

Quality Matters

**The monthly newsletter of the
Hunter New England Health
Clinical Governance Unit**

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the first edition of "Quality Matters", which is designed to provide snapshots of the initiatives, themes and events in quality and safety within Hunter New England Health, and on the broader state, national and international agenda.



Dr Kim Hill
Director
Clinical Governance

The newsletter will be a monthly publication. The first newsletter is an introduction to clinical governance, while future editions will cover key issues such as clinical effectiveness, patient safety and policy development. We will also include general features such as initiatives, outcomes, new projects, alerts, staff profiles and useful information links.

I hope that you find the newsletter of interest. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all this month's contributors. Please do not hesitate to share this newsletter with your Hunter New England Health colleagues and staff. The newsletter is only in the formative stages, so we are interested in receiving your feedback about it, today and in the future. You are welcome to contact any member of the Editorial Committee, or email us via clinicalgovernance@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Clinical Governance?

Clinical Governance is based on the principle that all of us, clinicians and managers alike, are jointly accountable for quality of patient care and standards of care delivery. It is the framework by which this accountability is ensured and demonstrated.

Why Clinical Governance?

Ensuring patient safety and quality of care is important to health care professionals, patients and the community and there are growing expectations that accountability for the safe delivery of health services will be openly demonstrated. In 1859, Florence Nightingale said: *"it may seem a strange principle to enunciate as the very first requirement in a hospital that it should do the sick no harm..."*. Nearly 150 years later, the Institute of Medicine Report (2000) found that the seventh most common cause of death in the USA was health care error. Further studies have led to our

current understanding that addressing systems issues are the primary basis of achieving quality improvement and the Clinical Governance Unit has been established to support and facilitate this across Hunter New England Health.

What are the key areas of interest?

Clinical Effectiveness, Patient Safety and Incident Reporting, Executive Support Service (including Complaints Management), Clinical Audit, Clinical Risk Management, Patient Satisfaction, Introduction of New Procedures/Clinical Innovations, Policy Development and Management, Quality Improvement and Safety Alerts. Specific clinical areas include Infection Prevention and Control, Quality Use of Medicines, Blood Watch (Blood Transfusion Improvement Program) Clinical Communication and Clinical Ethics.

How do we manage and monitor quality?

By creating an environment that promotes best evidence in patient care and encourages data-based decision-making; by having robust systems to identify incidents and risks, to monitor and evaluate, and to evaluate and report on health outcomes; and by encouraging staff and patients to provide feedback and input into the quality and safety agenda.

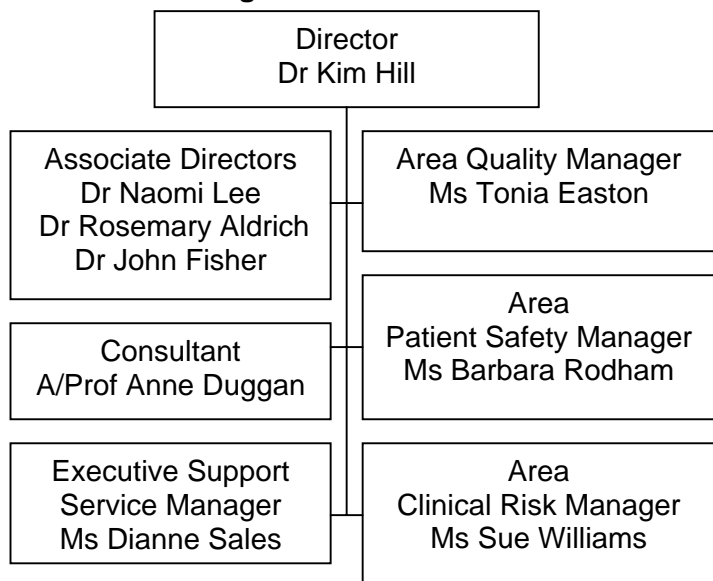
Where does Clinical Governance (CGU) fit within the Hunter New England Health organisation?

Clinical Governance is one of the Hunter New England Health Area Executive portfolios. The Director of Clinical Governance reports to the Chief Executive and is an Area Executive Team member. The Hunter New England Health CGU works in collaboration with other Area Health Services' Clinical Governance Units, NSW Health Quality and Safety Branch and the Clinical Excellence Commission.

Editorial team: Dr Kim Hill, A/Prof Anne Duggan, Ms Trish Blackman, Ms Alisa Johnson.
Comments and queries welcome at: clinicalgovernance@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au

Quality Matters

What is Clinical Governance's structure in Hunter New England Health?



IN PROFILE

Tonia Easton, Area Quality Manager

Tonia is a Registered Nurse and Midwife having obtained her qualifications from Royal North Shore Hospital Sydney and she also has a postgraduate certificate in Acute Care Nursing (NSW College of Nursing), Bachelor of Nursing (Deakin University) and Graduate Diploma in Quality Management in Health Care from the University of Newcastle. She is also a surveyor with Quality Management Services, Australia (QMS). Tonia has extensive experience in leading strategic systems-wide healthcare improvement programs and health planning. She has a special interest in areas of clinical guideline and policy development and the establishment of best practice models of care that are underpinned by evidence-based medicine and information management systems that enable timely feedback to clinicians of the outcomes of their care delivery.



New Policy Development and Management Framework for Hunter New England Health

Clinical Governance recently developed a framework to provide a uniform approach to the development, implementation and evaluation of policies. Policy is defined as an area-wide statement of clinical or corporate action requiring mandatory compliance. It may be initiated from within Hunter New England Health or as a Directive from NSW Health. If you want to know more go to: http://intranet.hne.health.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/27594/HN_EH_Policy_Framework_V3.pdf

Around and About:

Hand Hygiene

Are you aware of the Clinical Excellence Commission's "clean hands save lives campaign"? Have you seen posters on your wards? If you wash your hands before and after seeing patients you are reducing the risk of iatrogenic infection. Each year patients die or stay in hospital longer and sicker because of infection transmitted by health staff when they fail to wash their hands after patient contact. Learn more by visiting: <http://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/campaigns/cleanhandssavelives/overview.html>

NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program

Ever wondered about the systems in place in NSW to improve the quality and safety of the care we provide to patients? The third progress report on the NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program is available at: http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/pubs/2006/patient_safety_3.html

Article of the month









Florence Nightingale improved hygiene and reduced mortality from 40%-2%. If you want to know the difference you would make by hand washing then go to <http://www.jrsm.org/cgi/content/full/94/6/278>. As the authors state: "the treatment effect is so great that if hand hygiene were a new drug it would be used by all".

Safety Alerts issued by NSW Health in 2006

From time to time, Hunter New England Health receives advice from NSW Health or external authorities such as NHMRC and TGA about issues that may impact on patient safety. These notifications are called Safety Alerts. Each edition of *Quality Matters* will include recent alerts.

For more information click on the hyperlink

 Safety Alert  Safety Notice  Safety Information

| Number | Type | Issues covered | Date of issue |
|-----------|--|--|---------------|
| SN:007/06 |  | Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) Recalls | Dec 06 |
| SN:006/06 |  | Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) Recalls | Oct 06 |
| SN:005 |  | Safe Use of Fentanyl Skin Patches | Oct 06 |
| SN:004 |  | Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) Recalls | Oct 06 |
| SN:003 |  | Peiron Stent fracture in renal arteries | Oct 06 |
| SN:002 |  | Cleaning of flexible endoscopes (reprocessing) | Sep 06 |
| PSI:01/06 |  | Alaris SE pumps recall, Filshie Clip System, peanut allergies, Bisphosphonates medications | Sep 06 |
| 04/06 |  | Safe Use of Vincristine | Sep 06 |

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/sabs/register.html>