneficial for newly appointed CEOs in rural hospitals who may not have access or the resources to engage in the level of orientation typically undertaken by CEOs in metropolitan health services. A mentoring program has been established for new CEOs who are partnered with experienced health service CEOs to establish networks and further their understanding of broader stakeholder expectations, especially those in the political arena, department, board and community.

Executive LINK – Developing health executive leadership

The Executive LINK is a nine-month program, tailored specifically for public health sector executives who wish to challenge and develop themselves in their current role or who aspire to CEO roles. It builds on the core health leadership capabilities needed to drive care, reform and innovation in health. The program inspires health executives to:

- lead innovation to deliver best care
- expand their networks
- challenge the status quo and drive reform
- continue to positively influence the health system.

Executive LINK program overview

The Executive LINK program incorporates:

- a 360-degree feedback and emotional intelligence self-assessment to create a personal leadership development plan
- individual executive coaching sessions
- five workshops including a two-day residential
- events with national expert guest speakers
- half-day ‘Leadership Labs’ that allow participants the opportunity to hear from and network with executives from other sectors outside of public health to discuss issues
- an end-of-program event
- a collaborative leadership project that adopts an action learning approach to dealing with systemic issues in the health sector.

Critical LINK – Fostering leadership in senior clinicians and managers

Critical LINK does not prescribe a set leadership program. It provides a leadership development and training framework based on best practice principles.

Programs

In 2015 a number of leadership programs will be offered for the Critical LINK cohort in different clinical areas. The programs include the following components:

- pre-program work
- learning support and leadership coaching
- workshops
- a leadership (work based) improvement project
- an end-of-program event.

Critical LINK leadership program for neonatal nurse managers

In 2014 the Branch, in partnership with the department’s Nursing and Midwifery Policy unit, piloted an eight-month program tailored for outer metro, regional and rural maternity services managers wishing to improve their leadership skills and develop themselves in their current role. The program focuses on building core health leadership capabilities to drive patient-centred care, reform, improvement and innovation.

In recognition of the success of this initiative the program will be offered again in 2015 focusing on nurse unit managers and associate managers of special care nurseries and neonatal intensive care services.

Critical LINK previous programs

Critical LINK leadership program for emergency department directors and nurse unit managers

In 2013 and 2014 a six-month leadership program was offered for emergency department directors and nurse unit managers, the program focused on developing the core leadership capabilities to drive patient centered care, reform and innovation.
The program developed in partnership with the Emergency Care Network was designed so that the director and nurse unit manager participate together as a leadership team.

Clinical Leadership in Quality and Safety (CLiQS)
Clinical Leadership in Quality and Safety (CLiQS) is an innovative and award winning nine-month program that equips clinicians with the leadership skills and knowledge required to successfully lead and improve the safety and quality of consumer care. In 2012 CLiQS was awarded the Ted Freeman Award for Innovation in Education.

Participants bring their high levels of professional expertise, and the curriculum focuses on advancing their knowledge in learning communities. Knowledge is organised around structural, interpersonal and leadership issues, as well as real-world problems.

CLiQS will be offered in 2015 for more information please contact the Australasian College of Health Services Management.

Vital LINK – Engaging our potential health leaders
Supporting emerging leaders is an important arm of the department’s Leadership for improvement and innovation strategy. The Clinicians in Redesign engages early career clinicians junior doctors and allied health professionals in a formal training program in improvement science.

Clinicians in Redesign – Junior Doctors Redesign Program
Victoria’s approach to junior doctor involvement in redesign started in 2010 with a pilot project at two health services. The pilot sites received seed funding to establish a junior doctors program.

Junior Doctors Redesign Program
The Junior Doctors Redesign Program (JDRP) was established to engage, develop and support junior doctors in undertaking improvement work. The long-term objective is to build a cohort of medical clinicians engaged with, and taking leadership roles in, quality and process improvement activities.

Since launching the Clinicians in Redesign in 2010, the Branch has extended the program to now include fifteen health services involved. Each of the health services have chosen to recruit and rotate junior doctors through an accredited program over three or six months.

Allied Health Redesign Program
Based on the success of the Junior Doctors Redesign Program, the Branch established an Allied Health Redesign Program in 2014, which involves a six-month redesign project as well as other improvement activities. There are currently six health services engaged in this program, with four being funded for the first time in 2015.

Other programs
Leaders in Conversation
The Leaders in Conversation series has showcased leadership expertise from a broad range of sectors in a series of events.

The objectives of the series are to:
- increase the intellectual debate relating to leadership within health
- promote a shared understanding of leadership
- strengthen networking opportunities
- create a forum for the exchange of knowledge and the development of ideas.

Leaders in Conversation is centered on a keynote speaker providing insights into their own leadership journey and creating a narrative relating to specific topics.

Topics discussed have included:
- creating a just culture
- consumer-led design
- leadership insights from Antarctica
- building an improvement focused organisation.

The series is open to all people working in Victorian health services, including acute and community-based members of health service boards and departmental staff. The 2015 series will open with Christine Nixon APM, and also feature Daniel Flynn of the Thankyou. Movement and Ahmed Fahour, Group CEO of Australia Post and Deborah Cheetham. For more information please visit our website http://docs.health.vic.gov.au/docs/doc/Leaders-in-Conversation-Series-2015
Health System Management Course
In partnership with the University of Melbourne the department has developed a customised program in health systems management for senior managers and senior clinicians of Victorian health services. The program is a formal degree program of the University of Melbourne and involves a total of five days of classes offered in an intensive mode of discussions, workshops and a formal assessment component.

Health ICQ
Health Improvement Capability Quotient, or ‘Health ICQ’ is a robust tool to assess organisational capability for improvement. The Health ICQ is based on the Baldrige Award and Shingo Prize and has been informed by the learnings from the departments RHCP over the past three years.

Improvement is most successful where health services have well-developed organisational capability. The Health ICQ provides a description of organisational capability for improvement aligned to the RHCP framework.

This innovative tool is structured around four key areas, referred to in health literature as common to high performing organisations framed in the context of organisational improvement and includes:

- organisational systems and structures – the organisation’s processes and management of processes, and its demonstrated ability to drive improvement
- workforce skills and knowledge – the knowledge and skills of the workforce related to improving the workplace and the availability of training to build the appropriate skills
- results and systems impact – the means by which results are measured and tracked, and the emerging benefits are communicated
- culture and behaviours – the mechanisms to support and embed a continuous improvement approach, including leaders’.

You can access this and other resources via the Tools tab on our website:


Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne. Except where otherwise indicated, the images in this publication show models and illustrative settings only, and do not necessarily depict actual services, facilities or recipients of services.

© Department of Health, January 2015 (1501024)