



Southern Adelaide
Local Health Network

Clinician Engagement Strategy 2021-2024

To listen, act,
make better, together



Government
of South Australia

Health
Southern Adelaide
Local Health Network

Acknowledgement

Ngadlu tampinhi, Kurna Miyurna yaiya yarta-mathanya Wama Tarntanyaku. Ngadlu tampinhi purkarna pukinangku, yalaka, tarrkaritya. Parnaku yailtya, parnaku tapa purruna, parnaku yarta ngadlu tampinhi. Yalaka Kurna Miyurna itu yailtya, tapa purruna, yarta kuma puru martinhi, puru warri-apinhi, puru tangka martulayinhi.

We acknowledge the Kurna people are the traditional custodians of the Adelaide Plains and pay respects to Elders past, present and future. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land. We acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the Kurna people living today.





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Foreword

The Southern Adelaide Local Health Network (SALHN) Governing Board, Interim Chief Executive Officer, Chair Clinical Governance Sub-committee and professional leads present our Clinician Engagement Strategy for 2021-2024.



Ms Jenny Richter Chair – SALHN Board Clinical Governance Sub-committee

Mr Wayne Gadd Interim Chief Executive Officer

Dr Di Lawrence Executive Director of Medical Services

Mr Justin Prendergast Executive Director of Nursing and Midwifery

Ms Samantha Kruger Acting Executive Director of Allied Health

We pride ourselves on building and developing an inclusive and collaborative culture, where clinicians know they are valued and understand that they are essential to our commitment to deliver reliable and respectful health care.

The Governing Board, through the Executive and professional leads, is committed to strengthening our clinician engagement as a way in which the Board can demonstrate the value it places on clinical staff. It will also show the impact effective engagement can have on the quality of care and safety of our consumers and staff, and in the achievement of our strategic directions to build a thriving community.

SALHN, in all its iterations, has a very strong history of clinician engagement. This history complements, and is supported by, the integrated management system, connecting clinicians in all our service areas directly to the Board. The desired result is clinicians, managers, Executive and the Board working in partnership with trust and understanding to achieve outstanding results.

Connecting the Board to clinicians will help the Board understand the factors that affect clinical practice and clinician decision making. It will enable clinicians to contribute to the design, planning and decisions that will enable SALHN to be a leader in health service delivery.

This Clinician Engagement Strategy sets out a plan for further progressing our engagement with all our clinicians. It aims to:

- build strong and trusting relationships with all clinicians across SALHN
- demonstrate that clinician expertise and opinions are valued
- recognise the importance of clinical leadership in the engagement process
- provide clinicians with timely access to meaningful information that enables them to contribute to decision making, and helps them excel and innovate
- involve clinicians in creative approaches to solving hard health care problems
- provide structures and processes to support clinician consultation, discussion and debate
- empower clinicians to lead change, to continuously improve the quality and safety of our services by equipping them with the skills and opportunities they need to be effective.

This strategy links and values active participation and contribution from all clinicians, across specialties and disciplines, working part time or full time, across sites and at all levels of the organisation.

The SALHN professional leads fully endorse this strategy as one that will encourage, enable and grow clinicians to become leaders with skills to continuously improve practice and patient experience. It supports safety and respect for our patients and each other, the delivery of evidence-based health care, and a strong focus on continuous improvement, research enquiry and reflective practice. The strategy has been developed through wide consultation with many clinicians and we commend it to you.

Our clinicians

Our clinicians have a strong reputation and a rich history of effective engagement and communication, stemming from the origins of Flinders Medical Centre (FMC), Noarlunga Health Service and the Repatriation General Hospital, and their connectivity with the Flinders University. This research and teaching culture, with patients at the centre, has matured and evolved over the years. Our culture now includes a range of professionals, with links to many teaching institutes, and incorporates all SALHN sites.

Our clinicians have risen to many challenges and changes, displaying our clinical workforces' resilience. Our clinicians are agile and responsive, enabled through foundations of trust and respect.

We aim to care for our patients every step of the way, from the first 1000 days to the last days of life. The Flinders precinct connections remain strong, with Flinders Private Hospital and Flinders University as important partners. Both have also expanded into the south at Noarlunga and surrounding areas.

Our clinicians tell us that a respectful workplace environment occurs where there is genuine collegiality among clinical staff.

We are aware that clinicians often feel pressured. They juggle clinical and non-clinical commitments and value flexibility. They desire a balanced approach to decision making.

In engaging with clinicians across SALHN, we need to recognise the importance of clinical leadership and how this leadership can impact the quality of clinical engagement.

We also need to understand that:

- we work in busy environments, across sites and the opportunities to network are limited
- clinicians have strong allegiances to their professional groups
- clinicians may have more than one employer
- many clinicians work part-time
- there may be a limited connection to SALHN's strategic directions.

Our clinicians include all SALHN staff who provide clinical care to patients, professions such as medical, nursing and midwifery, allied health and Aboriginal health, and clinical staff at all levels or stages of their careers.

I was encouraged to apply to work with SALHN specifically by a colleague who spent their intern year in the group and could not speak more highly of their time and I fully endorse their recommendation. The TMO unit has been active in making sure that our year has been as positive experience by providing relevant information and training, support and, when needed, intervening quickly to rectify issues. As an intern arriving from interstate, I found that they went above and beyond by assisting with the search for accommodation amongst other things. My 5 terms were all well supervised and supported by my medical peers and I found escalation pathways accessible when I was in over my head. I have also found receptive ears whenever I have had suggestions for changes and improvements, where-it-be to protocols, team structure or otherwise. I am extremely happy to have undertaken my internship at SALHN and would recommend it very highly to anyone considering it as a workplace.

Dr Jason Ratcliffe
SALHN Trainee Medical Officer, 2020

Clinician engagement

A vibrant and respected clinical workforce, where all levels of clinicians have opportunities to contribute to improving our organisation, results in care that is safe and of high quality.

Clinician engagement is the method, extent and effectiveness of clinician involvement in the design, planning, decision making and evaluation of activities that affect SALHN and its patients.

Clinician engagement must be:

- a genuine 2-way conversation where clinicians are valued and heard
- multi-disciplinary, which is inclusive of, and connects, all clinicians
- driven by a common vision and an agreed purpose.

The enabling factors for clinician engagement¹ include:

- keeping patients at the centre of our decisions
- focusing on improvement
- building relationships and networks
- having open and transparent communication
- building trust, psychological safety and respect
- developing skills and creating a learning environment.

Our strategy incorporates our operating principle to "Listen, Act, Make Better, Together". This is a commitment to our community that also applies to our clinicians. The strategy for clinician engagement is built on our continuous improvement strategy principles by fostering our staff capacity and capability to create reliable systems. Our integrated management system supports our mission by connecting clinicians from ward to Board.

¹ SA Health, SALHN Clinician Engagement Workshop at the Flinders Medical Centre, 21 March 2018.

The clinician engagement principles and objectives align with the principles of the SALHN Strategic Directions Map and the 4 strategic pillars highlighted below.

1

Our clinical services

To align our clinical services to our community's needs, based on projected population changes over the next decade.

2

Our consumers

To achieve excellence in person and family-centred care by planning, delivering and evaluating our health care that is based on mutually beneficial partnerships between our consumers, families, health care providers and administrators.

3

Our relationships

To build partnerships to improve and innovate. To be a destination for world class treatment, research and training.

4

Our research

To ensure academic and evidence-based research is aligned to our clinical care

To address the complex care needs of our vulnerable community and population.

Principles



Developing supportive and collaborative relationships

Developing supportive relationships between clinicians is necessary to provide safe, quality care; improve decision-making; and drive excellence. The SALHN People Plan aims to create and enable such a workplace, providing an environment that fosters opportunities for communication and collaboration.

Creating a respectful work environment

Creating a respectful work environment is essential and underpins engagement, empowerment and the psychological safety for our workforce. Our SALHN Clinician Engagement Strategy draws on this framework and uses respect, trust, integrity and inclusivity to underpin our clinician engagement.

Employing a consistent and systematic way to manage and solve problems

We strongly support our staff to solve problems using the “resolve, own, escalation” approach. We encourage problem-solving at the individual and team level. In the event the individual or team-based problem solving can’t come to a satisfactory outcome, we expect staff to escalate the issue through their team huddle, team leader, manager or co-directors and clinical directors. Other pathways to raise actual or emerging issues include the professional leads, continuous improvement unit, safety and quality unit, human resources, or education and training units. These supports are also available 24/7 with after-hour’s coordinators and executive on call.

² SA Health, Discussion Paper: Strategic Framework for Clinician Engagement, 2018.

Objectives

We formulated the 5 key objectives of the Clinician Engagement Strategy through consultation with our clinicians.

<p>1</p> <p>Connecting clinicians</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Collaboration and driving enquiry in improvement, innovation and research</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Providing opportunities for clinicians to feel valued and be heard</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Clear and transparent communication, providing feedback and closing the loop</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Supporting high-functioning multi-disciplinary teams for the best patient care, experience, and outcomes.</p>
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Clinician engagement opportunities



Improvement and research

Understanding and reducing unwarranted variation in clinical care is critical to improving the quality, value and appropriateness of health care³. Introducing innovation with quality improvement principles in mind will also better serve patients⁴. At SALHN, engaging clinicians from all professions will be an essential condition for the success of our quality improvement initiatives. However, we know that clinicians are busy, have limited resources, and are pressured by competing demands. They are interested in resolving clinical issues, improving patient satisfaction, and delivering health care. Still, they are less likely to be attracted to abstract broader concepts that they don't see as relevant to their day-to-day practice⁵. Clinical service planning, the continuous improvement program, the 4 fields of research enquiry, formal structures (e.g. Clinical Council) and change champions will be used to improve communication of purpose, developing and sharing best available evidence and data to a strengthen an inter-disciplinary team approach for quality improvement and research endeavours.



Team-based care

The SALHN Clinician Engagement Strategy aims to increase horizontal leadership (shared, distributed and adaptive) opportunities for clinicians to work collaboratively, with a common purpose. They can set goals with our consumers, make decisions, and share resources and responsibilities for the delivery of best possible patient care, experience, and outcomes. A team approach⁶ involves clinicians from different disciplines, together with the patient, undertaking assessment, diagnosis, intervention, goal setting before creating a coordinated care plan and evaluating outcomes. The patient, their family and carers are involved in discussions about their condition, prognosis and care plan. Identifying goals of care helps to organise and prioritise care and contributes to improved satisfaction, quality-of-life and self-efficacy for patients⁷. SALHN will strengthen the mechanisms to develop shared understanding between patients, family, carers and the clinicians in the multi-disciplinary team and the likely steps required to attain the agreed goals.



Information

We want clinicians to have timely access to meaningful data that helps them excel and innovate. Clinician engagement has been crucial to data integration and analytics across key components of the organisation, including clinical care, organisational performance, research and future planning. SALHN's Digital Strategy brings together people, strategy, technology, process and data for the organisation to achieve rapid improvements in overall digital maturity and health care delivery.



Clinical service planning

SALHN is continuing to strengthen our clinical services planning that will connect our clinical services, teaching, research, staff and services across the organisation. It will engage and support clinical leaders and their teams to plan and deliver safe, reliable and respectful health care to our community. Integrated sub-speciality plans will form part of an integrated planning framework for SALHN. This will be a new way of working. It will require trust, mutual understanding of the issues identified and respectful positive relationships within the care team, as well as engagement and buy in from all clinicians across SALHN.

³ Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, The National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards User Guide for Review of Clinical Variation in Health Care, 2020

⁴ Dixon-Woods M, Amalberti R, Goodman S, Bergman B, Glasziou, P. Problems and promises of innovation: Why healthcare needs to rethink its love/hate relationship with the new, *BMJ Qual Saf* 2011;20(Suppl 1): i47-i51.

⁵ Vonnegut M. Is quality improvement improving quality? A view from the doctor's office. *New England Journal of Medicine* 2007; 357:2652-3.

⁶ Jessup RL. Interdisciplinary versus multidisciplinary care teams: do we understand the difference? *Australian Health Review*, 2007, 31(3):330-331.

⁷ Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, Implementing the Comprehensive Care Standard: Essential elements for comprehensive Care, 2018.





Our clinician engagement and consultation approach

The clinician engagement process has 4 elements⁸



Successful engagement for SALHN will also involve a range of approaches applied across each level of the organisation.



Support for escalation

The SALHN executive and Board strongly support the principle of escalation for problems that cannot be resolved locally. The various structures and systems to enable clinicians to have a voice and to raise any issues are shown in the Appendix A.

⁸ Adapted from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum (International Federation, 2014) and Safer Care Victoria's Clinicians as partners: A framework for clinician engagement, 2017.

Example of clinician engagement: Mentoring project in the emergency department

The Quality Mentoring Project in the FMC Emergency Department has existed since 2017. It is a multi-tiered mentoring scheme with a buddy-system for interns – facilitated by junior trainees, intermediate trainees mentoring general JMOs and consultants mentoring trainees. The coordination and education of both mentees and mentors is organised and carried out by an appointed Mentoring Coordinator. By the end of the first year the project had close to a 95% participation rate and the evaluation at the end of that

year revealed not only improved understanding of mentoring and its use but also reflected a positive influence on overall job satisfaction within the department. The success of the project resulted in subsequent development of the Fellows4Fellows mentoring project within SA, where senior emergency physicians mentor junior emergency physicians on a state-wide basis. A majority of the emergency physicians engaged in this are from SALHN. We hope to strengthen the project even further in the next years with more education and increased uptake from the general junior medical officer group.

Governing Board: Provide leadership, governance and oversight

Priority Areas (2021-24)

Set the agenda

Develop objectives, expectations and good measures

- Manage health service delivery that is safe, high quality and efficient.
- Provide overall governance and oversight, with clear objectives and principles, for the development and implementation of the SALHN clinician engagement strategy.
- Build strong and trusted relationships among the broad range of clinicians across SALHN by increasing horizontal leadership opportunities.
- Recognise the importance of clinical leadership.

Inform

Share information about a problem, opportunity, decision or direction

- Promote best practices in clinician engagement across SALHN

Involve and collaborate

Improve structures, processes and support for consultation and debate

- Create opportunities for clinicians to interact and have structured and unstructured conversations with Board members on a regular basis (e.g. Staff forums with Board members, Board member area visits and conversations).
- Continuously consult and seek feedback from clinicians about the provision of health services.

Empower

Invest in skills, capabilities and opportunities to lead change and recognise contributions

- Ensure clinicians from diverse disciplines drive system-level improvement and innovation.
- Monitor the impact of the strategy, explore further options to more comprehensively understand changes in clinician engagement over time, and adjust our path if needed.

SALHN Executive: Drive enquiry in improvement, innovation and research

Priority Areas (2021-22)

Priority Areas (2023-24)

Set the agenda

Develop objectives, expectations and good measures

- Develop an Integrated Clinical Services Planning Framework for SALHN.
- Include selected clinician engagement measures into the SALHN Pulse and staff surveys to establish a baseline and future improvement targets.

- Strengthen mechanisms beyond remuneration to recognise and celebrate the contributions clinicians make to the health service (e.g. SALHN Excellence Award, Local Heroes Award, the website, forums and conferences).

Inform

Share information about a problem, opportunity, decision or direction

- Develop a clinician-focused communications strategy to improve 2-way communications and to obtain clinician feedback to inform decision-making.

- Provide clear, timely and relevant information through face-to-face interactions and by maximising the use of alternative technology (apps, podcasts and videos) to enable collaboration and feedback about how clinician input has influenced decisions.

Involve and collaborate

Improve structures, processes and support for consultation and debate

- Canvass service challenges and opportunities directly and early with clinicians through the SALHN integrated management system and the continuous improvement program to understand the problem and to generate solutions for implementing and reviewing health service initiatives.
- Create opportunities for clinicians to interact and have informal conversations with Executive and leadership staff.

- Increase opportunities for clinicians to voice system concerns (e.g. SALHN Staff forums).
- Create profession specific engagement and leadership opportunities – medical, nursing and midwifery, allied and Aboriginal health.

Empower

Invest in skills, capabilities and opportunities to lead change and recognise contributions

- Create capacity and build the capability and skills of clinicians through education, professional development, training and necessary resources to develop a culture supporting transformation, innovation, quality, improvement and well-being.
- Empower clinicians by ensuring that they have permission, time and space to be involved in research.

- Develop the role of clinical leads in sharing clinical intelligence, influencing strategic decision-making and to lead solutions.

Co-Directors, Heads of Unit, Allied Health Managers, Nursing Directors, and Nursing and Midwifery Unit Managers: Develop high functioning interdisciplinary teams and promote clinical planning and improvement

	Priority Areas (2021-22)	Priority Areas (2023-24)
<p>Set the agenda Develop objectives, expectations and good measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake clinical service planning to deliver safe, reliable and respectful health care to our community and to support staff well-being. - Use job planning, performance review and development to identify areas for staff leadership development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognise excellence and support research, publication, career and personal development of clinicians.
<p>Inform Share information about a problem, opportunity, decision or direction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitate access to communication and ensure organisational communications are distributed appropriately within relevant area of management responsibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure staff awareness of the Quality, Information and Performance Hub and other data dashboards.
<p>Involve and collaborate Improve structures, processes and support for consultation and debate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage and support all clinicians by ensuring they have permission and time to be involved in internal and external system improvement initiatives, strategic planning process, operational delivery, and implementation of business plans at the unit level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop high-functioning interdisciplinary teams with vertical and horizontal leadership opportunities.
<p>Empower Invest in skills, capabilities and opportunities to lead change and recognise contributions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a feedback mechanism to welcome, value and respect feedback. Make it safe to offer feedback and for clinicians to advocate on behalf of patients and themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop skills and provide support to conduct significant clinical improvement projects.

Clinicians:

Better connected, informed, engaged and motivated to lead and influence change

Priority Areas (2021-24)

Set the agenda

Develop objectives, expectations and good measures

- Ensure commitment to evidence-based practice and access tools to support this.
- Gain a greater understanding of the complexity of the health system, how changes can be implemented in their clinical environment, competing priorities, and SALHN's legislative responsibilities.

Inform

Share information about a problem, opportunity, decision or direction

- Constructively advocate for patients and use reporting and escalating systems to advise leaders and management staff of clinician needs at the coal face.
- Provide robust, considered, evidence-based input into operational and strategic decision-making at all levels of the organisation.

Involve and collaborate

Improve structures, processes and support for consultation and debate

- Use innovative skills to deliver a better service in collaboration with other clinicians.
- Support and actively contribute to formal and informal internal and external clinician engagement structures .
- Participate in clinician research and development and professional associations.

Empower

Invest in skills, capabilities and opportunities to lead change and recognise contributions

- Promote innovation and share successful initiatives with other colleagues.
- Develop skills to review and analyse system performance data and evidence for my clinical area, or understand where to get help.
- Identify and develop personal leadership strengths and goals.
- Promote personal and systemic well-being.

Measures of success

SALHN’s Clinician Engagement Strategy, and our clinician’s expectations, will continue to evolve. The strategy includes seeking feedback from our clinicians, evaluating the impact of our plan and continuously improving our approach.

In accordance with the Health Care Regulation 7A under the Health Care Act 2008, we will monitor and report on:	
(i)	The objective of the strategy - Availability of patient safety and outcomes data to clinicians and how information is distributed regularly via a diverse range of channels to develop a clinician-focused communications strategy to ensure clinicians are better connected and informed.
(ii)	How the strategy is contributing to the functions of the governing board - Opportunities for clinicians to be involved in sub speciality clinical services planning, Continuous Improvement Program, the work of the State-wide Clinical Networks and other similar opportunities (e.g. Professional Associations).
(iii)	The manner in which consultation with health professionals is being conducted - Uptake and involvement in job planning and performance reviews to enable clinical teams to deliver the best possible patient care and outcomes.
(iv)	The key issues that form the basis of consultation with health professionals - Mechanisms to recognise excellence in research, support collaboration and innovation, recognise career achievements and the personal development of clinicians.
(v)	How the Governing Board has used the information obtained through the strategy to further improve the strategy - Presence of team approaches to care across SALHN that involves team members from different disciplines working collaboratively, with a common purpose, to set goals, make decisions and share resources and responsibilities.
(vi)	The effectiveness of consultation through a range of measures and public reporting - Uptake and involvement of clinical services planning by the specialities.

A report on key progress, achievements and learnings from clinician engagement will be prepared annually and available on the intranet. The report will include specific feedback from clinical leaders and consideration of specific measures of clinical engagement such as the Medical Engagement Scale (MES).

The Board and executive will use this information to explore further options to more comprehensively understand changes in clinician engagement over time and adjust our path if needed.

Example of allied health engagement:

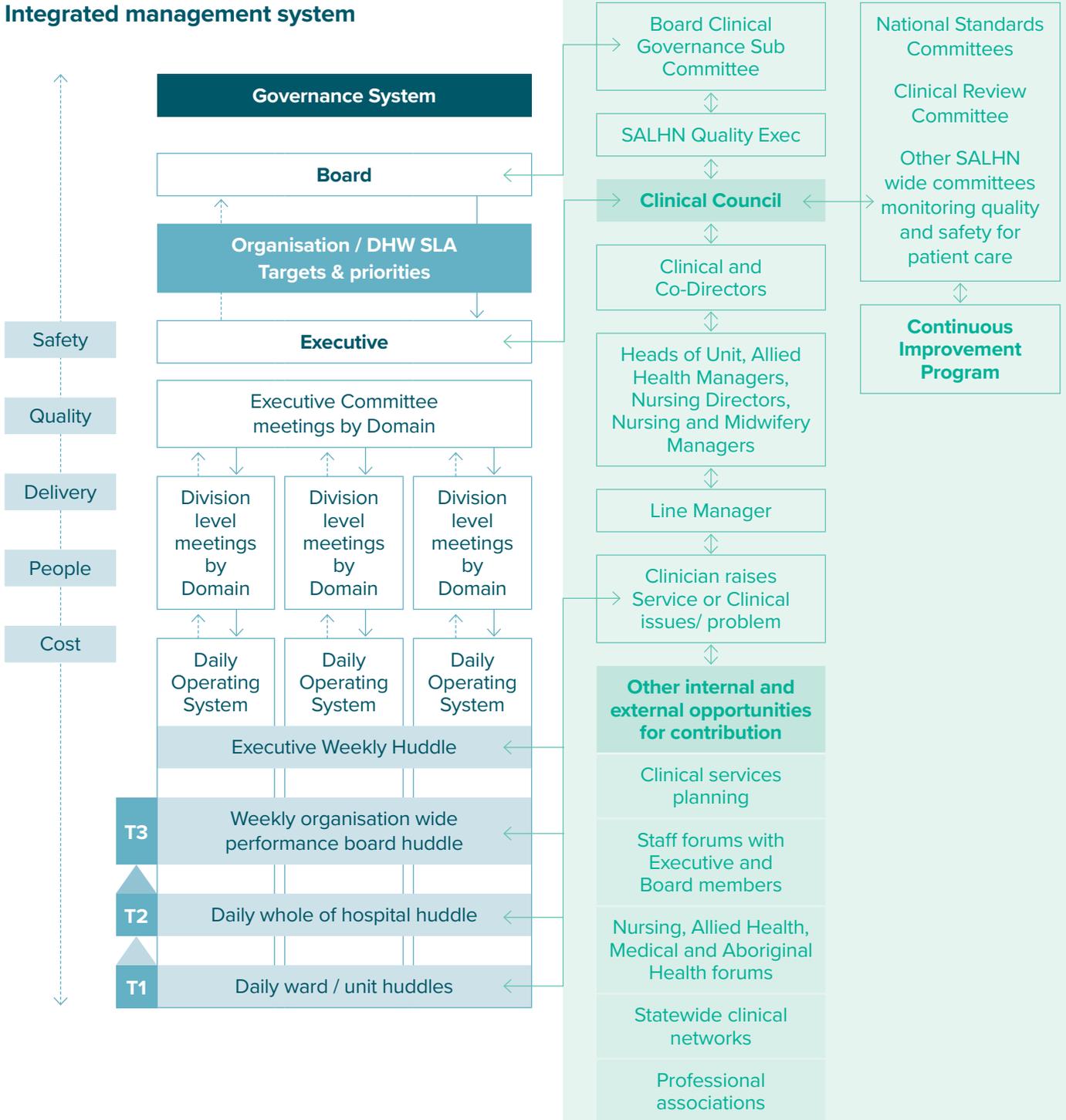
The Allied Health Division at Flinders Medical Centre has a long history of listening and engaging with staff. As early as 2015, we launched our 6-monthly employee net promoter survey (eNPS) to get anonymous feedback to assist in understanding workforce needs. While most feedback in recent surveys has been positive (with good team culture and supportive environment being the most common), areas for improvement included leadership, leadership opportunities (outside the classification structure) and communication. To improve communication the AH Division reinvigorated our monthly forums to include updates from management and started using Teamgage as a platform to improve real-time reporting mechanisms. Teamgage is a web-based platform that allows real-time measurement on metrics (of your choosing) to get a pulse check on staff wellbeing and engagement. Teamgage was used in various single and multi-disciplinary teams across the division to understand and solve problems as they happen.



Annex A:

Engagement and escalating systems (Resolve, Own, Escalate)

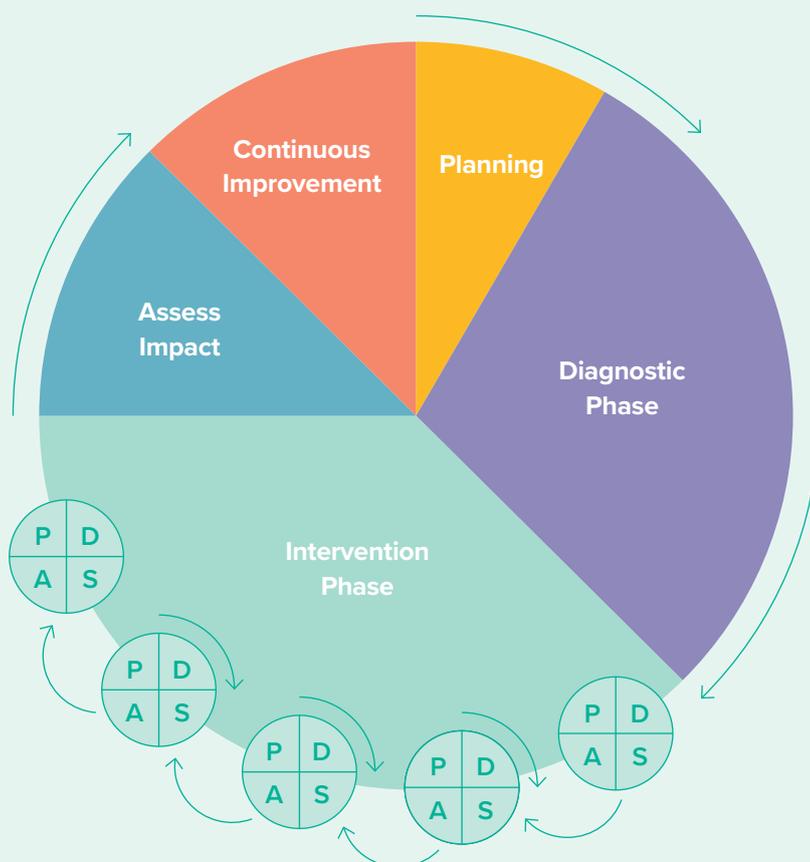
Integrated management system



The SALHN Clinical Council takes a system-wide, strategic view to provide safer and better care for all our patients.

Continuous Improvement Program

SALHN uses the Continuous Improvement (CI) methodology for problem solving to improve the quality of care for patients and to create safer working environments for clinicians. CI is simply the ongoing efforts by clinicians and others to improve systems, processes and services. Measurable improvement is driven by clinicians who work in the system using an 8-step process.



Integrated management system

SALHN's integrated management system connects the organisation from the clinicians working at the ward/unit level through to the Executive and the Governing Board.

It is underpinned by 5 management domains (safety, quality, delivery, people and cost) that help connect clinicians to the strategic directions of the organisation and manage our work on a daily basis.

These discussions happen at each level of the organisation from the front line clinicians to the senior Executive and each feed into the next level. The system is designed to ensure problems can be quickly identified; frontline clinicians are empowered to fix the problems they can, and to escalate the problems they can't.

For more information

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