

2020

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR
THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

**BIANNUAL UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FINAL REPORT: INDEPENDENT
REVIEW INTO THE WORKPLACE CULTURE WITHIN ACT PUBLIC
HEALTH SERVICES
AND
RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION 75 OF THE SELECT
COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2019-20 REPORT: HEALTH CULTURE
SURVEY**

**Presented by
Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA
Minister for Health
2 April 2020**

This statement is made following the commitment of the former Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Ms Fitzharris, on 16 May 2019 to providing the Assembly with biannual updates on the actions being taken in response to the Independent Review into the Workplace Culture within ACT Public Health Services.

I am also tabling today the executive summaries of the survey results for both the ACT Health Directorate and Canberra Health Services in response to Recommendation 75 of the Select Committee on Estimates Report, which recommended that ACT Health Directorate, Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce's culture survey results be tabled within one month of receiving the results.

As was highlighted in the Government Response, the three arms of the ACT Public Health Service are undertaking the surveys individually. This means that each arm has different timing for their survey and also different schedules for discussing results with staff, which is an important aspect of the survey itself. As was noted in the Government response, sharing the outcomes with staff is the first priority and is an important sign of respect for the time they have taken to share their views and experiences.

This means it was not possible to table the results of these two surveys within one month. I understand Calvary Public Hospital Bruce was intending to undertake their survey in the near-future however this may be delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In September 2019, I provided members with the first update where the emphasis was on the initiation and planning phase of the system-wide program of work. The objective has been to engage and guide the

workforce through real change to improve the culture across the public health system.

Today I will provide members with an update on the considerable work that has progressed against the recommendations in the Review; at a system-wide level, and within each of the three arms of the public health system.

As has been acknowledged from the start, facilitating significant change to transform culture takes time. Much of the work to date is foundational but will ultimately drive embedded and sustained cultural change for the ACT public health system. The shared aim across the system is to create an environment where the workforce feels supported, valued and empowered to deliver exceptional health care and enhance patient and consumer outcomes and experience.

I would like to outline the activities undertaken to date to progress this important work.

Strong Governance

A strong governance framework continues to oversee the program of work. The Culture Review Oversight Group, which I chair, has met on five occasions, with the purpose of the group being to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the Final Report. The Culture Review Implementation Steering Group, chaired by the Director-General of the ACT Health Directorate, which facilitates the implementation of the recommendations of the Review, has met nine times.

Engagement with key stakeholders across the health system continues through a range of fora including the:

- NGO Leadership Group;
- ACT Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board; including the appointment of chairs to two newly created working groups, the Research Working Group and the Workforce Education and Training Working Group;
- Clinical Leadership Forum; and
- Professional Colleges Advisory Committee.

These fora provide an opportunity to improve engagement through communicating goals and objectives, monitoring progress, sharing information and resources and increasing the frequency and value of communication in order to provide high quality health care.

All three organisations in the ACT public health system continue to embed and incorporate their vision, values and desired behaviours into organisational and people-related practices. This has also included deliberate integration into strategic and business planning processes. That means organisation wide strategic planning through to divisions and smaller work areas right through to integrating into individual performance discussions and planning.

Progress over the last six months

Over the last six months, a range of initiatives have commenced that will continue to progress over the coming months.

For example, planning has been underway to convene a Senior Clinicians and Administrators' summit between ACT Health Directorate, Canberra Health Service and Calvary Public Hospital in mid-2020 in support of recommendation four. I acknowledge the considerable effort and progress made in this area and am excited to see how this will continue to develop and influence a positive culture. However, I think we would all recognise that any initiatives requiring face-to-face gatherings are likely to be restricted for some time.

ACT Health has focussed on re-establishing open lines of communication with the non-government organisation sector in the ACT and has established the NGO Leadership Group. This is a positive commitment made to re-engaging and rebuilding trust amongst important service providers.

In response to recommendation eight, discussions are underway between the ACT and NSW governments in renegotiating the memorandum of understanding for regional collaboration. Initial discussions are positive and augers well for future collaboration.

To progress recommendation 11, Canberra Health Services has recently finalised recruitment to a project officer position to assess the Choosing Wisely initiative as a mechanism for improving safety and quality of care.

In response to recommendation 14 of the Review, ACT Health has engaged Workplace Research Associates Pty Ltd to undertake a review of the HR functions across all three organisations within the ACT public health system. The HR Review will enable the assessment of each organisations current state and outline recommendations supporting the maturation of HR models to enhance future organisational requirements.

This will actively support the application and maturity of people required to foster positive cultural change within each organisation and across the ACT public health system. It is anticipated that the HR Review will articulate the HR functions, resourcing requirements and capabilities required to deliver on strategic and operational commitments.

Both the ACT Health Directorate and Canberra Health Service have reviewed their recruitment processes, including recruitment focussed learning and development programs, to ensure selection panel members and delegates are supported in undertaking these activities and understand their responsibilities.

A range of foundational work is being undertaken across the public health system including mapping the application of the Respect, Equity and Diversity (RED) Framework in the three public health organisations. The purpose of this work is to strengthen the use of the RED Contact Officer network by staff and identify further opportunities to enhance the RED Framework across the ACT public health system.

A similar process has been initiated with mapping the complaints and grievance process to ensure there is consistent application of relevant policies, processes, procedures and role clarity. These activities are assessed as integral to building the confidence of our workforce and promoting a healthier culture, as well as an opportunity to explore how we can improve our processes.

A Culture Review Implementation Communications and Engagement Strategy has been developed through consultation with key stakeholders across the three arms of the public health system and the culture governance committees. This is supported by an Action Plan for phase

one with the main aim being to foster engagement with employees and to increase awareness of the rationale and the motivation for developing positive workplaces and culture.

The Inaugural Annual Review of the Culture Review Implementation is currently being undertaken by Mick Reid, who also chaired the panel that undertook the initial review. This annual review will enable us to measure the extent of implementation of the recommendations from the Review and the impact this has had on our workforce culture.

Staff Surveys

ACT Health Directorate and Canberra Health Service separately conducted their Staff Surveys in November 2019. Best Practice Australia conducted the surveys on behalf of each organisation and provided leadership group and staff briefings for the two organisations in February 2020. The engagement rates by staff within both organisations were the highest since implementation of the surveys in 2005. The high level of staff engagement is acknowledged and appreciated. The results from both surveys indicate improvement from previous results.

Both organisations have communicated results to their workforce. The leaders of the ACT Health Directorate and Canberra Health Services are working with their workforce to develop a strategic approach to concentrate on identified areas for improvement. This is further supported by the significant system-wide work underway in developing enduring cultural change. Our deliberate strategic approach acknowledges that there is more work to be done and outlines an ambitious approach to support workplaces to thrive.

Organisational and cultural change takes time to achieve sustainable results. The partnership with the Australian National University, Research School of Management to develop the ACT Public Health System Workplace Change Framework provides an evidence-based approach to organisational and cultural change.

ACT Public Health System Workplace Change Framework

The partnership with the ANU is a critical component in the ACT Government's deliberate investment in a systematic and coordinated method in approaching the people aspect of health services which will underpin the approach to managing future culture change.

The partnership was established to develop an ACT Public Health System Workplace Change Framework to shape initiatives through a co-design process. The Framework is being informed by the recommendations from The Review and assessment of available evidence such as literature reviews and engagement with professionals through facilitated conversations to understand ACT specific factors.

Several important themes were identified as a result of the ANU team's engagement with stakeholders. These included an acknowledgement that investment is needed in leadership and management capabilities; factors that support individual performance and development; team effectiveness, psychological safety and workplace behaviour; and organisational processes that facilitate the management of grievances and complaints.

It is worth recognising that these themes are consistent with the findings from the Staff Surveys and the Review, and further support the consideration, planning and development of focused initiatives.

The Workplace Change Framework is being developed to effectively address the people and organisational behaviour recommendations outlined in the Review. The Framework is designed as a logic model and is underpinned by behavioural change theory. It encompasses a program of evidence-based interventions with measurable outcomes.

This Framework will be an important tool to ensure prioritisation of efforts and resources in focusing on actions that will have maximum positive impact for our workforce. This will assist in targeting implementation and incorporate evaluation methodology that will track progress and enable reporting of achievements. The model will support ACT public health services to create behaviour change across the system and measure the impacts of specific initiatives.

The ANU team presented the evidence and findings underpinning the draft Workplace Change Framework to the Culture Review Implementation Steering Group in late January and the Culture Review Oversight Group in February 2020.

Supporting the Framework, the ANU team has developed Rapid Evidence Assessments and Critically Appraised Topics to ensure there is a clear understanding of the main elements highlighted in the report. The Rapid Evidence Assessments identify:

- themes and assumptions that underpin initiatives and interventions;

- organisation variables that require addressing prior to implementation;
- impacts of previous interventions;
- moderating factors; and
- considerations to increase the likelihood of success.

Further consultation will occur across the health system to ensure feedback on the draft Framework prior to finalisation in late March 2020.

This is a deliberate and considered approach to building a positive culture, and it will take time. We are investing in a coordinated approach, informed by our people and based on the best evidence available. We are fortunate to have ready access to the knowledge and expertise available at ANU to invest in the future of our ACT public health system.

There is so much more going on across the public health system – including the finalisation of Canberra Health Services' Occupational Violence Strategy and upcoming implementation of the Better A&E model across our emergency departments; and the rollout of two Vanderbilt-style programs at Calvary Public Hospital Bruce.

It is essential that our workforce feel safe, supported, valued and engaged. For that to occur, engagement will be frequent to guide our workforce through meaningful change to improve the culture.

The effect of this will be a better public health system for the Canberra community, and a healthier staff culture.

ENDS