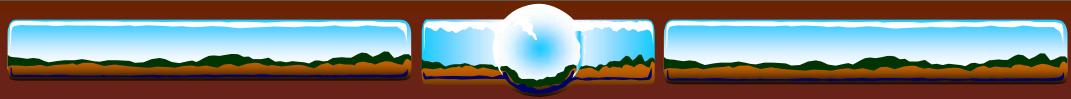


Classification of 'allied health'

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Allied Health Professionals have been defined in many ways over recent years. The most simplistic, collective usage of the phrase "Allied Health" is used to mean health professionals other than doctors and nurses. Organisations and workforce reviews utilising "Allied Health" in their title, narrow the definition to a varied but similar grouping of health professionals. Clarifying the definition of allied health and promoting the understanding of what the allied health professions offer to rural and remote populations in terms of service and outcomes is considered essential for future rural and remote allied health policy development.

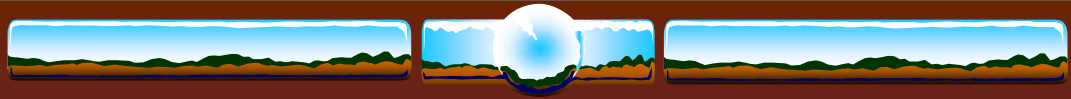


Background

- ❖ Many different understandings and definitions
 - Depends on context of usage
 - Issue or disease related
 - No attempt to classify or define but terminology used without clear direction as to which professional groups are being included.



- ❖ Clarification essential for future rural health policy development
 - ⇒ workforce planning and resource allocation
 - ⇒ benchmarks
 - ⇒ Evidence based recruitment and retention support strategies
 - ⇒ Education and training support structures
 - ⇒ Development of models of best practice allied health service delivery in rural and remote regions
- ❖ Understanding and agreement between key stakeholders to use the definition in strategic policy and program development across State and Commonwealth jurisdictions
- ❖ Must have direct relevance to Australian practice



Methodology

- ❖ Straightforward and pragmatic
 - ⇒ Stage 1 - sample of general definitions
 - ⇒ Stage 2 - collation of definitions used by broad range of key stakeholders.
 - ⇒ Stage 3 - consultation with key stakeholders
- ❖ Has been done before by SARRAH in 2002 – but time for a review



Allied Health Professions?

- ❖ What is a profession?
- ❖ Examples of definition of 'allied health professional'
 - ⇒ key features of professionals that are generally included and which are generally excluded within the broad definition of allied health



Allied/Ancillary/Health Professional/Other?

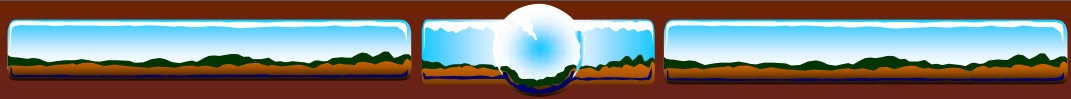
- ❖ Health professional workforce split between ‘medical’, ‘nursing’ and ‘allied/ancillary/health professional/other’.

CONFUSION



Key stakeholders

- ❖ Allied health organisations at state and national level
- ❖ Allied health reference groups/taskforces
- ❖ Commonwealth and State Departments of Health
- ❖ Health Insurers
- ❖ Department of Veteran's Affairs
- ❖ Australian Taxation Office
- ❖ Requirements to register or obtain licence to practice
- ❖ Industrial Awards
- ❖ Australian Bureau of Statistics



Importance of being 'Allied'

- ❖ To the medical and nursing professions
- ❖ To the client and the community
- ❖ To a multi-disciplinary approach to health care
- ❖ Particularly important in the rural and remote context when away from services provided by major teaching hospitals and specialist units



Proposal for consideration

There is an urgent need to further categorise the disciplines within the broader health professional workforce. To stimulate discussion the following is proposed:

1. Medical professions (primary qualification is a medical degree)
2. Nursing professions (primary qualification is a nursing degree)



3. Allied health professions (or clinical health professions)

- ❖ *Tertiary qualified*
- ❖ *Apply their skills and knowledge to:*
 - ≡ *Restore and maintain optimal physical, sensory, psychological, cognitive and social function.*
 - ≡ *Prevent and diagnose*
 - ≡ *Minimize disability*
- ❖ *Allied (aligned):*
 - ≡ *To each other and other members of the health professional workforce,*
 - ≡ *To their clients, the client's family, carers and community*
- ❖ *Multidisciplinary*
- ❖ *Working across the health system*

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4. **Public Health Professions**

- ≡ *tertiary qualified*
- ≡ *work with communities and other organisation to create circumstances that promote and protect health, prevent injury, ill health and disease;*
- ≡ *monitor health and implement services to improve life expectancy and the quality of life;*
- ≡ *develop, maintain and report upon health data sets;*
- ≡ *implement disease and injury prevention measures; promote and educate on healthier lifestyles; and protect health through disease prevention services and legislation.*



5. Oral Health Professions

- ≡ *Tertiary qualified*
- ≡ *Involved in dental and oral health services incorporating both direct and indirect patient care*

6. Vocationally Trained Health Workers & Assistants

- ≡ *Generally trained within the vocational sector, may have diploma or advanced diploma level qualifications*
- ≡ *Provide both direct and indirect client care, usually under the guidance of a tertiary trained health professional*
- ≡ *Provide support and assistance to members of the health professional workforce*
- ≡ *May provide a variety of health services in the absence of members of the tertiary trained health professional workforce*



7. Clinical Support Health Professions

- ⇒ *Tertiary trained*
- ⇒ *Involved indirectly with client care, providing services to the clinical professions in areas such as*
 - ❖ *client records,*
 - ❖ *health information management systems,*
 - ❖ *hospital libraries,*
 - ❖ *e-health,*
 - ❖ *research & development;*
 - ❖ *technical support & maintenance; and*
 - ❖ *information technology.*



8. Complementary/Alternative/Natural Therapy Health Professions

- ≡ *May have tertiary qualifications from either recognised universities or from private institutions or training from the vocational sector*
- ≡ *Involved in direct client contact providing direct assessment and treatment*
- ≡ *service provision is directed towards the philosophy of a holistic approach to health and wellbeing*
- ≡ *do not work as part of a recognised multidisciplinary team and are not recognised as “allied” to other members of the health professional workforce.*



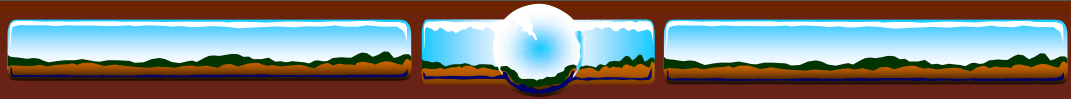
The health workforce also comprises professions that are multi-sectorial:

9. Administrative Professions

- ⇒ *involved primarily with the administration and management of health services*
- ⇒ *involvement with the community involves the planning of health services.*

10. Other Professions

- ⇒ *Professions or Artisans with or without a recognised tertiary qualification who provide motivational, psychological and rehabilitation support services for clients.*



Need for pragmatic approach

- ❖ Professional groupings may change over time
- ❖ Recognise that new professions are emerging
- ❖ Numerous other members of the rural and remote health workforce who may be included in a broader, more loosely defined categories such as 'allied health worker' or 'allied health service provider'
- ❖ Workforce reform will have an impact



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