

# VQC update

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## Message from the Chair

The Minister for Health has approved a second term for the Victorian Quality Council, with the new Council meeting for the first time in November 2004. A number of projects will roll over to the second term of Council. These include: Clinical Leadership; Data; Consumer Participation; Education; Infection Control; Falls Prevention; Pressure Injuries; Appropriateness of Care and Acute Pain Management. It is anticipated that a number of new projects will be developed by Council in response to emerging safety and quality trends such as effective staffing, learning from other industries and health service enquiries, and evaluation. The term two Victorian Quality Council will comprise a mix of members from the term one Council as well as a number of new members, whilst the Management Group remains the same. As with the term one Council, members will not be representative of organisations, but come to the table as individuals with skills and commitment relevant to Council's role in assisting health services to improve safety and

quality. Council will continue its commitment to collaboration and cooperation with health services to pursue this goal in a useful way. Term 2 Council membership is available on the VQC website.

A number of projects have come to fruition since the previous VQC newsletter in May 2004. Both the Falls Prevention Guidelines and the Healthcare Quality and Safety Data Directory have been launched and distributed. Follow up state-wide falls prevention education has been run to assist health services to familiarise themselves with the guidelines and their implementation. An electronic database of the data directory, including a search function, will be available by the end of November. PUPPS 2, the second pressure ulcer point prevalence survey, will take place in November/December 2004. This will include all Victorian acute and sub-acute beds and will provide an interesting and useful comparison with the data collected in 2003. Once again, a statewide report and individual health service reports will be produced, and the



extent to which recommendations from the first PUPPS survey have been implemented will be reviewed.

I am pleased to have been appointed to the Chair of VQC and look forward to working with all of you to continue to improve the safety and quality of our health care services.

**Christine Kilpatrick**  
Chair, VQC

## Education News

The VQC Education Working Group has conducted a targeted request for quotation for the development of a safety and quality short course curriculum. This project should commence by the end of 2004 and will run for 6 months, including curriculum development, piloting and evaluation. The aim of this project is to construct a basic safety and quality short course that VQC can roll out across Victoria in a way that is easily accessible to health services, particularly targeting middle managers and registrars in the

first instance. Project-specific education is also in development: a statewide falls prevention program is about to commence and, as in 2003, pressure ulcer education will be run as part of the PUPPS 2 project in November/December 2004.

VQC sponsored a discussion forum in June in conjunction with the Victorian Quality and Risk Managers Group, the Medical Defence Association of Victoria and the Department of Human Services. Titled 'Accountability vs. A Just Culture –

Lifelong Partners or Mortal Enemies?' The forum was well attended by a wide range of health sector stakeholders. Facilitated by Associate Professor Terry Laidler, the panel generated a lively discussion about issues of blame, a systems approach and accountability in regards to patient safety and clinical error. The notes from this forum are available on the VQC website, and may be useful in health service education programs or as a prompt to discussion and debate around these issues.

# A snapshot of plans, initiatives and project progress 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**. An electronic version of the checklist in the safety and quality framework document will be released shortly. This will enable health services to better capture and compile checklist information across the health service and will provide some simple analysis capability. The focus of this area is now on developing supplementary papers exploring clinical governance roles in health services in more detail, with the board and consumer role papers about to be released. The issue of clinical leadership is also being addressed, with a number of interviews conducted with health service personnel to build on the literature review conducted in 2003. The findings from this clinical leadership interviews project will be fed into the development of a clinical leadership project for 2005.

2. The Data Working Group has released the Healthcare Quality and Safety Data Directory and, a database version will be available by the end of 2004.

3. The **Consumer Participation Working Group** has released a database version of the VQC Consumer Directory. Check the website for details. A project is underway to apply Cochrane Communicating with Consumers evidence to difficult areas of communication in health services. A number of new projects are under discussion including the investigation of best practice in involving consumers in safety and quality. The clinical governance working group has also developed a "consumer role in health service safety and quality" paper as a supplementary paper to the VQC Safety and Quality Framework.

4. The **Education Working Group** is developing a safety and quality short course for Victorian health services (see Education news elsewhere in this newsletter).

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

### Infection control

The hand hygiene improvement pilot project is underway, implementing the Pittet/Austin model of hand hygiene improvement in six sites across Victoria. Workshops will be held in 2005 to disseminate lessons learned from the pilot.

### Falls Prevention

The Falls Prevention Guidelines Pack has been distributed to health services and follow-up statewide education has been held.

### Pressure Injuries

PUPPS 2 will be run across all acute and sub-acute beds over November/December 2004. A statewide pressure ulcer education program was run across the state in mid 2004 in response to requests from health services that had attended the first PUPPS education. The mattress replacement tender is in progress, and health services will be invited to order their mattresses in December.

### Appropriateness of Care

A report on case studies related to adverse events due to delays in communicating test results will be released shortly. This report contains analysis of systems issues that led to these adverse events, corrective action taken by health services, and overall lessons learned that can be applied across all health services.

### Acute Pain Management

The development of an acute pain management toolkit is in process. This should be completed in the first half of 2005.

### Medication Errors

Following a review of medication councils, committees and interest groups across the state, the Department of Human Services is convening a new peak body on Medication. The ways in which VQC will collaborate with the new peak body on improving medication safety are currently under discussion.

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