



Message from the Chair

The Victorian Quality Council (VQC) has commenced working in partnership with a number of health services over the past few months to develop and progress projects in VQC strategic areas.

Many of you will have been involved in the Pressure Ulcer Point Prevalence Study (PUPPS), or are awaiting your survey in the next few weeks. By the time PUPPS completes in early December, 7,200 beds across Victoria will have been surveyed.

At the time this newsletter was being prepared, the state range was 5.4% to 35.5% which falls within the range documented in other published studies. VQC very much appreciates your involvement, as this study will enable us to make meaningful recommendations regarding a statewide approach to pressure ulcer prevention.

Over the past few months we have also sponsored 20 clinicians including medical, nursing and allied health practitioners, to attend either the Perth or Auckland quality conferences in July and September. Details

of those sponsored can be found on the website along with a summary of the lessons learned and issues raised by those attending.

Another area of sponsorship in which VQC has been involved is the awarding of Travelling Fellowships in conjunction with the Department of Human Services. Out of the 75 applications received, ten projects were sponsored at \$12,000 each to improve the safety and quality of healthcare. The fellowships centre around visiting overseas agencies to gather best practice information to be applied in the Victorian health system. The VQC website contains a list of the fellows and their proposed projects. It is envisaged that a report of the fellowship outcomes will be published around the middle of next year.

Considerable progress has been made with a number of VQC projects with results to be released late this year or early next year. See the "Plans, Initiatives and Project Progress" section of this newsletter for further details.

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, including the



distribution of the Australian Safety and Quality Council's Ten Tips for Better Healthcare brochure by the end of 2004. This will include translation into the top ten languages used by patients in Victorian health services.

Michael Walsh
Chair, VQC

Education News

The VQC Education Working Group met with a group of health service quality managers and educators earlier this year to discuss areas for safety and quality education development. As a result of this discussion, the Education Working Group commenced the development of a number of safety and quality education modules in conjunction with a range of stakeholders.

The scope of the project is still under discussion, with the aim being to develop a range of generic safety and quality education modules applicable for use in all Victorian health services. This project should not preclude health services developing and holding their own education sessions, as local approaches and contexts are different

in each health service. The package, when finalised, should provide a useful basis for health services to develop and refine their own safety and quality education. One of the first phases of this project will be a needs analysis and environmental scan to determine what already exists and what works well, and we look forward to your participation in this phase of the project.

The Medication Safety Working Group and associated stakeholders will hold a Medication Safety Workshop early in 2004. Further details of this will be distributed as they are available.

Many of you will have participated in the VQC Clinical Governance workshops held in each rural region over August and

September. The workshops discussed the concepts of clinical governance from a regional and rural perspective. The workshop was also held via videoconference and a video was made for distribution to all regional and rural health services by the end of the year. The workshop presentations can be found on the VQC website.

The clinical governance issues raised at the regional workshops will be integrated into the VQC safety and quality improvement framework that will be released by the end of this year. The framework is a guide to key safety and quality principles and explores the impact of organisational structures and rates on the six dimensions of quality.

A snapshot of plans, initiatives and project progress 2003-2004

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.

1. Establish a **safety and quality improvement framework**. The framework is being finalised and will be released by the end of 2003. A series of supplementary discussion papers on clinical governance roles and responsibilities at various levels of the health system will be developed and rolled out periodically over 2004.
2. The **Data Working Group** is compiling a directory 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. The directory will be distributed to health services in early 2004.
3. The Consumer **Participation Working Group** is developing a directory of consumer and community contacts to assist health services to identify consumers for involvement in planning and improvement activities. This will be distributed to health services in early 2004. A project to review current issues with consumer participation in safety and quality is also being developed.
4. The **Education Working Group** is developing safety and quality education modules for Victorian health services (see *Education News* elsewhere in this newsletter).

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

Infection control

VQC consulted with infection control stakeholder groups to determine appropriate projects to be pursued. A number of projects are underway in the area of infection control: sustained improvement of hand hygiene practices in Victorian hospitals; surveillance of MRSA – a review of current practices; and usage of antibiotic impregnated central venous catheters. Review of current practice re timing of antibiotic prophylaxis in surgery is underway as a pilot project in two health services.

Falls Prevention

The Falls Prevention Toolkit for health services is under development and will be distributed to health services in April 2004.

Pressure Injuries

The Pressure Ulcer Point Prevalence Survey (PUPPS) is underway and will be completed in early December. Detailed hospital reports will be distributed to each health service in March 2004 and the final report and recommendations will be completed in April 2004. The education sessions held as part of the PUPPS surveyor training have been videoed and these videos will be distributed to health services in December to assist with local pressure ulcer education.

Medication Errors

The Medication Working Group is working with a number of stakeholder groups to develop a statewide drug information network and drug information bulletin. This will be completed by June 2004. A Medication Safety Workshop will be held early in 2004.

Appropriateness of Care

In response to health services' feedback to the Appropriateness Working Group, requesting a project to be developed on failure to communicate abnormal test results, the Working Group is in discussion with a number of health services who have experienced adverse events in this area. Their experiences will be written up into a series of case studies for distribution in January 2004, to assist in the dissemination of lessons learned. A pilot project investigating systems issues in this area in more detail is also underway.

Acute Pain Management

This newly developed Working Group was formed as a result of a forum for stakeholders in acute pain management conducted in February 2003. They are working on the development of an acute pain management performance measurement toolkit.

Safe and appropriate use of blood and blood products

The Blood Matters Breakthrough Collaborative, undertaken by the DHS Clinical Innovations Unit, is in its final phase, and VQC will review the results of the collaborative in conjunction with DHS to determine the next steps.

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