VC, Minister launch $12M clinical redesign program

The University of Tasmania has been chosen by the Australian Government to coordinate a $12 million Clinical Redesign program focused on improving the state’s acute patient care, boosting hospital efficiency, and delivering better satisfaction for both patients and health care professionals.

Health Services Innovation Tasmania (HSI Tas), a centre of the Faculty of Health, is managing the process. It was officially launched by Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen, who was joined at the podium by Tasmanian Health Minister Michael Ferguson.

He noted that the focus of the initiative was on the safety and quality of clinical services, particularly by providing health care professionals and students with skills in the principles of clinical redesign.

Minister Ferguson said, “This is not a ‘quick fix’ for Tasmania’s health system, and the results will take some time to be fully realised. But they will come because clinical redesign has been shown to be working effectively in other jurisdictions.

“The Tasmanian Government is very confident that this centre will make a major contribution to improved patient care, a better professional experience for our health professionals and a more economical use of resources.”
"For the first time the Australian Government has appointed a University to manage the planning and rollout of a state-based clinical redesign program," the Vice-Chancellor said. HSI Tas is working closely with health leaders and the state’s hospitals, through newly opened clinical redesign offices in Burnie, Launceston and Hobart.

"In terms of our educational and research roles, the University is ideally equipped to work collaboratively with the community, and the Tasmanian and Federal governments, to improve the efficiency, quality and safety of patient care," the VC said. Picking up on this theme, the Health Minister called the event "An important milestone in the evolution of Tasmania’s health system, and a placeholder in the role that collaboration plays in innovation."

Professor Rathjen added, “For the University to host this specialised unit is a huge vote of confidence in our ability to work with the professional and broader community on key issues in the field of health care, which affects us all.”

The VC said, “The public health care challenge is recognised as being especially strong in Tasmania, which faces high demands for emergency services and elective surgery, two of the key areas that clinical redesign is well suited to addressing.

“The wellbeing of Tasmanians underpins this important initiative, and we are committed to assisting our hospitals perform more effectively within the national budgetary constraints. “We are confident that Health Services Innovation Tasmania will help deliver a better health care experience for Tasmanians, and a more sustainable hospital system into the future.”

HSI Tas involves 14 full and part-time staff members, and its Co-Directors are Professor Greg Peterson, Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Health and Associate Professor Craig Quarmby, a surgeon with lengthy experience in the Tasmanian health care system.

View the Vice-Chancellor's address on youtube.

Tasmanian Health Conference - 26 & 27 July

The Tasmanian Health Conference was held on 26 and 27 July at the Medical Science Precinct, University of Tasmania, Hobart. HSI Tas was invited to be part of a panel discussion on the Tasmanian Health Assistance Package. We also took the opportunity to hold our first one-day Clinical Redesign workshop on the day preceding the conference (see below).

The Tasmanian Health Conference has proven to be a conference that gathers together senior health leaders, clinicians and politicians to discuss challenges within Tasmania’s health system, and this year was no different. In the conference opening Tasmania’s Minister for Health, the Hon Michael Ferguson MP, announced changes to the Tasmanian health system that the Liberal government will bring about. The theme of the changes is: One State, One Health System; Better Outcomes. The Minister described 4 steps that would take place with the first being the amalgamation of the 3 Tasmanian Health Organisations (THOs) into one Tasmanian Health Service (THS) based in Launceston. This will take effect on 1 July 2015.

Step two will be the establishment of the Health Council of Tasmania with membership inclusive of clinicians, stakeholders and the community. This group will obviate the need for the Tasmanian Lead Clinicians Group and will work closely with the Clinical Advisory Groups that arose out of the workings of that group.

A comprehensive review of the Department of Health and Human Services is step 3 and step 4 will be the release of a White Paper in the first half of next year. This will detail the Liberal government’s vision on delivery of healthcare services in Tasmania.

Craig Quarmby, Co-Director HSI Tas, presented a brief overview of the clinical redesign program prior to a panel discussion including Graeme Houghton (Chair, THO Governing Councils) and Phil Edmondson (CEO, TML). The session was chaired by Alasdair Macdonald, one of the members of the Commission on Delivery of Health Services in Tasmania. By means of the presentation and panel discussion HSI Tas was able to clearly outline the purpose and functioning of the statewide clinical redesign program, and the facilitation role of HSI Tas. Craig detailed the 5 Key Priority Areas that had been selected by the Consortium of Healthcare Partners for clinical redesign focus: emergency medicine access, elective surgery, bed demand and capacity, specialist outpatient clinics and acute mental health. Concern was raised about the impact of the Minister’s announcement on the
structure and function of the clinical redesign program and attendants were reassured that little change to the program would be required. Rather than Service Agreements between UTAS and three THOS there would be a Service Agreement with one THS. Clinical Redesign Offices would still be required in each of the three regions.

HSI Tas was proud to be one of the sponsors of the Conference and staff manned a booth throughout the conference. Many thanks to our team who gave up part of their weekend to do so.

First Clinical Redesign workshop a success

Health Services Innovation Tasmania (HSI Tas) recently delivered a successful ‘Introduction to Clinical Redesign workshop, the first in a series of nine to be hosted statewide. The workshop at the University of Tasmania’s Domain Campus in Hobart on July 25 preceded the AMA Tasmania/UTAS sponsored Tasmanian Health Conference, and was opened by Associate Professor Michael Pervan, Acting Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services. Mr Pervan highlighted the need to identify opportunities to improve Tasmanian health service delivery, alluding to the new strategic direction announced recently by the state government. Among other components, the ‘One State, One Health System: Better Outcomes’ strategy entails clinical redesign.

Many of the 64 participants were senior clinicians (nursing, medical and allied health), heads of departments and other staff working in Tasmanian healthcare. Some had links with the University of Tasmania or were employed in Non-Government Organisations. The morning session focussed mainly on learning from other clinicians, with four medical and nursing experts from other states sharing their experiences with the audience. The presentations centred on four areas: Elective Surgery, Emergency Access, Sub-Acute care and Outpatients. Dr Tim Green (Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney) dispelled the myths about clinical redesign in the emergency department. His key messages were: You don't have to be an expert; harness the knowledge and insight of your own teams, real sustainable change is possible and it can be a very rewarding process. By developing a new model, team based care, RPAH achieved a number of positive results, including a reduction in average Length of Stay in the Emergency Department (ED), and ward emergency calls 0-4 hours post transfer from the ED.

Bernadette Comitti (Alfred Health, Melbourne) spoke about the changes achieved in the area of elective surgery. Alfred Health implemented a protocol-led process throughout the entire patient journey. Some outcomes of her redesign journey were also amazing. Alfred Health has achieved an 85 per cent increase in the number of elective surgery admissions, decreases in patients waiting greater than recommended category time and length of stay,
and increased patient and staff satisfaction.

Dr Peter Hunter (also Alfred Health) spoke about his sub-acute experience. Introducing interdisciplinary briefs led to reduced Length of Stay and increased separations. Dr Hunter highlighted the need for increased patient involvement and the importance of communication with all key stakeholders. Importantly, he highlighted the need to see clinical redesign through the eyes of the patient.

Dr Lynne Gordon (Southern Adelaide Local Health Network) spoke about the changes achieved in Dermatology out-patients. One important development was a nurse-led clinic to promote successful discharge for complex patients back to their GP and developing a patient information sheet for new patients to assist the doctor’s assessment. The outcomes of this work included category three wait times for new patients being reduced from nine to seven months and, more importantly, category two wait times were reduced from 16-32 to 6-12 weeks.

In addition to these presentations HSI Tas Principal Redesign Consultant, Lauri O’Brien, provided an interactive session about the tools and techniques used in clinical redesign and HSI Tas Education Officer, Pieter Van Dam, presented the principles of clinical redesign. In the afternoon session, participants discussed case scenarios, concentrating on finding root causes by undertaking diagnostics, and presenting their results to the larger group.

The valuable day of learning and experience sharing was closed by Co-Directors Professor Greg Peterson and Associate Professor Craig Quarmby, who emphasised that HSI Tas is committed to supporting all aspects of the Tasmanian health system in the clinical redesign journey.

Hospital photo-shoots completed

As reported in last month’s newsletter, photo-shoots have been under way at Tasmania’s four hospitals in order to provide HSI Tas and the THOs with a good stock of visual images to use on their websites and in other material.

The last of these shoots took place during the week ending 15 August at Mersey Community Hospital and North West Regional Hospital, with well-known Tasmanian photographer Rob Walls again behind the lens, and valuable liaison support provided by THO-NW media officers Janine Phillips and Fleur King.

Our media adviser Robin Osborne reports that clinical staff were extremely helpful, as were the few patients who participated in the photos. He also noted a widespread awareness of the clinical redesign program. HSI Tas is most appreciative of the cooperation of all involved in the photographic exercise, which has resulted in a bank of excellent, up to date images.

Consultation in medical ward at North West Regional Hospital, Burnie.

Clinical Leads (North West) Dr Marielle Ruigrok and Mr Scott Fletcher.
Royal start-up for Clinical Redesign

The Clinical Redesign program began in earnest at Royal Hobart Hospital (RHH) during week commencing 4 August under the guidance of clinical leads Dr Nicole Hancock and Dr Marcus Skinner, with Executive Director of Nursing Coral Paton as executive sponsor. The project officers are Maggie Crawford and Sue Hughes (pictured).

The first study to be done at RHH is WAISH (Why Am I Still Here?). For a week, Maggie and Sue visited wards that receive patients from the Emergency Department. The next study, monitoring patient flow within the Emergency Department, started on Sunday 17 August. Improving the patient's healthcare journey entails more timely care – e.g. shorter waiting times; a better patient and carer experience; better access to related services; better use of existing hospital resources and greater professional satisfaction.

Clinical Redesign Office - North

Further progress on the state-wide rollout of clinical redesign was marked by the recent formation of the Clinical Redesign Office North in Launceston. The Clinical Redesign team include (l-r) Dr Alasdair MacDonald (Director of Medicine LGH) as Clinical Lead, Helena Nicholson, Program Officer (previously project officer THO-N Performance Improvement Program), Kerry Leonard, Program Officer, (previously NUM John L Grove), and Dr Phoebe Griffin, Research Assistant.

The new team will be housed in the Northern Integrated Care Service building, UTAS Clinical School level and can be contacted by email:

Kerry: kerry.leonard@dhhs.tas.gov.au
Helena: helena.nicholson@dhhs.tas.gov.au
Phoebe: phoebe.griffin@utas.edu.au

HSI Tas Honours Scholarships in 2015

Health Services Innovation Tasmania (HSI Tas) invites students interested in undertaking Honours in health services research within the acute health sector to apply for Honours in 2015, with research projects including:

- A historical evaluation of the ‘Elective Surgery Blitzes’
- An examination of inappropriate ambulance service usage
- Determinants of utilisation of an after-hours GP clinic (Launceston)
- An investigation into frequent hospital emergency department attendees
- An exploration of consumers’ experiences of hospital outpatient clinic services
- An exploration of the various pathways to presentation at the hospital emergency department
- A comparative analysis of ‘GP-type presentations’ to hospital emergency departments in Tasmania
- A qualitative evaluation of previous hospital-based clinical redesign projects undertaken in Tasmania

Up to six $5,000 Honours Scholarships are available. Additionally, direct research and associated travel costs will be covered by the program.

For further information and to apply visit http://www.healthinnovation.tas.edu.au/research/honours-2015.

Closing Date: Friday 31 October 2014