Health promoting hospitals and health services fact sheet

Background

The role of health promotion in hospitals must change in response to the rising levels of preventable chronic conditions, chronic ill health associated with the ageing population and to assist in bridging the health gap. For example, chronic conditions are the leading cause of illness, disability, death and health system utilisation in Australia. Consequently, they are threatening to overwhelm Australia’s health budget, the capacity of the health services and the health workforce. Health promotion and prevention in the hospital and health service settings will assist in tackling preventable chronic conditions, maximise potential health gain of all patients, clients, staff, and the community it serves and reduce its impact on the environment. However, health promotion must no longer be limited to providing health information to patients. It must become an integral part of the patient care journey and embedded into broader health systems processes.

“A health promoting hospital and health service (HPH) aims to increase the health gain of its patients, staff and the community it serves”

Health promoting hospitals

A health promoting hospital and health service (HPH) aims to increase the health gain of its patients, staff and the community it serves v. It strives to do this by reorienting its health services to include a greater focus on promoting health and wellbeing through integrating health promotion and education, disease prevention and rehabilitation services within hospital and health service quality management systems. As a settings based approach to health promotion, a HPH strives to create a supportive policy and physical environment, which promotes the health and wellbeing of all whom access its services and work there i.

A variety of HPH models have been developed. The World Health Organisation (WHO) developed the Standards for Health Promotion in Hospitals, the Manual and self-assessment form and the HPH Network to support their implementation by hospitals and health services vi, vii.

Benefits of being a HPH

There are benefits of being a HPH for patients, clients, staff, management, the community population and the environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefactor</th>
<th>Benefits of being a HPH</th>
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| Patients         | • increased focus on the perceived needs of patients and clients (and relatives)  
                   • better chances for self-determination and self-care, thus leading to better quality of life  
                   • better quality of care, while also improving the sustainability of health outcomes  
                   • maximised potential health gain                                                                                                                                 |
| Staff            | • increased health knowledge, attitude and skills  
                   • increased health behaviour change  
                   • decreased injuries  
                   • increased job satisfaction  
                   • improved health status                                                                                                                                 |
| Hospital         | • increased employee engagement  
                   • increased team cohesiveness  
                   • improved corporate image  
                   • decreased absenteeism                                                                                                                                 |
| management       |                                                                                                                                                       |
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefactor</th>
<th>Benefits of being a HPH</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• decreased workers compensation costs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• increased staff productivity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• improve health gain of services, thereby improving effectiveness and efficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• contribute to achievement of National Safety and Quality Healthcare Standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>• reduce energy usage and waste</td>
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<td>• reduced carbon emissions and other pollutants created by waste disposal</td>
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The hospital’s role in health promotion

Hospitals and health services should be playing lead a role in health promotion, prevention and management of chronic conditions and there are several reasons why.

- They are a central component of the health system, are significant consumers of goods and producers of waste, and are in contact with a large proportion of the community\(^i\).
- Furthermore, health promotion is a core component of quality for improving health, clinical effectiveness and patient safety\(^ii,iv\).
- Hospitals and health services can have significant influence over the behaviour of patients and relatives\(^v\) and can support staff to improve their health through workplace HP\(^i,vi\).
- As research and teaching institutions, hospitals can also influence local health systems and professional practice\(^iv\).
- Reorienting their focus from curing disease and alleviating pain to include HP and prevention can significantly reduce the volume and severity of chronic conditions and provide long-term cost savings and better health outcomes\(^vi\).

Becoming more health promoting

- Develop an organisational policy for health promotion, targeting patients, clients, relatives and staff with an overarching aim of improving health outcomes.
- Health professionals in partnership with patients and clients, systematically assess needs for health promotion activities to support patient treatment, improve prognosis and to promote the health and well-being of patients and clients.
- Provide patients with information on significant factors concerning their disease or health condition and establish health promotion interventions in all patient and client pathways.
- Become a health promoting workplace through creating a supportive policy and physical environment and workplace culture which encourages and promotes staff to practice healthy lifestyle behaviours.
- Follow a planned approach to collaboration with other health service providers, institutions and sectors on an ongoing basis and initiate partnerships to optimise the integration of health promotion activities in patient and client pathways.

Resources


For more information

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