

Better Skills, Best Care

Role: Allied Health Assistant – Acute Care

Pilot settings

This role was piloted at three health services. It was based in:

- the acute medical ward at Austin Health;
- the acute medical care unit at Monash Medical Centre; and
- the acute orthopaedic pre-admission clinic and ward and Ballarat Base Hospital.

There was an additional home-based element to the role at Ballarat Base Hospital and Monash Medical Centre.

Role descriptions

Ballarat Base Hospital

The role at Ballarat Base Hospital was a combined occupation therapy/physiotherapy role to support the allied health professionals in the provision of care for patients, focusing on hip and knee joint replacements. The role was primarily in the preadmission clinic but extended to home-based screenings and acute orthopaedic inpatient and discharge.

Monash Medical Centre

The role at Monash Medical Centre was a combined occupational therapy/physiotherapy role to support the allied health professionals in the provision of care in the acute medical care unit. There was also a home-based element to this role.

Austin Health

The role at Austin Health increased the provision of physiotherapy services on the acute medical ward with a focus on the Functional Maintenance Program, designed to reduce the deterioration of the functional capacity of patients.

Tasks

Ballarat Base Hospital

The tasks allocated to the AHA in the preadmission clinic included the following:

- Assess, fit and provide appropriate gait aid
- Assess, fit and provide other equipment required
- Educate patient in use of gait aid and/or other equipment
- Educate patient on acute orthopaedic unit processes
- Educate patient on likely post-operative surgeon's protocols
- Subjective assessment of patient, including completion of a checklist of pre-operative status

The tasks allocated to the AHA following the preadmission clinic included the following:

- Visit the patient's home
- Complete a home visit assessment tool to identify risks
- Record the types and measurements of furniture and access sites
- Discuss with the allied health professional the complete equipment and home modification process

The tasks allocated to the AHA relating to post-surgery, on the ward, included the following:

- Observe, educate and assist Personal Activities of Daily Living (PADLs) and Domestic Activities of Daily Living (DADLs) with showering, dressing and bed transfers
- Ensure compliance with precautions during PADLs and DADLs
- Provide and educate the patient in the use of equipment during PADLs and DADLs
- Provide a verbal and written report on the performance of the patient during PADL and/or DADL to the team
- Interpret charts to ensure the patient is stable to undertake the allied health programme
- Observe the wound site and report to team signs of infection
- Ensure infection control principles are complied with

The tasks allocated to the AHA on the ward leading up to discharge included the following:

- Select appropriate equipment as directed by the OT/Physiotherapist
- Organise provision of equipment
- Check and set-up equipment

Monash Medical Centre

The tasks allocated to the AHA for this role included the following:

Patient specific interventions

- Devise a treatment session from a joint OT/Physio problem list
- Perform an intervention prescribed by the Physio or OT
- Progress as appropriate the intervention within and between sessions
- Review performance of functional tasks
- Attend unit meetings and report patient performance

Patient education

- Provide and educate patient prescribed OT equipment
- Progress gait aid where appropriate for non-compliant equipment
- Organise patient hiring or purchase of equipment
- Arrange courier of equipment

Home visits/Integration of functional performance

- Assist in education of OT prescribed equipment
- Communicate variation in functional task performance between ward and home to staff and/or family
- Reinforce strategies/interventions practiced on ward to home setting
- Identify variation in functional task performance between ward and home
- Assist in ensuring patient safety on home visit
- Validate information provided and observations from home visit

Austin Health

The tasks allocated to the AHA for this role included the following:

- Coordinating and running the Functional Maintenance Program (FMP) on a specific ward (7E)
- Receiving and interpreting referrals for the FMP following initial assessment of the patient by the ward physiotherapist
- Implementing the appropriate FMP intervention for referred patients (either group or one-on-one treatment)
- Reporting on the performance of patients directly to the ward team within an agreed reporting framework
- Ensuring patients' oxygen requirements are met
- Assessing mobility safety, including stairs, for delegated patients awaiting discharge

Education and training

HLT42507 Certificate IV in Allied Health Assistance is the appropriate qualification for this role.

The mandated clusters for physiotherapy and occupational therapy should be included in the elective units of the qualification for the Ballarat Base Hospital and the Monash Medical Centre roles, along with four of the electives listed below. For the role at Austin Health, the physiotherapy cluster should be taken along with eight other elective units from the list below. See www.ntis.gov.au for full course details.

- Provide appropriate services for young people (CHCYTH6C)
- Provide support to an older person (CHCAC1C)
- Teach or develop basic skills of strength and conditioning (SRSSTC001A)
- Assist with client movement (HLTCSD305B)
- Confirm physical health status (HLTAP401A)
- Establish and monitor a case plan (CHCCM2C)
- Produce coded clinical data (HLTCC301A)
- Maintain patient records (BSBMED303A)
- Maintain business resources (BSBCMN307A)
- Follow safe manual handling practices (HLTHSE204B)
- Use advanced medical terminology (BSBMED301A)
- Utilise specialist communication skills to build strong relationships (CHCCOM3C)

Providers

Delivery of qualifications and units of competency from the new Health Training Package HLT07 requires TAFE institutes and private Registered Training Organisations to formally apply to the Office of Training and Tertiary Education for Registration to deliver training. It is anticipated delivery could commence by Semester 1, 2008.

Information about VET providers can be accessed on www.ntis.gov.au

Costs associated with undertaking training

Until nominal hours for delivery of units are established, costs of delivery cannot be stated.

Training gaps and delivery options

Some skills may be best developed through in-house training, where site-specific requirements can be addressed.

This qualification is suited to Australian Apprenticeship pathways.

Contact details for piloted roles

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