Rehabilitation Redesign Project – Project background

Introduction:
A Rehabilitation Redesign Project was co-sponsored by the Health Services Performance Improvement and Inter-Government and Funding Strategies Branches, of NSW Health, in response to the need to review rehabilitation models of care in NSW.

The initiative to develop new models of care for rehabilitation is built upon the COAG objective to enhance the provision of subacute services and it will help position NSW Health as a leader in the provision of contemporary, effective and efficient models of rehabilitation care. NSW public rehabilitation services have an integral role within the health continuum and are fundamental in promotion effective transition across care settings.

The project has had key involvement from a statewide Rehabilitation Redesign Working Group with representation from rehabilitation and aged care physicians, allied health and rehabilitation nursing and the Agency for Clinical Innovation.

The overall aim of the project was to recommend a new model of care for adult rehabilitation which is evidence based, efficient, and applicable to both metropolitan and rural areas in NSW and which measure inputs and outcomes. The Rehabilitation Redesign project has considered rehabilitation services including orthopaedics and stroke rehabilitation as well as aged care services delivering rehabilitation. The specialist rehabilitation services of spinal, burns and traumatic brain injury are not the focus of this project, however the new models developed have considered the requirements in supporting the spinal, burns and traumatic brain injury population groups who are treated in general rural rehabilitation services.

The project is using Redesign Methodology, which is a robust framework for improving clinical processes. Redesign methodology involves frontline staff identifying issues across the patient journey and considering design solutions.

The objectives of the project were to provide recommendations for a rehabilitation model of care such that:

- Adults will have equitable and timely access to effective and appropriate hospital and community-based rehabilitation, complementary to acute and other subacute care.
- Adults interacting with rehabilitation services provided by NSW Health will experience health outcomes based on best available evidence and greater satisfaction with the services they receive.
- Hospital and community health service teams and key stakeholders (including GPs) will have access to practical integrated and coordinated rehabilitation models of care for their patients.
- Information and data systems will be identified and incorporated into existing work or recommendations made to develop, understand and support process improvements and activity based funding for rehabilitation.
This project aim was to support the objectives by:

- Identification of and achievement in key patient journey improvements in rehabilitation services delivered across NSW
- Improving
  - access to services by the development of new approaches to care
  - quality and consistency of rehabilitation models across the State
  - flow of patients between acute, sub-acute and residential care
  - access to non-acute health services for older people
  - bed utilisation, management of patient flow and efficient use of resources.

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) were engaged to work with NSW Health in the assessment and solution design phases of the project which is now complete. Ten individual NSW Rehabilitation Services were selected for detailed site visits. The site visits to Rehabilitation Services were conducted in October 2010 to:

- develop a profile of existing and/or innovative models for rehabilitation care delivery
- identify issues and challenges impacting rehabilitation care in NSW

In addition to the site visits there was review of interstate and international models culminating in the development of recommendations for a new model of care relevant to metropolitan, regional and rural areas in NSW.

The report outlines that there is a case for change in rehabilitation services. This is shown by a growth in over night and day rehabilitation activity and total bed days used for rehabilitation.

Recommendations are made which outline a new model of care for NSW Health and key areas requiring change to impact the new model of care.

The new model of care has been endorsed by the Director-General and will improve rehabilitation across settings from in-reach to acute care, inpatient rehabilitation, day hospital, home based, outpatient and outreach rehabilitation.

Where to from here:
Following receipt of feedback on the report in early 2011, NSW Health will consider each of the recommendations and work with Local Health Networks to implement the rehabilitation model of care.

It is anticipated that an initial step will require a coordinated process to undertake a gap analysis between current services for rehabilitation within the new Local Health Networks and the recommended model of care for Rehabilitation in NSW.

For additional information on this project, please refer to the ACI Rehabilitation Network www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/networks/rehabilitation