

National Model for Clinical Governance

What it means for assessment to the NSQHS Standards

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care has released a new National Model for Clinical Governance (national model). It replaces the *2017 National Model Clinical Governance Framework*.

This fact sheet describes:

- how health services can use the national model to strengthen their clinical governance arrangements and address the requirements of the current National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards (second edition)
- how accrediting agencies can consider health services' use of the national model.

Key points

- The national model aims to drive high-quality care and better outcomes for patients in Australian hospitals, including day hospitals.
- Effective implementation of the national model will strengthen health services' clinical governance arrangements and position them to better address the requirements of the NSQHS Standards.
- Health services can use the national model to identify gaps and areas for improvement in their organisational culture, systems and structures.
- Implementation of the national model is not mandatory. Health services are encouraged to use the model when they next review their clinical governance arrangements.
- As part of assessment to the current NSQHS Standards (second edition), accrediting agencies can consider evidence that the health service has used (or has a plan to use) the national model to strengthen clinical governance arrangements.
- Health services should continue to meet the actions in the Clinical Governance Standard in the NSQHS Standards (second edition) at the same time as implementing the national model.
- The six foundations of clinical governance described in the national model will form the structure of the clinical governance standard in the next NSQHS Standards (third edition).

About the National Model for Clinical Governance

The national model provides contemporary, best practice guidance to support health services to review and strengthen their clinical governance arrangements. It is for public and private health services in the acute sector, including day hospitals.

The national model is a principles-based document that elevates clinical governance within health services and makes delivery of high-quality care everyone's responsibility, including the board and across the entire organisation.

It describes the six foundations of clinical governance (see diagram below) to achieve high-quality care. Each foundation provides examples of good practice as well as warning signs that can alert boards and executives to weaknesses in their clinical governance systems.

Figure 1 The six foundations of clinical governance



How should health services use the national model?

The national model provides guidance to health service boards and executives (or equivalent) on reviewing whether their organisational culture, systems and structures are aligned to deliver care that is consistently high quality and improving.

Health services are encouraged to begin aligning their clinical governance arrangements with the foundations in the national model.

They can apply the national model in a way that meets the needs of their organisation. Some health services may use the national model as a high-level status check against their own framework and approach. Others may decide to use the national model as an opportunity to perform a large-scale review and evolution of their clinical governance system.

A [practical guide to implementation](#) supports health services to apply the national model as an enabler of consistently high-quality care.

Does the national model need to be implemented right now?

No, implementation of the national model is not mandatory. Health services are encouraged to use it when they next review their clinical governance arrangements, such as updating their clinical governance framework.

How does the national model relate to the NSQHS Standards?

The national model describes the organisational culture, systems and structures needed to effectively apply the [NSQHS Standards](#).

Using the national model to strengthen health services' clinical governance arrangements will support an organisation-wide approach to addressing the requirements of the current NSQHS Standards. Health services can use the national model to identify gaps and areas for improvement in their organisational culture, systems and structures.

The six foundations of clinical governance will form the structure of the Clinical Governance Standard in the third edition of the NSQHS Standards. The third edition is in development and will replace the current NSQHS Standards.

Health services should continue to meet the actions in the Clinical Governance Standard in the current [NSQHS Standards](#) (second edition) at the same time as implementing the national model.

How should accrediting agencies consider implementation of the national model during assessment to the NSQHS Standards (second edition)?

As part of assessment to the NSQHS Standards (second edition), accrediting agencies can consider evidence that the health service has used (or has a plan to use) the national model to strengthen clinical governance arrangements. This may include some or all of the steps suggested in the [practical guide to implementation](#).

Accrediting agencies should not penalise health services for identifying gaps and weaknesses in clinical governance maturity, systems, structures or culture as part of implementing the national model. Health services need to show that they have a plan to address any identified gaps and weaknesses and that any actions have been prioritised based on risks to patient care.

Where risk or harm to patients is identified, accrediting agencies should maintain a proportionate, risk-based approach to assessment of the NSQHS Standards.

For more information

For questions about implementation of the NSQHS Standards and the Australian Health Service Safety and Quality Accreditation Scheme:

- contact the Advice Centre: AdviceCentre@safetyandquality.gov.au
- call 1800 304 056.

To find out more about the national model, visit www.safetyandquality.gov.au/cg

© Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care 2026