
CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Health, disability, children and families: partnering across sectors to improve the transition experience and outcomes for young children new to disability

2nd Asia Pacific Conference on Integrated Care, Melbourne, 11-13 November 2019

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Introduction: The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a transformational reform of Australia's disability sector. The NDIS has seen complete disruption to the pathways linking health and disability sectors. Local solutions are required to resolve interface issues.

Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service (CHQ) is the quaternary health service for children and young people in Queensland and beyond and provides both diagnostic services and health interventions for children with new and/or emerging disability. CHQ has taken a proactive approach to understanding the NDIS and has forged a partnership with the Brisbane Region's Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) partner, The Benevolent Society (TBS), to support NDIS access and planning for young children who need disability services to enable a safe and timely discharge.

This has led to efficient and effective care transitions for children with complex conditions and long-term care needs within the context of an evolving health-disability interface.

Targeted population: Children aged 0-6 years who have a new or newly diagnosed disability who are eligible for NDIS funded services and supports and who are an inpatient of the Queensland Children's Hospital.

Timeline and highlights:

1. January 2019: Colocation of The Benevolent Society (TBS) staff at the Queensland Children's Hospital for one day per week (MoU in place) to support staff and families of children who are inpatients of the hospital navigate the NDIS and progress along the inpatient pathway

2. January to June 2019:

- Partnership to support 53 children aged 0-6 and their families to transition from hospital to home with linkages to the disability sector in place (64% of total number of inpatients requiring NDIS related support at time of discharge)

- Whole of state focus:

 - 43% were residents Greater Brisbane region

 - 45% were residents Regional Queensland

 - 11% live in other jurisdictions (NSW and WA)

3. Robust plans for new participants that often exceed industry expectations

4. No NDIS related delays to discharge for the 0-6 cohort at CHQ in 2019, despite extreme and complex disability requiring plans inclusive of in home support and assistive technologies

Sustainability and Transferability: This initiative is sustainable due to cross sector commitment to an integrated approach to care which has reduced the burden on all stakeholders to ensure information is easily shared and barriers to discharge are understood. These learnings are transferable to older children (7+) and other like-organisations.

Conclusion: The NDIS has been a catalyst for innovative partnerships. CHQ and TBS have forged such a partnership and the children of Queensland are benefiting from:

- Reciprocal and trusting relationships between health and disability providers based on an understanding of complimentary roles and responsibilities
- Accurate and timely information exchange for families and for health professionals
- Pathways that enable flexibility to manage barriers and challenges as they arise