



## Greetings from the Chair

Welcome to the first of what will be many editions of "VQC Update". This two-page newsletter will be published every 2 months to provide a snapshot of the activities of the VQC. Further information is available on our website, or by contacting the VQC Management Group.

The VQC is a Ministerial Advisory Committee convened to lead the safety and quality agenda in Victoria's health services. Council meets bi-monthly and consists of 26 members comprising medical and non-medical clinicians, Board members and management personnel. VQC's role in safety and quality is not to duplicate the good work already being done in this area, but to:

- Identify areas where similar work is being done and facilitate useful collaboration and

coordination between stakeholders

- Synthesize expert information, advice and evidence from different sources and disseminate to health services via information and education
- Identify gaps in safety and quality where work is not being done and develop projects in these areas
- Enable health services to better manage and improve safety by providing practical tools and techniques
- Adapt the Australian Council for Safety and Quality agenda for application in Victoria.

Actions involved in achieving these are detailed in the VQC Strategic Plan 2002-2005 which has been widely distributed, and is available on the VQC website.

Council is in the relatively early stages of development and, as you will see further on in this newsletter, is just getting the initial projects off the ground.

VQC is committed to engaging broadly with health services and other stakeholders and we look forward to working with you in



many different capacities, including: piloting of initiatives, testing guidelines, implementing and sustaining evidence-based change, data collection and education to make our health services safer and better places to be.

**Michael Walsh**  
Chair, VQC

## Who does what at VQC?

Three members of the 26 member Council comprise the VQC Executive:

Dr Michael Walsh (Chair)  
A/Professor Christine Kilpatrick (Deputy Chair)  
Dr Jenny Bartlett

Council is supported by a small Management Group comprising:  
Cathy Balding (Manager)  
Lesley Thornton and Eddie Gibbons (Senior Project Officers)  
Pauline Berryman and Trish Kaplan (Anaesthetic and Surgical Consultative Council support)  
Anna Watchorn (Administration)

Future editions of "VQC Update" will profile Council members.

### 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 have project content expertise.

Current project comprise:

- Development of a **safety and quality framework** focusing on guidelines and practical approaches to clinical governance, including clinical leadership, both medical and non-medical (Working Group Chair: Governance - Michael Walsh; Clinician Leadership – Christine Kilpatrick.  
VQC contact: Cathy Balding)
- Exploring ways to **overcome barriers to consumer involvement** in health service safety and quality improvement (Chair: Christine Walker;  
VQC contact: Lesley Thornton)
- Responding to **known areas of risk** in hospitals:

#### Infection control

(Chair: David Hillis;  
VQC contact: Eddie Gibbons)  
Review of current practice re timing of antibiotic prophylaxis in surgery

#### Falls and Pressure Injuries

(Chair: Falls – Stella Axarlis;  
Pressure Injuries – Kerry Bradley;  
VQC contact: Lesley Thornton)  
Review of available national guidelines and evidence for development of Victorian guidelines

#### Medication Errors

(Chair: George Braitberg;  
VQC contact: Eddie Gibbons)  
Development of guidelines for standardised medication charts

#### Appropriateness of care

(Chair: Jane Hendtlass;  
VQC Contact: Cathy Balding)  
Review of evidence in key areas of practice involving overuse, underuse and misuse. Health service Quality Committee Chairs have been invited to involve their organisations in related projects.

#### Safe and appropriate use of blood and blood products

(Collaborative Director: Sam Ludolf;  
VQC Contact: Cathy Balding)  
Funding of a "Blood Matters" Breakthrough Collaborative.

VQC will approach health services in the new year to pilot and assist with projects – we look forward to collaborating with you.

## 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 funded 3 health service staff members involved in quality and safety to attend the 2nd Asia Pacific Conference on Quality Improvement, and 22 hospital personnel to attend Clinical Risk Management training in Brisbane with Dr James Bagian.

VQC has also participated in DHS Quality Improvement Funding Workshops on topics relevant to VQC strategic areas including falls, medication and pressure ulcers.

#### Upcoming events in early 2003 include:

- Regional workshops in conjunction with the Australian Council for Quality and Safety in Health Care
- A clinical governance seminar with ACHSE and RACMA

Watch out for information on international guest speakers throughout the year.

VQC Contact for Education Issues:  
Cathy Balding