



Our ref: D07/10392

Related D07/10392

Professor Chris Baggoley
Acting Chief Executive
Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care
GPO Box 5480
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Professor Baggoley

Response to the Consultation Paper - *An Alternative Model for Safety and Quality Accreditation of Health Care*

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed alternative model for accreditation of the safety and quality of health services in Australia.

The Greater Western Area Health Service covers a large part of rural NSW and serves a total population of approximately 305,440 people (4.6% of the NSW population). Services in GWAHS range from base hospitals through to Multipurpose Services and other small facilities in remote locations. Community and primary health care services are provided, as well as a range of mental health and drug and alcohol services. The majority of services are accredited, and plans are in place to support those services currently not undertaking an accreditation program to do so.

We are pleased to provide the following general comments, notwithstanding any specific comments or proposals that may be provided by the NSW Department of Health:

- There is general agreement that there is a need to minimise duplication and overlap between accreditation programs, and control the potential for proliferation of standards. Accordingly, the proposals to develop national minimum safety standards and a national framework for quality improvement are supported.
- Whatever national standards are developed, the focus on clinical outcomes must be maintained.
- The proposals to improve the oversight and governance of health accreditation processes are supported. Namely, separating standard setting from assessment, certification of assessment agencies and establishing an independent body for accreditation decisions are considered sensible suggestions that could be relatively easily implemented. Some concerns could be allayed by ensuring clear pathways for industry involvement in the standard setting process.

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- Anything that can be done to improve surveyor competency and inter-assessor reliability would be welcomed. Surveyors need industry experience and be relevant to the environment.
- The national framework for quality improvement should take into account existing quality initiatives already in place such as the NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program.

Should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me on (02) 6841 2256.

We look forward to hearing the outcomes of the review.

Yours sincerely



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Director Clinical Operations

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