

# AUSTRALIAN COMMISSION ON SAFETY AND QUALITY IN HEALTH CARE

TRIM: D20-39882

**The Hon Greg Hunt MP**  
**Minister for Health**  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

## **Provision of ACSQHC Letter of Intent 2020-21**

On behalf of the Board of the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC), I am pleased to provide you with the ACSQHC's Statement of Intent 2020-21. This Statement has been prepared in response to the Statement of Expectations provided to me, as the ACSQHC Board Chair, on 16 December 2020.

I welcome the opportunity to re-affirm the ACSQHC's commitment to leading and coordinating improvements to the safety and quality of health care for all Australians. The ACSQHC is known for its expertise in identifying and addressing complex health care safety and quality issues; fostering collaboration and driving action to improve the delivery of care; engaging consumers and clinicians; and informing improvements to the efficiency and effectiveness of health systems.

The ACSQHC works in partnership with patients, consumers, carers, clinicians, the Australian, state and territory health systems, the private sector, managers and healthcare organisations to ensure the delivery of the right care, at the right time, in the right place.

We work particularly closely with the Department of Health, and other Commonwealth agencies to ensure that change and system improvement is coordinated and based on the best available evidence, and look forward to continuing this close relationship.

Yours sincerely



**Professor Villis Marshall AC**  
Chair  
Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care

18 December 2020

# **Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care: Statement of Intent 2020-21**

The Government has issued a Statement of Expectations for the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC), which outlines the ACSQHC's role, short and long-term priorities, legislative framework, stakeholder relationships, organisational governance and financial management. The Statement of Expectations is available via the ACSQHC website at:

[www.safetyandquality.gov.au](http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au)

This Statement of Intent responds to the Government's Statement of Expectations for the ACSQHC.

## **Our role**

The purpose of the ACSQHC is to lead and coordinate national improvements in the safety and quality of healthcare that contribute to improving the value, effectiveness and sustainability of the health system, and to better health outcomes and experience for all consumers. The ACSQHC aims to support the delivery of the right care, at the right place and the right time, for all Australians.

## **Short and long-term priorities**

The ACSQHC has recently completed a review of its strategic priorities, which resulted in the release of the ACSQHC's Strategic Intent 2020-25, which prioritises:

- Safe delivery of care: Clinical governance, systems, processes and standards ensure patients, consumers and all staff are safe from harm in all places where healthcare is delivered
- Partnering with consumers: Patients, consumers, carers and the community are engaged in understanding and improving healthcare for all
- Partnering with healthcare professionals: Healthcare professionals, organisations and providers are engaged and supported to deliver safe and high-quality care
- Quality, value and outcomes: Evidence-based tools, guidance and technology are used to inform delivery of safe and high-quality care that is integrated, coordinated and person-centred.

These priorities are reflected in the ACSQHC's three year rolling work plan and include focus on:

- Developing and maintaining national safety standards for acute, primary and other health services, and improving the reliability of accreditation processes.
- Monitoring and responding to new healthcare safety and quality issues as they emerge, such as evolving medication safety concerns, managing risk and response to COVID-19, identifying emerging safety and quality threats, and highlighting unwarranted variation in health care.
- Providing clinical and healthcare guidance in key health areas such as recognition and management of sepsis, anaphylaxis, back pain, mental health, colonoscopy and improving diagnosis.
- Developing and strengthening use of meaningful safety and quality indicators and measures for quality improvement across the system.

- Monitoring and reporting on key healthcare safety and quality data, to highlight safe and high-quality healthcare and where improvement may be made.

## **Legislative framework**

In 2006, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) established the ACSQHC to lead and coordinate national improvements in the safety and quality of health care.

The ACSQHC's permanent status was confirmed with the passage of the *National Health and Hospitals Network Act 2011*, and its role was codified in the *National Health Reform Act 2011* (NHR Act 2011) which includes the following functions:

- Formulating standards, guidelines and indicators relating to healthcare safety and quality matters
- Advising Health Ministers on national clinical standards
- Promoting, supporting and encouraging the implementation of these standards and related guidelines and indicators
- Monitoring the implementation and impact of the standards
- Promoting, supporting and encouraging the implementation of programs and initiatives relating to healthcare safety and quality matters
- Formulating model national schemes that provide for the accreditation of organisations that provide healthcare services and relate to healthcare safety and quality matters
- Publishing reports and papers relating to healthcare safety and quality matters

The ACSQHC's role and partnership with states, territories and the Commonwealth was confirmed in the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality Intergovernmental Agreement 2012 and its functions have been incorporated into the National Health Reform Agreement, including the latest iteration: the National Health Reform Agreement Addendum 2020-2025.

The ACSQHC also receives separate funding from agencies such as the Australian Government Department of Health to undertake specific projects which provide additional opportunities to improve the safety and quality of health care generally

The ACSQHC, under management of the Board, will continue to meet its functions under the NHR Act 2011 and the National Health Reform Agreement Addendum 2020-2025.

## **Stakeholder relationships**

To achieve its purpose, the ACSQHC works in partnership with patients, carers, clinicians, the Australian, state and territory health systems, the private sector, managers and healthcare organisations to achieve a safe, high-quality and sustainable health system. The ACSQHC works closely with the Department of Health and other Commonwealth entities including the Independent Hospital Pricing Authority, the National Health and Medical Research Council, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the Australian Digital Health Agency, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and the National Blood Authority. The ACSQHC also works closely with consumer groups, state and territory health departments, clinical

colleges and other professional clinical organisations, complaints commissioners, and universities.

In addition, the Board has established subcommittees that provide specific advice and support across all relevant areas of its work. The Private Hospital Sector Committee includes nominees from key private healthcare bodies, and the Primary Care Committee provides an opportunity to liaise with and seek advice from the primary care sector. The Audit and Risk Committee advises the Board on the ACSQHC's financial reporting, non-financial performance reporting, risk and internal controls. Program initiatives are informed by external advisory committees, working groups, public consultation and workshops.

### **Organisational governance and financial accountability**

The ACSQHC's Board, appointed by the Minister for Health, is responsible for ensuring the proper and efficient performance of the ACSQHC's functions. As an agency that is funded on a cost-share basis by the Australian Government and all of the state and territory governments, the ACSQHC needs to work in partnership with others to achieve its purpose. In developing its work the ACSQHC is supported by the Inter-Jurisdictional Committee, which is made up of senior representatives from the Australian Government Department of Health, and the Department of Health from each state and territory. It is responsible for advising the ACSQHC on policy development and facilitating jurisdictional engagement and consultation.

The ACSQHC meets its accountability requirements under the *Public Service Act 1999* and *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and the through the publication of its Corporate Plan, Annual Report, Annual Performance Statements and auditing processes.

### **Conclusion**

The ACSQHC's intent is to provide authoritative, evidence-based, appropriate and timely leadership, information and guidance to support the delivery of safe and high-quality health care in Australia.

The ACSQHC makes sound decisions about the deliverables it can produce within the funding that is available, and is able to draw on an extensive range of expert advisors and stakeholders to help prioritise action and activity.