

Information Sheet: Hospital Chief Executives

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission) has launched a campaign to improve the prevention, recognition and treatment of delirium and to provide high-quality care for people with cognitive impairment in hospitals.

The Commission is asking you to join the campaign and commit your hospital/s to introducing strategies that will improve the recognition and care of patients with cognitive impairment. Hospitals that have joined are listed on the campaign web site and promoted.

Why does cognitive impairment matter?

Cognitive impairment, (such as delirium or dementia), is a common condition experienced by people in hospitals that is often not detected, or is dismissed or misdiagnosed. People with cognitive impairment in hospital are at significantly increased risk of adverse events and preventable complications, such as falls, pressure injury, accelerated functional decline, longer lengths of stay, premature entry to residential care or increased mortality. Harm can be minimised if cognitive impairment is identified early and risks are acted upon. Delirium can be prevented with the right care.

The Commission, in recognition of cognitive impairment as an important safety and quality issue, has included specific items in the draft version 2 of the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards.

What are the likely benefits for my hospital?

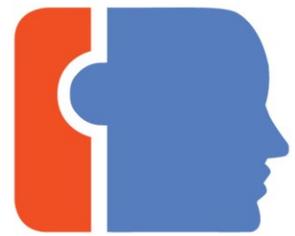
- An important public relations opportunity
- Learning from other hospitals' efforts and successes
- Opportunity to promote your hospital's achievements
- Improved outcomes for patients with cognitive impairment through reducing complications and adverse events
- Improved patient flow
- Positive results in patient surveys from improved patient and carer experience
- Improved coding of delirium and dementia from better recognition and documentation
- Increased staff confidence and job satisfaction in caring for patients with cognitive impairment
- Readiness for NSQHS Standards V2.

Who can join the campaign?

As the campaign is a call for action to unite everyone who cares for people with cognitive impairment, the campaign web site also enables individuals to commit to the campaign. Doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, health service managers, hospital care and support staff, workers in primary health or community care, patients and families can all make a difference.

Commitment certificates list simple, straight-forward steps tailored to the person's role. The most important first step for everyone is to learn about delirium, dementia and other forms of cognitive impairment.

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The web site tracks the number of individuals who have joined but does not list individual names. Participants may choose to post their commitment publically on social media. Hospital personnel are asked to provide the name of the hospital in which they work so that the nominated cognitive champion can be informed of numbers of participants from your hospital.

Key organisations have joined the campaign as supporters and are listed with their logos on the supporter's page. They will be promoting the importance of the campaign and influencing their members to take up the commitment.

Those who join become part of a community striving to make a difference. There are opportunities to share success stories and helpful tips to address the challenges faced in implementing change. Everyone has access to resources, webinars and regular newsletters.

How long does the campaign go for?

The campaign was launched at the beginning of 2016 and will run until the end of 2018. Version 2 of the NHSQS Standards is expected to be ready for implementation from January 2019.

What am I committing to if I join?

- I will learn about delirium and dementia and other forms of cognitive impairment
- I will promote the importance of cognitive impairment as a quality and safety issue
- I will appoint a cognitive care champion to oversee change
- I will promote the campaign as an opportunity to support quality improvement activities for cognitive impairment.

What am I committing my hospital to if I join?

- My hospital will screen for cognitive impairment
- My hospital will be alert to delirium risk and be dementia friendly
- My hospital will care for people with cognitive impairment with dignity, respect and compassion
- My hospital will partner with consumers.

What evidence do I need to submit to the Commission?

- There are no data collection, reporting or assessment requirements for the campaign. Committing to the campaign demonstrates a willingness to find out more about the current experience of patients with cognitive impairment in your hospital and mobilise action. If you are already a leader in this field, please provide details so that others can learn from your experience.

How can I join?

Complete the hospital commitment form and send it to cognitive.impairment@safetyandquality.gov.au If you are responsible for more than one hospital, please provide a separate form for each hospital.

Provide details of your nominated cognitive champion. A cognitive champion could be selected from a number of different areas such as a leader in quality and safety or a clinical leader. The Commission will provide a campaign pack to the champion, including your hospital certificate and will provide regular feedback on the number of participating personnel from your hospital. If you choose, the name of the cognitive champion will be listed on the website so that individual participants can be in contact with the nominated champion.

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