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Foreword

Metro North Board values the dedication and work of our clinicians. We believe that meaningful and active engagement with our clinicians at all levels of strategic and organisational planning is not an additional task, but a vital part of designing services which provide the best possible care to our patients. By working together, we can ensure clinicians have the resources and support to deliver integrated and responsive patient-centred care.

Dr Robert Stable AM
Chair, Metro North Hospital
and Health Board

About Metro North Hospital and Health Service

Metro North Hospital and Health Service (Metro North) enables people to deliver excellent patient-centred and high quality health services. With a focus on engagement and collaboration, we connect people to deliver services to a population approaching 900,000, from north of the Brisbane River to north of Kilcoy.



Our strength lies in our diversity. The Royal Brisbane and Women's and The Prince Charles Hospitals provide advanced levels of health care which are highly specialised, such as heart and lung transplantation, genetic health, and burns treatment. Redcliffe and Caboolture are major community hospitals and Kilcoy is a regional community hospital. Mental Health, Oral Health, Subacute and Ambulatory Care Services are provided from many sites including hospitals, 11 community health centres, residential and extended care facilities and mobile service teams. Dedicated units provide Public Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services. The state-wide Clinical Skills Development Centre is one of the world's largest providers of health care simulation.

For up-to-date information about the Metro North catchment population please go to <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/metronorth/documents/mn-health-service-strategy.pdf>.

Strategic context

Metro North Strategic Plan outlines our commitment to put people first. A key strategic objective is: “Supporting our people to lead and deliver excellent patient-centred care and high quality services”. Meaningful and sustained clinician engagement to inform new ways of working and resources is essential to achieving this objective.

In addition to contributing to the *Metro North Strategic Plan 2015–2019* and the *Putting People First Strategy (2015)*, *Working Together* complements the consumer engagement strategy, *Connecting for Health: Strategy for inclusive consumer and community engagement, involvement and partnerships 2016–18*. It aligns with the Health Services Strategy 2015–20 and the Clinical Streams and Clinical Directorates, which are working examples of Metro North’s commitment to clinician engagement. It also takes into account feedback from the Clinician Engagement Survey 2014 and consultation with Metro North executive and clinical leaders.

Working Together supports the contemporary health reform agenda and legislation including: Section 40 of the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011* which requires Hospital and Health Services to develop and publish a clinician engagement strategy and the Hospital and Health Boards Regulation 2012 which prescribes the minimum requirements for this strategy.

Hospital and Health Service Boards are accountable for the overall performance of each HHS. The Board has the responsibility to oversee the operation of the HHS, including the development, implementation and measuring effectiveness of the clinician engagement strategy, including governing and managing resources to purchase and provide health services.

Meaningful and sustained clinician engagement takes time. It takes time to build and maintain productive relationships and value clinician time. *Working Together* aims to build upon and strengthen existing clinician engagement strategies such as the clinical councils, clinical streams and professional leads.



Building partnerships with clinicians for patient-centred care

Purpose

Working Together is in place to make sure clinicians have a voice in Metro North HHS, building on the strengths and diversity of our clinical workforce and the achievements since the first Clinician Engagement Strategy 2012–15. The purpose of the strategy is:

- To develop and maintain a clinician workforce that is involved in shaping the direction of the health service to achieve patient-centred care.
- To foster a sense of ownership of the strategic direction of Metro North amongst clinicians.

Objectives

Working Together has five key objectives to achieve meaningful and sustained clinician engagement:

- Identify, discuss and resolve issues of strategic importance that require a whole of Metro North approach with clinicians.
- Create opportunities for clinicians at all levels to connect in meaningful ways with each other (within, between and across disciplines), the Metro North Board and Executive Leadership Team.
- Develop the leadership capabilities of clinicians to deal with the challenges of transforming healthcare.
- Effectively use communication strategies, tools and expertise to enable two-way communication and timely, succinct and accessible information on important strategic and clinical issues.
- Establish formal relationships with external stakeholders to facilitate clinician involvement in whole-of-community health service delivery.

Outcomes

Working Together will achieve the following outcomes:

- Meaningful and sustained clinician engagement through open and respectful relationships
- Clinical engagement that achieves a culture of partnering and collaboration to achieve patient-centred care.



“Our greatest strength is working together as a team.”

– Dr George Javorsky, Chair, Metro North Clinical Council

Scope

Working together involves:

- all clinicians who provide care on behalf of Metro North
- clinicians in our partner organisations
- Metro North Board and Executive and non-clinical staff who support and enable clinicians to deliver patient-centred care.

Critical success factors

For *Working Together* to be successful, we commit to:

- Proactively seek advice from and involve the Metro North and Hospital Clinical Councils, professional leads, clinical streams, clinical directorates and other clinician led groups in matters of strategic and clinical importance
- Provide safe forums where clinicians can advocate for consumers and health system improvements
- Recognise that clinician participation in strategic activities must be balanced with clinical workloads
- Support and enable patient-centred care.

Pictured: Metro North Hospital and Health Service (MNHHS) and Brisbane North PHN have reaffirmed their commitment to work together to improve continuity of quality patient centred care. The recently signed protocol between the two organisations recognises that better health outcomes are achievable when there is effective collaboration between primary healthcare and hospital services.



*Partnerships based on trust
and mutual respect*

Issues and risks

Through implementing *Working Together*, we aim to prevent or minimise the following issues or risks:

- At the organisational level, when clinicians are not meaningfully engaged and involved in decision-making, the reputation of Metro North may be damaged, resulting in workforce turnover and poor staff retention
- At the clinical level, when clinicians are not empowered to respond to identified risks and patient feedback, high quality, safe services and treatment may be compromised
- At the service level, when clinicians are not involved in service design or re-design, resources may be duplicated or misallocated with the best possible solutions for service innovation ignored
- At the system level, when clinicians are not engaged, their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of systems and processes may not be used to develop the kind of integrated and connected care required to deliver efficient, cost-effective and patient-centred care
- At the population health level, when clinicians are not supported to innovate, advancements in evidence-based healthcare that would benefit the community and improve the health of the population will not be realised.



Roles and responsibilities

Metro North Clinical Councils, Clinical Streams and Clinical Directorates play lead roles in clinician engagement; however the realisation of *Working Together* is a shared responsibility involving Metro North staff, at all levels, clinical and non-clinical.

Governance

The Metro North Board seeks to achieve its vision for clinician engagement by working with and through the Clinical Councils. The Clinical Councils are recognised as an effective forum for involving clinicians in health system change. The role of the Clinical Councils in implementing *Working Together* is to:

- listen to and be a voice for clinicians to shape the strategic direction of Metro North to achieve patient-centred care
- facilitate two-way communication within and between clinical and non-clinical groups and
- escalate clinician concerns and advocate for timely and appropriate responses.

Performance measures

The Metro North Clinical Council will develop a work plan and associated key performance indicators for *Working Together* as part of the inaugural Annual Clinician Forum in April 2016. These will be included as an addendum to the strategy and reported annually. The impact of *Working Together* will be assessed via clinician feedback on the Annual Clinician Forum, a Clinician Engagement Survey and a sample of independent clinician interviews.

Review and reporting

Annual progress reports will be provided to the Metro North Board, Executive, Clinical Councils. An annual feedback report will be developed for clinicians.



“When clinician engagement works well it is just the way you work, rather than a concept that is separate to everyday business. The organisation benefits as clinicians themselves will drive change for the better and patients benefit with better outcomes.”

– **Dr Elizabeth Whiting, Executive Director, Clinical Services, Metro North Hospital and Health Service**



Enablers

Metro North Hospital and Clinical Councils

There are 5 Clinical Councils: Metro North Clinical Council, Royal Brisbane, Prince Charles, Redcliffe and Caboolture Hospital Clinical Councils. They are a voice for clinicians to ensure excellence in patient care. The role of the Clinical Councils include: providing direction and leadership to engage and actively involve clinicians in shaping the future direction of Metro North Hospital and health services; oversight of the planning and delivery of integrated, patient centred health services; and enabling excellence in training, education, research and innovation.

Metro North Clinical Streams

There are eight clinical streams: medicine, mental health, oral health, critical care, women's and children, heart and lung, cancer care and surgery.

The purpose of the Metro North Clinical Streams is to provide a patient centric approach to care delivery focussing on equity of access, outcomes and experience. They provide a perspective that crosses traditional hospital and service boundaries and aim to ensure integration and coordination of care across the Health Service and the community. The clinical streams foster a collaborative approach in planning and delivery of services and facilitate clinician engagement in the governance of clinical services across Metro North. They provide a Metro North perspective that can influence external partners; support a whole of Health Service approach to education and research, service redesign, innovation and new technology adoption.

Professional Leads

Metro North's operational and strategic governance model is underpinned by three professional clinician leads for Nursing and Midwifery Services, Medical Services and Allied Health Practitioners. Each professional lead is pivotal in providing a single, coordinating, and unifying accountable officer for each professional stream. They maintain and support professional standards, as well as lead innovation by engaging and supporting clinicians to improve our patient's health care experience. They provide an important function in ensuring all clinicians have a strategic voice.

Healthcare partnerships

Meaningful and sustained engagement with clinicians working in other Hospital and Health Services general practice and non-government healthcare providers is central to patient-centred care and the implementation of the Metro North Health Services Strategy 2015–2020.

Glossary

Clinician¹: 'any individual who provides diagnosis or treatment as a professional medical practitioner, nurse, allied health practitioner or other health practitioner.

Clinician engagement¹: the involvement of clinicians in the planning, delivery, improvement and evaluation of health services within Queensland Health, utilising clinicians' clinical skills, knowledge and experience.

¹ National Health Reform Lead Clinicians Groups: Enhancing Clinical Engagement in the Australian Healthcare System 2011.

