

Message from the Chair

The Victorian Quality Council (VQC) undertook a planning workshop in February 2003 to revisit the 2002-2005 Strategic Plan and decide upon priorities and activities for the next 18 months.

The resultant discussions have been documented in a 2003/04 action plan that can be accessed via the VQC website. There is now at least one principal project in each VQC strategic area, and these will comprise the majority of Council's work over the next 12 months, with other initiatives to be undertaken as appropriate.

New working groups have been established in the areas of Data and Education, whilst a number of the original working groups are

about to roll out projects involving a range of health services. Over the next few months Council will seek stakeholder input into numerous projects including: Clinical Governance, Infection Control, Pressure Ulcer Prevention, Consumer Participation and Appropriateness of Care. A number of conference scholarships and travelling fellowships will also be offered. We look forward to your participation.

Since the publication of the last newsletter, workshops have been held in the areas of Clinical Governance and Acute Pain Management to inform VQC direction in these areas. Work on a Safety and Quality Framework has commenced and education sessions with regional and rural constituents will be undertaken in June and July. A forum for consumers and providers in May will initiate the development of a consumer participation framework for hospitals. Council will also continue to work closely



with the Australian Council for Safety and Quality to adapt and apply National initiatives for Victorian health services.

Michael Walsh
Chair, VQC

Education News

VQC will fund and provide an ongoing program of education and training opportunities in rural and metropolitan areas as part of its strategy to enable and assist health services with safety and quality improvement. These will take the form of fellowships, scholarships and sponsorships to attend significant quality and safety related events, and VQC workshops run in collaboration with other stakeholder organisations.

Most recently, VQC sponsored a workshop in conjunction with ACHSE, RACMA and VHA to discuss clinical governance with Board and Executive members of Metropolitan Health Services. A similar workshop will be rolled out to regional and rural health services in June and July.

A number of conference scholarships and travelling fellowships will be offered in the coming months. The scholarships will be offered for the Australian Safety and Quality conference in Perth in July and the 3rd Asia

Pacific Improvement conference in New Zealand in September. Details of applications for these scholarships have been forwarded to health services.

An Acute Pain Management Forum was conducted in February, which brought together key stakeholders in acute pain management in Victoria. This workshop, facilitated by Dr Norman Swan, saw the development of agreed key principles for acute pain management in Victoria and the identification of significant areas for further development. Discussions on progressing this work are currently underway and the principles may be viewed on the VQC website.

A Consumer and Provider Forum is planned for May, to bring together those who have had significant input in consumer participation research, policy and projects, to agree on a consumer participation approach in hospitals. The aim of the framework development is to provide practical solutions to enabling

consumers and providers to work together collaboratively at a number of levels to improve safety and quality of care and services.

The week of June 16 will see two international experts in clinical governance visiting Victoria:

Professor Aidan Halligan, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health, UK and Mr Ron Cullen - Head of the Clinical Governance Unit, Modernisation Agency, NHS, UK.

Health services will be advised of opportunities to attend related education and discussion sessions.

The VQC Education Working Group is also undertaking a consultation process to ascertain the current gaps in safety and quality education.

VQC contact for Education Issues:
Cathy Balding

A snapshot of plans, initiatives and project progress

VQC activities are driven by the five key strategic areas as described in the strategic plan:

1. Establish a safety and quality framework
2. Provide improved access to better data
3. Involve consumers in improving safety and quality
4. Educate on safety and quality
5. Respond to known problems and risks

Projects are developed by Council **Working Groups** in each area, comprising Council members and co-opted associate members who contribute project content expertise.

A strategic planning update was held in February 2003 and priorities set for the next 12-18 months as follows:

1. Establish a **safety and quality framework**. This framework will be developed across six levels of health care: Board, CEO and Management, Consumers and Community, Quality Committee, Government, Clinicians and Staff. The generic framework will be completed by the end of June, with discussion papers on roles and responsibilities at various levels of the health system rolled out periodically over the next 12 months.
(Working Group Chair: Safety and Quality Framework – Michael Walsh; Clinician Leadership Chair – Christine Kilpatrick; VQC contact: Cathy Balding)
2. The **Data Working Group** is compiling a map of useful safety and quality data repositories including state and national databases and registries, which may assist health services to monitor and compare their care and services.
(Chair: Jenny Bartlett; VQC contact: Eddie Gibbons)

3. A **consumer participation discussion forum** is to be held in May in conjunction with The Department of Human Services to bring consumers and providers to work together to develop a consumer participation framework for hospitals. A directory of consumer and community contacts, to assist health services in involving consumers in planning and improvement activities, is also being planned.
(Chair: Christine Walker; VQC contact: Lesley Thornton)

4. The recently formed **Education Working Group** is undertaking a consultation process to ascertain the key gaps in safety and quality knowledge and education in health services.
(Chair: Brendan Flanagan; VQC contact: Cathy Balding)

5. **Responding to known areas of risk in hospitals:**

Infection Control

The preparation for the review of current practice re timing of antibiotic prophylaxis in surgery is underway in a number of health services. The first phase of this project will ascertain the availability of these data via theatre management systems.
(Chair: David Hillis; VQC contact: Eddie Gibbons)

Falls Prevention

VQC is in the process of tendering the development and implementation of a falls prevention kit for health services.
(Chair: Stella Axarlis; VQC contact: Lesley Thornton)

Pressure Injuries

Health services have recently been invited to participate in a statewide point prevalence study to ascertain the scope and severity of this known problem area in Victoria's health services.
(Chair: Kerry Bradley; VQC contact: Lesley Thornton)

Medication Errors

A tender process is being undertaken for the development of standardised guidelines for medication charts.
(Chair: George Braitberg; VQC contact: Eddie Gibbons)

Appropriateness of Care

Health services responses to requests from the Appropriateness Working Group to submit areas for potential projects resulted in a number of clear areas of need being identified. The first project will be developed, in conjunction with health services, to investigate failure to communicate abnormal test results.
(Chair: Jane Hendtlass; VQC contact: Lesley Thornton)

Safe and appropriate use of blood and blood products

A "Blood Matters" Breakthrough Collaborative is being undertaken by the DHS Clinical Innovations Unit.
(Collaborative Manager: Sam Ludolf; VQC contact: Cathy Balding)

We welcome your comments and queries. Further information on any of the above projects is available by contacting the relevant Project Officer at the Victorian Quality Council.