
CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

The New South Wales Integrated Care Strategy

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Introduction: The New South Wales (NSW) health system faces challenges in the coming decades as the effects of a changing population place pressures on the delivery of health care.

Integrated Care is a crucial step to delivering care that is patient-centred and of value to the population. The NSW Integrated Care Strategy was launched in 2014. Local health partnerships were supported to implement innovative, locally led models which trialled new ways of working to address the needs of communities across NSW. Detailed monitoring and evaluation informed the next steps of the strategy.

Description of policy context and objective: The NSW Health Strategic Framework for Integrating Care was developed in 2018. The Framework articulates a clear vision for integrating care in NSW across the life course. Principles, enablers and expected outcomes are outlined in the Framework, and these are demonstrated in two major implementation activities: scaling effective initiatives across NSW; and collaborative commissioning with providers, organisations and settings in the community.

Scaling effective initiatives: Six Integrated Care initiatives have been selected for scaling across NSW. Each focuses on a cohort of the community, rather than a specific disease, and aims to manage health and social needs in primary and community care where possible and appropriate.

The NSW Ministry of Health provides funding to Local Health Districts (LHD) to implement scaled initiatives in partnership with primary and social care services. LHDs enrol patients on a state-wide Integrated Care Patient Flow Portal which enables continuity of care across NSW and monitoring and evaluation of the strategy with aggregated and linked data.

Collaborative commissioning: Collaborative commissioning promotes the development of partnerships between Primary Health Networks (supported by the Commonwealth Government) and LHDs (NSW Government). Partnerships develop care pathways for patient groups identified through a comprehensive population needs assessment. These pathways reflect the need for better coordination between primary and secondary health services, as well as other service providers that contribute to the social determinants of health. Collaborative commissioning incentivises local autonomy and accountability for delivering patient-centred, outcome-focused and value-driven care in the community.

Targeted population: Integrated Care in NSW focuses on improving outcomes for vulnerable people and at-risk populations across the lifecycle.

Highlights: Integrated Care in NSW strives for whole-of-person care where care is wrapped around the individual rather than focusing on a pathway to address a specific disease. We recognise the

need to create linkages between NSW service clusters, state and federal government agencies, and non-government providers. Providing these linkages takes the burden of coordination off the patient so they have a seamless experience that meets their needs.

Comments on transferability: This state-wide approach to integrating care has been informed by monitoring and evaluation of previous strategies implemented in NSW. Lessons learned throughout implementation may be transferrable to other states in Australia, or similar regions internationally.

Conclusion: Integrated Care in NSW has evolved over time, in response to the needs of the population, new evidence and continuous monitoring and evaluation. Improved outcomes have already been demonstrated across the Quadruple Aim of healthcare delivery.