How collaboration between a rural clinical school and local hospital improved work readiness in students and patient safety.

Throughout any year students from two universities in the disciplines of medicine and allied health participate in placements at our regional hospital. In 2012 forty-six medical students spent between six and nine weeks on placement and seven allied health students spent six months.

Motivation: To provide a comprehensive orientation to health science students undertaking placements at rural and regional hospitals so that they may complete their rotation, fulfilling their educational requirements in a safe manner and meeting the administrative requirements of the hospital.

Problem statement: It was identified that there had been an increase in needlestick injuries, blood and body fluid exposure, and medication errors by students on placement at the local regional hospital. The orientation to equipment or roles and responsibilities relating to safety in this area was inconsistent and some students were not receiving orientation to the hospital at all. Students entered the hospital with limited understanding of the legislative requirements for confidentiality or other hospital responsibilities and agreements.

Approach: The rural clinical school worked to support and assist the hospital to adhere to CHSA accreditation standards. It was decided to create and implement an orientation program at the rural clinical school to cover these areas of significance, in the best interest of patient safety and the wellbeing of the students on placement. A questionnaire was developed to gather student feedback in regard to the value of the orientation.

Results: The value of the orientation to the student has been measured since its introduction in early 2012. This poster will present the results, which ideally will find minimal OH&S incidents amongst students on placement and greater confidence in transition to placement.

Conclusion: This poster will demonstrate the necessity of appropriate orientation to health science students on clinical placement. Our orientation model will develop a benchmark for all rural clinical school students on placements.