How one AMS is closing the gap—the power of data

Garry Hansford
Goondir Health Services, QLD

An efficient data reporting system is integral to planning, delivering, monitoring and evaluating primary health care services, particularly those that proactively aim to close the gap. Most services periodically report on national closing the gap efforts, real time data management and reporting is required to ensure operational targets are achieved; operations are continually improved; and quality, safety and risk are all managed.

One health provider with multiple clinics across 160,000 square kilometres in regional Queensland has developed and implemented a reporting system that provides clinicians, managers and the executive with up-to-date data that allow quick evaluations and informed clinical and management decisions to be made.

The Clinic Performance Dashboard combines clinical data from the patient record information system, organisational data from the quality management system and financial data into one service planning and management tool. It was developed to overcome service coordination and delivery challenges in a multidisciplinary clinical setting working with over 1,800 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, many diagnosed with multiple chronic diseases.

The Dashboard operates at a number of levels, with data tailored to suit multiple audiences. There's a 'one page' overview with the high level performance metrics of most interest to executives and the Board; there's a 'snapshot view' of key metrics that managers use to plan and evaluate service delivery; behind which lies the detailed data and analyses that allow team leaders and clinicians to drill down to what matters for them.

The Dashboard helps management define what is important, educates staff about the things that matter, sets goals and expectations for clinics, teams and individuals, helps the executive sleep at night because they know what's going on, encourages action to be taken sooner rather than later to address issues and problems, communicates progress and success. Most importantly, the Dashboard provides a 'place', a common interface for interacting with and analysing important organisational data, and places the patient and the community at the centre of all of health services activities.

Where once the organisation relied on multiple data sources and anecdotal advice to guide service planning, the Dashboard now provides clear evidence which can be accessed by staff, managers and the executive to inform decision-making that can lead to successful service delivery and improved health outcomes.

In this presentation the Dashboard will be showcased, the development process explained, and policy implications explored.