



Gold Coast Primary Health Care Protocol

Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service
July 2023

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1. Purpose

This protocol reflects the partnership between the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service (GCHHS) and the Gold Coast Primary Health Network (GCPHN), and their engagement of other leading primary care organisations on the Gold Coast.

The protocol recognises the important roles that both acute and primary care sectors play in the delivery of health services. By strengthening relationships and integration of health sectors, key objectives can be achieved, and performance requirements met, such as those set by the National Health Performance Authority.

This document is not a legal instrument. It is, rather, a foundation to guide and support effective collaboration to improve the overall health and wellbeing of the Gold Coast population.

This protocol:

- Encourages parties to partner in planning and delivering health services
- Identifies a range of priority program areas and projects to progress over the next three years
- Agrees principles underpinning an effective partnership approach
- Outlines governance expectations to support delivery of actions
- Promotes a joint approach to leverage our strengths and improve healthcare access and overall wellbeing for the Gold Coast population.

This protocol is published in accordance with the requirements of section 42 of the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 and section 22 of the Hospital and Health Boards Regulation 2023.

2. Background

The range of health care providers and services involved in the delivery of primary health care across the Gold Coast is diverse. Medical, nursing and allied health professionals deliver services in a myriad of settings, including general practice, pharmacies, community-based clinics and centres, aged care facilities and more frequently within consumer's homes or via telehealth. Other certified healthcare providers are involved in supporting the activities of daily living for consumers, including the provision of home or centre-based respite for carers. Services are also tailored to address specific requirements for diverse population groups, including multicultural and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, people with disabilities and LGBTIQ+ people. Acute care, both emergency and elective, for physical and mental ill health is provided via a network of public and private hospitals, community health centres/precincts and home-based care.

Health information and education are made accessible through health promotion events held at venues across the Gold Coast, through in-person or online support groups, as well as online information sources such as health-focused apps and websites.

The demand for health and wellbeing services continues to grow due to the triple impact of local high population growth rates, population ageing, and the increasing burden of chronic disease, partly due to increasing prevalence but also due to longevity and survivorship. Despite the considerable achievements within the acute and primary care sectors, the ability to adequately address consumer demand remains challenging, creating an overreliance on the acute care sector and placing more strain on already overwhelmed emergency departments and acute care beds.

As health care is operating in an environment of significant and constant change, models of care must adapt in order to respond effectively to the changing needs of the community. These new models of care must support optimal communication, innovation and collaboration within and between the acute and primary sectors to reduce unnecessary service duplication. This promotes inefficient use of stretched resources and ultimately reduces positive health outcomes across the Gold Coast community.

3. Guiding Principles

The following agreed statements will underpin the nature and purpose of collaboration and co-operation between the parties:

- A Head Agreement between GCHHS and GCPHN (current to 30 June 2024) recognises the benefits achieved through collaboration and establishes the framework for service agreements between parties on joint activities.
- The vision, values and strategic plans for all organisations engaged under this protocol will be mutually respected.
- A cross-sector, multidisciplinary approach is required to meet the health care needs of the Gold Coast population.
- Leadership is required to ensure the most effective functioning across all sectors.
- Successful collaboration will require:
 - openness and transparency, with shared accountability for outcomes and strong joint governance arrangements
 - a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect
 - effective communication, with inclusive, meaningful interactions and sharing of information in a timely manner.
- All services work towards effective integration of information systems and service delivery in a sustainable manner.
- Care is supported through the use of evidence-based guidelines.
- Workforce capacity across all health sectors will be developed and supported.
- Partnership opportunities should be optimised among the public, private and non-government organisations.
- Partnership with consumers is paramount to improve the outcomes, experiences and the delivery of care.

4. Objectives

Current objectives for 2023-2026 are as follows:

- 4.1 Joint participation in population health needs identification and service planning
- 4.2 Mutually agreed programs, including pathways to improve the integration and coordination of care between acute and primary care sectors for identified target groups with specific focus on:
 - a) Improving access to services so consumers receive timely care in the most appropriate setting
 - b) Equitable access for vulnerable populations
 - c) Avoiding preventable hospital presentations and admissions
 - d) Monitoring (and, where possible, improving) transfer of care processes across settings
 - e) Developing appropriate communication systems and processes utilising available technology to support integration.

These align with the GCPHN and GCHHS strategic objectives, as well as several of the priorities outlined in 'Putting Patients First' (Queensland Government 2023).

- 4.3 Refining a GCHHS/GCPHN partnership and engagement framework to support effective collaboration, remove duplication and support clear review and decision-making pathways to maximise positive outcomes for the community.

5. Governance

Collaborative meetings will take place at all levels of the organisation to progress programs of work identified in the workplan at Appendix 1. At a minimum, the following will occur:

- a. Joint Board meeting (annually) to support a shared strategic vision for system-wide planning and delivery of health care services and evaluate program progress and success
- b. Operational working groups (as required) to progress individual work programs.

Miscellaneous

Dispute resolution will be based on the principle of goodwill and compromise. Mutually agreed mediation may be utilised if necessary to reach an agreed outcome or position.

Data sharing will be governed by the Data Sharing Agreement in place between GCHHS and GCPHN. This document also outlines requirements and responsibilities with respect to data confidentiality and publication.

Any media or publication relating to joint programs will be reviewed and agreed by both parties prior to release, will appropriately acknowledge both parties and remain subject to the requirements of confidentiality and intellectual property.

All Intellectual Property created through collaborative project work under the terms of the GCHHS and GCPHN Head Agreement will vest automatically in each party as tenants in common in accordance with each party's contribution.

This protocol is valid from the date of execution for a period of three (3) years.

Appendix 1 Joint Workplan 2023-26

Priority Area	Work Program	Organisational Representative
Joint Planning		
	Local Area Needs Assessment (GCHHS, GCPHN, Kalwun)	
	Joint Regional Planning (Mental Health – children and youth, MH – adult and older person, Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD), Suicide Prevention)	
	Joint Regional Planning – Older people (commencing late 2023)	
	Joint Regional Planning reporting (GCPHN Board and GCHHS Board)	
Joint commissioning		
	After Hours Safe Space (jointly commissioned), The Way Back Support Service	
Service Development and Delivery		
Mental Health	Better Care Mental Health and AOD initiatives (partial)	
	Opioid Replacement Shared Care	
	Clozapine Shared Care	
	AOD Transition of Care (Inpatient AOD to/from community-based AOD Residential Treatment)	
	GP Psychiatry Line	
	Eating Disorders	
	NDIS application pathways Kids H2H Hub	
	Service Delivery Space in the Northern Gold Coast Region	
	Mental Health Symposium (deferred to early 2024)	
Public Health	Gold Coast Public Health Unit – Immunisation	

Palliative and Aged Care	Palliative and Aged Care Leadership Group (Specialist Palliative Care in Aged Care (SPACE), Residential Aged Care Facility Support Service (RASS), Advanced Care Planning (ACP), Community Palliative Care)	
	Specialist Palliative Care in Aged Care (SPACE) Team contract with GCPHN	
	Community Palliative Care (committee)	
	Advance Care Planning service (provision of resources)	
	Residential Aged Care Facility Support Service (RASS) team – Residential Aged Care Homes – contract with GCPHN to increase services	
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health	Mungulli – contract with GCPHN to increase services	
	Closer To Country Initiatives	
Voluntary Assisted Dying	GCPHN funds a General Practitioner to sit on the Voluntary Assisted Dying Committee – reports back to the Palliative Aged Care Leadership Group	
New clinics	Urgent Care Centre	
	Tugun Minor Injury and Illness Centre	
	Endometriosis Clinic	
System Support	Disaster – human and social response and recovery (flood funding)	
	Community Advisory Groups / Councils	
	Health Literacy	
	GCHHS Community Services Report Steering Committee	
	Collaborative Dialogue Process	
	Digital/ICT (liaison/information sharing/collaboration)	
	Primary Sense - proactively screens consumers with high risk of hospitalisation and identifies risk factors for long stay	

	HealthPathways	
Data Sharing	GP Liaison Unit/GP Partnerships and Engagement – data sharing agreement for 6-month Smart Referrals and Queensland Health Provider Portal activity usage	

