

# VQC Newsletter

Edition number 7 | March 2006

## Message from the Chair



Since July 2005, the Victorian Quality Council (VQC) and its Management Group have progressed the objectives identified in the 2005-08 Strategic Plan through

a number of projects. These include the [Hand Hygiene Project](#), the [Acute Pain Management Measurement Toolkit](#), [evaluation of the Falls Guidelines Toolkit](#) and the development of the [Clinical Staff Handover Information Sheet](#). This newsletter will provide an update for the Victorian health care sector on these, and other, projects that are currently underway or have been completed since July 2005.

The VQC recently developed a number of communication strategies to enhance

the sector's understanding of its work. A bi-monthly newsletter will be published along with an annual 'Year in Review' report. *The Year in Review* will be released at the end of each financial year.

The VQC Management Group has also undertaken a significant update of the VQC website to support easier navigation of the site while providing a regular update of VQC activities.

The Council will also provide a profile of two Council members in each newsletter to enable a better understanding of the vast experience and expert knowledge in safety and quality that supports Council's work.

In recent months there have been a number of changes of staff working in the VQC Management Group. A staffing profile has been developed to enable the health services to get to know the staff including the Manager and project officers responsible for supporting specific VQC Working Group activities.

The profile is part of this newsletter.

I look forward to continuing to work with the sector to improve health care safety and quality through the development of the VQC Strategic Plan.

**Associate Professor  
Christine Kilpatrick  
Chair, VQC**

### Know your Council Members

Associate Professor Christine Kilpatrick was appointed Deputy Chair of the Victorian Quality Council in 2001 and Chair in 2004. She has worked as a neurologist for over 20 years and in 2005 was appointed Executive Director, Medical Services, Melbourne Health. She was a member of the Women's and Children's Health Board from 2000-2004 and in 2004 appointed to the Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) Board. She chairs the RCH Board Quality Committee.

## Evaluation of Falls Guidelines

*"Minimising the risk of falls and fall related injuries – Guidelines for acute, subacute and residential care settings"* was produced by the VQC and distributed to health services in August 2004.

The purpose of the guidelines is to assist health services to implement an effective falls minimisation strategy. In September 2005 two health services commenced an evaluation of the processes set out in the falls guidelines.

Implementation of the evaluation of the falls minimisation strategy has occurred on four wards within each health service. A range of data is being collected and a final report will be prepared on completion of the project.

The data will include a checklist outlining structures and processes that assist in the planning, implementation and maintenance of a falls minimisation strategy.

[www.health.vic.gov.au/qualitycouncil/activities/safetymdu.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/qualitycouncil/activities/safetymdu.htm)

## Safety and Quality Education Program

The VQC is currently finalising the development of the [Safety & Quality Education Program](#). Aimed at registrar level doctors and nursing and allied health

middle managers, the program consists of five modules:

1. Improving the patient journey.
2. How safe is your health care setting?  
The nature of error.
3. Recognition and management of adverse events, near misses and clinical risks.
4. How effective teamwork and communication can improve quality and reduce risk.
5. Effectively improving safety and quality within a health care organisational environment.

A pilot of two of the modules was conducted at Austin Health and The Royal Women's Hospital in late 2005. Thank you to all the participants and organisers for their time and feedback. A pilot of the complete education program is currently being planned and is expected to start later this year.

## Hand Hygiene Project

The Victorian Quality Council identified that poor hand hygiene (hand washing, hand disinfection) practice amongst healthcare workers is known to be the single largest problem associated with hospital acquired infection transmission and is a major factor in the spread of antibiotic resistant pathogens within hospitals.

In May 2004 the VQC conducted a pilot project across six pilot health services (four metropolitan and two regional rural). The VQC further approved funding of \$2.3M to support the rollout of the Hand Hygiene project to all Victorian hospitals which commenced in February 2006. The VQC will incorporate the information and experience gained from the pilot health services to support the implementation of a practical model to achieve sustained improvement in hand hygiene practices in Victorian hospitals.

This approach incorporates the:

- Introduction of an alcohol-based hand hygiene product;
- Education of healthcare workers regarding hand hygiene practices
- Ongoing promotion of hand hygiene practices via a range of communication and promotional tools;
- Active participation and feedback at both individual and organisation levels;
- Involvement of clinical leaders at health services; and



Jason O'Keeffe, Maureen Willson, Robina Bradley, Rhea Martin, Roger Gregory at the Hume Region Hand Hygiene Project Information Session.

- Collection and feedback of three outcome indicators:
  - Hand Hygiene product usage in litres/1000 bed days/month;
  - Rates of nosocomial infection; and
  - Rates of hand hygiene compliance

A Steering Group involving representation from key industry groups, clinical staff and the VQC has been meeting to support the broad planning, implementation and evaluation of the state-wide roll out of the program.

The project will be conducted in two stages, each of twelve months duration. Stage one commenced in February 2006 with information sessions held in Melbourne, Bendigo and Wangaratta for 41 participating health services. A two day education workshop will be held in April 2006 to provide training in hand hygiene compliance auditing and data collection for stage one project officers along with workshops in the Loddon Mallee and Hume regions for small rural health services.

[www.health.vic.gov.au/qualitycouncil/activities.handhyg.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/qualitycouncil/activities.handhyg.htm)

## Enhance leadership in safe and effective staffing

A proposal has been accepted for the development of an education package that would provide staff with the basic principles of safety and quality in health care. This package will cater for clinical and non-clinical staff. The aim of the package is to introduce the principles of safety and quality in health care to staff and direct them to relevant systems within organisations. This project is in the early stages of development.



## Enhance continuity of care through clinical staff handover

Communication issues between staff are a recognised contributory factor in the occurrence of adverse events. Effective clinical handover relies on good communication and is therefore a potential risk factor in the provision of safe, quality care. Clinical handover is a concern internationally however there has been limited research and best practice standards have not been established.

An information sheet outlining the current understanding of patient safety issues related to clinical handover and the system improvements suggested in the literature has been produced. This has been circulated to health services with the aim of clinical areas reviewing and implementing the improvement strategies as appropriate. Whilst much of the literature addresses shift-to-shift handover, the strategies can be applied in a range of multi disciplinary handover situations.

The VQC is interested in finding out from health care workers what they see as being priority areas for further work regarding clinical handover. Feedback from clinical staff will be essential in designing a project that benefits clinicians and patients. If you have ideas please email them to [patricia.mcgarrity@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:patricia.mcgarrity@dhs.vic.gov.au).

The clinical handover information sheet is available at:

[www.health.vic.gov.au/qualitycouncil/activities/handover.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/qualitycouncil/activities/handover.htm)

## Know your council members



Assoc Professor  
Leslie Reti  
MBBS (Melb)  
SM (Harvard)  
FRCOG FRANZCOG

Les is a gynaecologist, head of one of the Gynaecology Units at the Royal Women's Hospital (RWH) where he is Clinical Director of Clinical Governance and Chairman of the Senior Medical Staff. He has had a special interest in Quality Assurance for over a decade, chairing the RWH Quality and Safety Committee and its predecessors, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists Practice Improvement Committee and has been a member of the Victorian Quality Council since its inception in 2001.

He has a Master of Science in epidemiology and has been involved in the development of:

- Clinical Indicators
- Benchmarking
- Unplanned readmissions
- Incident monitoring
- Relative utilisation rates of hysterectomy
- Reporting to consumers
- Clinical risk management
- Morbidity review

## Pressure Ulcer Basics Education Program

In 2003 and 2004 the VQC conducted Pressure Ulcer Point Prevalence Survey (PUPPs) in Victorian health services.

The PUPPs program recommended that all clinical staff should undertake basic pressure ulcer education.

As a result of this recommendation an education package has been developed with the assistance from experts in the field, covering areas such as the development of pressure ulcers, identification of the type of ulcer, and prevention and management strategies.

The education package is currently being developed into an interactive online package designed to provide basic knowledge for use by all clinical staff. It is anticipated that it will be available at the commencement of July 2006.

[www.health.vic.gov.au/qualitycouncil/activities/ulcers.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/qualitycouncil/activities/ulcers.htm)

### Pressure ulcer publications

The VQC has previously conducted two pressure ulcer point prevalence surveys in Victorian health services, PUPPS and PUPPS 2. Information gained from these surveys has been used in the prevention and management of pressure ulcers. System changes such as upgrading of mattresses to static pressure reduction foam mattresses has occurred. The Quality and Safety Branch of the Department of Human Services will conduct future surveys.

VQC has a number of publications available on its website to assist health services in the prevention and management of pressure ulcers. These include the following information sheets for patients, which are available in a number of languages.

*"Move, Move, Move"*

*"Preventing Pressure Ulcers – An information booklet for patients"*

[www.health.vic.gov.au/qualitycouncil/improve/pupps.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/qualitycouncil/improve/pupps.htm)

Reports from PUPPS are available at:

[www.health.vic.gov.au/qualitycouncil/improve/state.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/qualitycouncil/improve/state.htm)

# VQC Newsletter

## Victorian Travelling Fellowship Program



Parliamentary Secretary for Health Daniel Andrews (left) with Travelling Fellows Sandra Davis, Frances Wise, Felicity Lawrence, Sue Brumby, Fiona Whitecross, Melita Van de Vreede, Margaret Foulds, Angela Murray and Justin Walter and Associate Professor Christine Kilpatrick (centre).

The Hon Bronwyn Pike MP, Minister for Health, launched the Victorian Travelling Fellowship Program in May 2003. The program is a joint initiative between the Victorian Quality Council and the Department of Human Services.

The program provides health professionals, clinicians and managers presently working within the Victorian public health system a chance to conduct short investigations that will be of value professionally and personally. Fellowships open an important avenue for international contact that many health professionals may otherwise find difficult to access.

The prime objective of the fellowship is to increase innovation and improve patient care. This will be achieved by encouraging international learning and information sharing that will focus on enhancing healthcare in Victoria so that it meets and exceeds community expectations.

In December 2005 Associate Professor Christine Kilpatrick and the Hon Daniel Andrews awarded eight fellowships. Each fellow will undertake their studies during 2006. For further information please contact Paula Marsh, DHS Quality and Safety Branch, on [paula.marsh@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:paula.marsh@dhs.vic.gov.au).

### On the move. . .

From 24 April 2006, VQC office will be relocated to 50 Lonsdale St, Melbourne.

The VQC office's contact details will remain the same:

Ph: 1300 135 427

Fax: 1300 138 933

Email: [vqc@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:vqc@dhs.vic.gov.au)

Postal address

GPO Box 4057, Melbourne 3001

Website

[www.health.vic.gov.au/qualitycouncil](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/qualitycouncil)

The Victorian Quality Council

Safer, better care throughout Victorian health care services

[www.health.vic.gov.au/qualitycouncil](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/qualitycouncil)