

NSLHD and SNHN 2021 Joint Board Meeting Communiqué

The Northern Sydney Local Health District (NSLHD) Board and the Sydney North Health Network (SNHN) Board, and their Executives, participated in a joint board meeting in October 2021. This is the second joint annual meeting that the boards have had. There were a number of invited guests and the following topics were presented and discussed.

Planetary and Climate Health

Dr Kate Charlesworth commenced this year as Medical Consultant, Planetary Health, NSLHD and Climate Risk Lead, SNHN. The presentation included recent scientific reports setting out the urgency of action to avoid climate breakdown, the health sector's carbon footprint and carbon hotspots, and the achievements to date of both organisations. Members from both boards were extremely supportive of the programs, and the ensuing discussion was about how action to address our climate risk could be achieved at scale and pace.

Mental Health Commissioning

The SNHN Chief Operating Officer, provided an update on Mental Health commissioning. Mental Health commissioning is a key focus of Primary Health Networks (PHN) across the country. The SNHN commissions a range of community based mental health and Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) services. Commissioning is undertaken in partnership with key stakeholders including consumers, carers, communities, clinicians, service providers and NSLHD. There have been increased resources provided in response to COVID-19.

Collaborative Commissioning

The Project Manager, Operations Integration, NSLHD provided an update on the NSLHD and SNHN Collaborative Commissioning project. Collaborative Commissioning is a jointly governed program to develop a system-wide model of care. NSLHD and SNHN share the governance, responsibility and monitoring of the Key Performance Indicators across the program. The Ministry of Health (MoH) has invested significantly in the program and has provided support for the program through robust monitoring and evaluation. The SNHN and NSLHD joint program is currently focussed on frail and older people.

Virtual Hospital

The NSLHD Virtual Hospital (VH) Acting General Manager and one of the VH Clinical Directors presented an overview of the VH. The NSLHD VH has been in operation since early 2020 as part of the COVID-19 response. The VH provides remote care including the assessment of symptoms to detect deterioration, education and advice, social and wellbeing check, and ensuring isolation guidelines are adhered to. All patients receive an initial medical assessment and a risk stratification. NSLHD and SNHN are collaborating to develop a pathway for general practice involvement in caring for COVID-19 positive patients in the community. The model is based on Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) guidelines and will be delivered in a phased approach.

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