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AUSTRALIAN COMMISSION  
ON SAFETY AND QUALITY IN HEALTH CARE

## Caring for Cognitive Impairment

Newsletter No 10

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## Message from the Commission's CEO

The Commission has been conducting the [Caring for Cognitive Impairment campaign](#) since 2016 to improve the safety and quality of care for people with cognitive impairment or at risk of delirium in our hospitals, and to help prepare hospitals for new actions in the [National Safety and Quality Health Service \(NSQHS\) Standards \(second edition\)](#).

Thank you to the 2,266 individuals who have joined the campaign and will continue to be cognitive champions. Thank you to the 232 hospitals who also joined to herald their commitment and their work towards implementing improvements.

Now that all health service organisations are required to work towards implementation of the second edition of the NSQHS Standards, our Caring for Cognitive Impairment campaign website will transition from a campaign site to an implementation support platform.

The website, which has attracted 12,218 hits from 1 July 2018 – 30 June 2019, will remain an important platform to access resources, to share your work and to learn from the experiences of consumers. We will continue to add cognitive impairment resources and also provide links to external sources of information.



In this issue we acknowledge the work of the NSW Dementia/Delirium Clinical Nurse Consultant Network and congratulate Alzheimer's WA as one of our supporting organisations on a very successful symposium in March this year.

Read on to discover our new cognitive impairment resources that are now available. The NSQHS Standards Cognitive Impairment User Guide highlights the many actions in the NSQHS Standards that can be implemented to improve the care of people with cognitive impairment or at risk of delirium.

Regards,

**Adjunct Professor Debora Picone AO**

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## New resources

The Commission has developed four new cognitive impairment resources to:

- Provide information for health service organisations to help them improve the quality of care and health outcomes for people with cognitive impairment or at risk of delirium
- Support implementation of the NSQHS Standards (2nd edition)
- Augment existing [NSQHS Standards resources](#), and should be read in conjunction with these
- Provide links to further resources and examples of approaches to delivering health care to people with cognitive impairment or at risk of delirium.

The [user guide](#) discusses the three specific cognitive impairment actions listed in the second edition of the NSQHS Standards, as well as additional actions listed in the NSQHS Standards that are particularly critical and support implementation of safe and high-quality care for patients with cognitive impairment. The relevant NSQHS Standards are summarised in the Actions for Health Service Organisations Fact Sheet.

[A better way to care – Actions for clinicians \(2nd ed.\)](#) describes a pathway to improve the early recognition of, and response to, patients with cognitive impairment to reduce harm and ensure they receive safe and high-quality care. It outlines actions that clinicians can take aligned with actions in NSQHS Standards. The pathway and key steps for clinicians are summarised in the [Action for Clinicians Fact Sheet](#).



These resources build upon A better way to care resources developed by the Commission in 2014, reflecting new evidence, a wider cognitive impairment scope and map to the second edition of the NSQHS Standards.

A consumer resource is currently under development.

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## Transitioning the campaign to implementation support



The Commission is committed to driving improvements in safety and quality of care for people with cognitive impairment or at risk of delirium. Now that all health service organisations are required to work towards implementation of the second edition of the NSQHS Standards, our Caring for Cognitive Impairment campaign website will transition from a campaign site with active recruitment to an implementation support platform.

Use the [cognitivecare website](#) to access regularly updated resources, share initiatives and learn from others.

Keep up to date by registering on the website to receive newsletters and emails from the cognitive impairment program. Submit your story or a summary of your hospital's initiatives via the [Share your story](#) form or email [cognitive.impairment@safetyandquality.gov.au](mailto:cognitive.impairment@safetyandquality.gov.au)

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## Across Australia

This feature of the newsletter highlights initiatives that are happening at a state or territory level.

### Long standing champions

The NSW Dementia and Delirium Clinical Nurse Consultants (CNCs) have been committed to delivering high quality and innovative cognitive care in NSW since 2004.

There are 20 acute positions, eight community positions and four positions combining both acute and community across 14 Local Health Districts (LHDs). Some of the acute positions span more than one hospital and all complement other specialist aged care nursing positions. Both acute and community roles incorporate all the specific CNC domains of Clinical Service and Consultancy, Clinical Leadership, Research, Education and Clinical Services Planning and Management.

The CNCs are active members of the NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) Aged Health Network and have developed into a strong network, meeting bi-annually to share experiences and lessons learnt. Highlights of their ongoing work include:

- Leading the implementation of the ACI Confused Hospitalised Older Persons (CHOPS) Program in a number of NSW hospital wards, including implementing the [ACI Volunteer Dementia and Delirium Care Program](#)
- Organising regular LHD wide cognitive impairment forums
- Supporting the Caring for Cognitive Impairment campaign and providing leadership and support for implementation of the Delirium Clinical Care Standard and new cognitive impairment actions in the NSQHS Standards in their LHDs
- Providing collaborative feedback, participating in advisory and working groups and being a key reference group for issues around dementia and delirium
- Facilitating e-learning for clinicians in their LHDs through the NSW Health Dementia Care Competency and Training Network.



NSW Dementia/Delirium CNCs share their campaign commitment at a network meeting in 2017

[The Health Dementia Care Competency and Training Network](#) is an interactive website that delivers online dementia training as well as providing ongoing resources, research updates and support to clinicians. Six online



dementia courses are facilitated by dementia clinicians and include discussion forums, real-time online chats, quizzes and self-directed lessons. The site also provides access to dementia care competencies developed for clinicians at essential, enhanced and expert levels.

The statistics for training through the Health Dementia Care Competency and Training Network are impressive. As of April 2019 the network includes; 5,945 students, 97 facilitators, 15 NSW Health Districts comprised of: 3,985 nurses, 727 allied health professionals and 1,233 other professionals (medical staff and non-regulated workers). Since 2013, on average 885 new members join annually. In 2018, 17,695 hours of education were delivered with a consistent completion rate of 78%.

The network supports the concept of an online learning program that provides an entire educational experience, linking learning to improved clinical practice, critical thinking and reflection. In a recent evaluation, 80% of a sample of participants reported implementing and sustaining change in the workplace for more than 12 months and being able to transfer their knowledge and skills to others.

Analysis of feedback from 1,455 participants undertaking the 12-week Positive Approach to Care of the Older Person with Dementia course offered by the network reported the following features of the program: Applicability (88%), Attractiveness (78%), Functionality (59%), Learning interaction (62%) and Implementation into practice (99%).

A learner's perspective: *'What I have found most valuable in this course is how 'person-centred care' as a concept has been articulated and translated to care of people with dementia. Prior to this course, I think I really feared dementia, probably out of ignorance. I have been delighted to learn how to promote and maintain 'personhood' against the challenges of the impact of this disease.'*

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## Alzheimer's WA Acute Care Symposium

This feature of the newsletter highlights exciting events or initiatives from organisations that have supported the Caring for Cognitive Impairment campaign.

### Alzheimer's WA has provided a summary of their Acute Care Symposium

The inaugural acute care symposium on 6 March 2019 was attended by 95 people passionate about the support of people living with dementia and their families. It was an opportunity to share ideas and to challenge participants to consider a new way forward in best practice dementia care. Following the Welcome to Country, the symposium was officially opened by the Deputy Premier, Minister for Health, Hon Roger Cook. Professor Fiona Wood AM, Director of the Burns Service of WA provided a wonderfully motivating presentation at the end of the day. Speakers presented on a range of topics, including the importance of the hospital environment, with inspiring examples of local improvements in many areas.

### Feedback was overwhelmingly positive:

*'Fabulous day, fabulous speakers and I enjoyed the opportunity to hear about others hard work, and to network'; 'A great variety of topics'; 'This symposium was more than I expected'; 'I gained knowledge and understanding to improve quality of care that I give to patients on the ward.'*

The event was also a celebration of all staff working in West Australian hospitals championing the cause of caring for cognitive impairment. Over 200 Dementia Change Champions have completed [training](#) endorsed by Alzheimer's WA and have been involved in continuous improvements projects modelling positive change with conviction and determination.



**Participants of the acute care symposium on stage at the Alzheimer's WA Acute Care Symposium share their commitments to the caring for cognitive impairment campaign**



**Participants at the Alzheimer's WA Acute Care Symposium**

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## Resources

### Webinars

The Commission will continue to host and record webinars as part of implementation support. The [website](#) has all video recordings and slides of the 11 webinars conducted as part of the campaign.

- All about caring for cognitive impairment
- Getting started: Lessons from the field
- Be alert to delirium
- Caring for cognitive impairment responding to distress
- Working with people with cognitive impairment, carers and families
- Webinar special: Interview with delirium expert, Professor Inouye (not live)
- Q&A on NSQHS Standards: Webinar for lead hospital cognitive champions
- Safer use of medicines for cognitive impairment
- Improving the hospital environment for people with cognitive impairment
- Setting up a volunteer program in hospitals for patients with cognitive impairment
- Cognitive impairment in the emergency department (ED) and intensive care unit (ICU).

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