

Offender Health Services Governance Improvement Project – Update 1

Background

The purpose of the Offender Health Services Governance Improvement Project (the project) is to improve the Department of Health's (the Department) oversight of offender health services in accordance with its system manager responsibilities. Phase 1 of the project, the independent Offender Health Services Review (OHSR) was conducted in 2018 by the Department in consultation with key stakeholders. The OHSR report contained a range of recommendations across the following five broad themes:

1. Relationships and Governance
2. Workforce
3. Access
4. Service Standards and Models
5. The Correctional Environment and Interfaces with QCS

Offender Health Services Review Implementation Plan

The Department carefully examined the report and all recommendations have either been accepted, accepted-in-principle or supported. Those that are the primary responsibility of the Department have been accepted or accepted-in-principle. Those recommendations where the responsibility primarily lies with Hospital and Health Services (HHSs) have been supported given that HHSs are independent statutory entities to the Department. Notwithstanding this, a high degree of collaborative effort will be required between the Department, HHSs and Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) for this plan to be successful. The Department has developed an implementation plan to act on the OHSR'S recommendations.

Establishment of the Office for Prisoner Health and Wellbeing

To address the lack of system leadership identified in the review, the Department established an Office for Prisoner Health and Wellbeing (OPHW). The OPHW provides capacity within the Department to undertake many of the system-wide leadership functions detailed in the OHSR recommendations. Specifically, in collaboration with other stakeholders, the OPHW will coordinate the following:

- establishment of a strategic direction for prisoner health and wellbeing
- development and maintenance of policies, standards, and quality assurance mechanisms
- planning for future services
- funding approaches and the allocation of funding
- development and implementation of information systems
- development and support of a research agenda.

The OPHW in collaboration with HHSs and other units within the Department will also progressively, carefully and methodically implement the other OHSR recommendations.

Update on the implementation of the Offender Health Services Review's recommendations

As of October 2019, the following recommendations are either complete (and have become business as usual) or are currently in progress:

Governance

- OPHW established as a statewide coordination unit.
- The Prisoner Health and Wellbeing Leadership Group (PHWLG) and Prisoner Health Services Directors Group (PHSDG) established as a collaborative mechanism with key stakeholders including HHSs and QCS.
- Updated HHS service level agreements to better reflect Prisoner health services
- Development of a state-wide strategic plan has commenced with a key stakeholder workshop to be held in November 2019.
- A state-wide MoU between Qld Health and QCS has been drafted for consultation and is in the process of being finalised.
- A membership-based Prisoner Health and Wellbeing Clinical Community of Practice is being established, including nominations for the Clinical Lead role/s.
- Key performance indicators have been developed and distributed for feedback as part of a broader service evaluation and development system.
- The prisoner electronic medical record project is progressing with the development of a business case, including the selection of a vendor to be considered and endorsed by the PHSDG.

Workforce

- The recommendations relating to workforce are HHS led activities and are being discussed and progressed through the PHSDG.

Access

- The recommendation to increase offender's access to health services refers to the establishment of the MoU, collaborative arrangements and the revised service legal agreements. The OPHW is currently working on arrangements for access to aged and disability care for prisoners.

Services standards and models

- A funding methodology and model based on turnover, security level and prisoner numbers has been developed and implemented.
- Needs based resourcing models have been developed for primary healthcare and oral health services.
- The OPHW are working with the Office of Health Ombudsman to understand the nature of prisoner health complaints and will work to support HHSs to improve internal complaint and compliment systems.
- A clinical service redesign project has commenced at Brisbane Correctional Centre.

The Correctional environment and interface with QCS

- The OPHW will continue to work on policy to improve prisoner's health with QCS.
- Minor fit out funding for upgrading of health clinics has been provided to HHSs.

The next update on the Offender Health Services Governance Improvement Project is expected to be available in March 2020.