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Quality Matters

The monthly newsletter of Hunter New England Health Clinical Governance

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Comments and
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From the Director...

In 2006, Hunter New England Health held its very successful Quality Exposition and Scientific Program at Newcastle University, covering topics of interest relating to clinical governance, practice improvement and clinical ethics.

Around 120 HNE Health clinicians and managers attended it, and included key notes presentations from Professor Cliff Hughes and other Australian experts in quality and safety.

This year's Quality Expo and Scientific Program will be held on 17-18



September 2007, at the University of New England in Armidale, and I hope that you will be able to join us

at this event.

As in 2006, the event will be linked with the Achievement Awards Night, and in this edition of *Quality Matters* we are pleased to highlight the achievements of the finalists for the Quality Awards.

The next edition will include further information about the Quality Expo and Scientific Program.

Dr Kim Hill
Director,
Clinical Governance

Management of complaints

Complaints and compliments provide unique information about the quality of health care from the perspective of consumers and their carers. Management of a complaint is an opportunity for complainants to have their concerns acknowledged and resolved effectively. For clinicians and managers the benefits are that any identified risks are managed appropriately and that action is taken to minimise or eliminate those risks.

The NSW Health Complaint Management Policy Directive http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2006/pdf/PD2006_073.pdf was issued in 2006 and applies to all HNE Health staff. The aims of the policy are to:

1. Assist health services with timely and effective complaints management.
2. Establish a standard approach to complaints handling and performance indicators to monitor compliance.
3. Ensure that health service staff are aware of their responsibilities and are able to manage complaints.

What action is HNE Health taking and why?

Hunter New England Health is implementing a policy rollout across the Health Service. This will involve everyone based on the principles that:

- Learning from complaints and receiving feedback gives opportunities to improve service and safety.
- Patients, clients and their carers have a right to provide feedback and make a

complaint, and have their complaint responded to promptly and respectfully.

Staff who are mentioned in complaints need support and procedural fairness during its resolution.

How should complaints be managed?

Complaints can be made in person, over the telephone or in writing. Staff at all levels are expected and required to accept complaints and to know what action they can take to resolve them. Where possible the unit involved, with support from the complaints manager, if needed, should deal directly with the complaint. Senior management must be notified of more serious complaints and may decide to participate in resolution.

How do I appropriately acknowledge a complaint?

There are a few steps you should follow when taking a complaint. These are:

1. Identify yourself, listen carefully, write down the details and clarify what outcome the complainant expects. This will assist where another member of staff is delegated to resolve the complaint.
2. Explain the procedure for handling a complaint.
3. Offer an apology.
4. If it's within your delegation resolve the complaint. If not refer it to your manager or a duty manager.

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In profile...Dr Naomi Lee

Dr Naomi Lee first came to Newcastle from Sydney to attend the University of Newcastle's School of Medicine, graduating in 1995.

Naomi undertook most of her junior medical training at John Hunter Hospital and other hospitals in the Hunter. After a short period working in General Practice in the NSW ski fields, Naomi returned to Newcastle and took up the position as Clinical Superintendent in the Junior Medical Unit.

Naomi later worked as



**Associate Director
Dr Naomi Lee**

the Director Medical Services Greater Newcastle Sector before taking on her current role in Clinical Governance.

Naomi graduated from law in 2005 and was awarded the University Medal for best performing

student. She has recently completed her Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice with the College of Law and was admitted to practice as a lawyer in NSW with the Supreme Court in July 2007. She works two days a week with Sparke Helmore Lawyers.

Naomi's interests primarily lie in the areas of health law and clinical ethics and in assisting clinicians and managers to understand the legal framework in which health care is delivered.

Complaints management

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5. Invite the complainant to contact you, or an appropriate person, if they are dissatisfied with the outcome.

6. Log the complaint in the Incident Information Management System (IIMS) or refer the complaint (in writing or verbally) to your manager for entry into IIMS. Complaints can be lodged anonymously.

Who is responsible for completing the IIMS process?

The person receiving the complaint is responsible for IIMS notification and the staff member designated to manage complaints at each service or facility is responsible for completing the management details in IIMS.

How do I manage a serious complaint?

The first point of contact is the Executive Support Service Manager or delegate. They can be contacted on 1800 605 172 during business hours or through line management outside business hours. If it is outside business hours, ask to speak to an After Hours Manager at the hospital or service, as they can assist in managing your complaint and if required escalate through line management to the appropriate level which may include the Director of Clinical Governance.

Recognising success...

The recent call for entries to the Hunter New England Health Quality Awards received over 80 submissions. There were 27 finalists in the entry categories. A list of finalists is available at: <http://intranet.hne.health.nsw.gov.au/>

Hunter New England Health has now entered two projects in each of the 7 Strategic Directions categories of NSW Health Awards; 10 are nominated for the NSW Premier's Awards and eight for the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) Awards.

Information on entries, abstracts and contacts is available at:

http://intranet.hne.health.nsw.gov.au/cg/quality_improvement_including_continuous_practice_improvement/quality_awards/hneh_quality_awards

Quality Expo and Scientific Program

The HNE Health Quality Exposition and Scientific Program 2007, is to be held in Armidale on 17-18 September 2007 commencing at 1pm on the Monday. The focus of the program will be "Getting it Right; Effective Communication". The winners of the Hunter New England Health Quality Awards will be announced at the Achievement Awards dinner on Monday 17 September 2007.

The agenda for the Scientific Program will be made available in mid-August. Please add these dates to your diary.

CHASM: Surgical Mortality Audit Program

Hunter New England Health is one of two sites piloting the Collaborating Hospitals' Audit Of Surgical Mortality (CHASM) program.

The program will implement a systematic peer reviewed audit of deaths in NSW associated with surgical care. The Clinical Excellence Commission with the Special Committee Investigating Deaths Associated With Surgery (SCIDAWS) will oversee the program, supported by the NSW State Committee of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. CHASM is based on a Scottish program involving a two-tier assessment with voluntary surgeon participation through notifying deaths,

and peer review assessment of deaths.

The program provides confidential feedback to the surgeon and participation accrues Category 3 CME points. Medical practitioners with surgical privileges in Hunter New England Health will shortly receive further information on the program.

Within HNE Health CHASM will be co-ordinated through Clinical Governance and a Clinical Audit Project Officer is under recruitment.

Contact: Dr John Fisher on 6767 7237 (John.Fisher@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au) or Mary Byrne on ph: 4939 2350 (Mary.Byrne@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au).

RCA Update: Removal of air taps



Following an incident in one of our Hospitals a Root Cause Analysis found that the presence of the medical air outlet in close proximity to the oxygen outlet contributed to a staff member attaching the oxygen delivery device to the air outlet.

The recommendation: As a result medical air outlets at the hospital now have the taps removed. If medical air is required it must be at the direct order of a senior medical officer and the tap is obtained from a central point. "Simple - but effective"

Safety alerts and notices:

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

Please click on the hyperlink under 'Issues covered' for more information:

Number	Type	Issues covered	Date of issue
SI:001/07	 Safety alert	Alcohol based hand cleaners and fire	27 June 07
SN:010/07	 Safety notice	Therapeutic Goods Administration (TPA) Recalls	27 June 07