

Strategic Plan

2019–2022





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Message from the Minister for Health

Modern health systems rely on good data and reliable feedback.

The data and feedback help inform us when we make decisions about where to put more resources and to track improvements over time.

As we all strive for better healthcare and better outcomes for patients, we know the Bureau of Health Information (BHI) is busy gathering the data which will help us make good decisions for patients, their families and for the 117,047 outstanding health professionals who make up the workforce.

Over a decade, BHI has independently done this valuable work. It has measured performance and it has sought the views of patients. The results have made us more transparent and more accountable.

BHI reports have given us both positive and negative feedback and they have helped us to continue building a health system dedicated to excellence in care.

I congratulate BHI on a decade of strong leadership and look forward to seeing how it can help us continue to provide world class care where the patient is at the centre of everything we do.

Brad Hazzard

Minister for Health

Minister for Medical Research

“BHI reports have given us both positive and negative feedback and they have helped us to continue building a health system dedicated to excellence in care.”

Message from the Board Chair and Chief Executive

This *Strategic Plan 2019–2022* marks 10 years since the Bureau of Health Information (BHI) was established by the NSW Government to deliver timely, accurate and comparable information on the performance of the NSW public healthcare system.

The process of developing this plan has given us the opportunity to take stock of BHI's growth and development over the past decade, during which we have established a strong reputation as an independent, trusted and fair provider of healthcare performance information.

The *Strategic Plan 2019–2022* demonstrates our continued commitment to provide high quality information that is meaningful both within and outside the health system, supporting improvement and strengthening accountability.

Looking forward, BHI has determined our goals and priorities in response to the needs of our stakeholders, who are working in an increasingly complex and dynamic health system, to deliver better outcomes for patients and better value to the health system.

Through purposeful engagement and collaboration, we will ensure that BHI's work aligns with and responds to health system priorities, providing actionable insights in areas that matter to patients.

“Through purposeful engagement and collaboration, we will ensure that BHI's work aligns with and responds to health system priorities, providing actionable insights in areas that matter to patients.”

This strategic plan reflects the concerted efforts of our staff and many stakeholders, whose valuable input has been central to its development. We would like to thank the NSW Ministry of Health, local health districts, specialty networks and our fellow pillar organisations for their considered advice.

We would also like to thank the BHI Board for its unwavering support and guidance during the development of this plan and for continuing to oversee and monitor its implementation.

BHI will continue to build on our successes and seize new opportunities to maximise our impact on behalf of the people of NSW and enhance our value to all those working to improve patients' experiences and outcomes.

Professor Carol Pollock

Board Chair

Dr Diane Watson

Chief Executive

Introduction to the Bureau of Health Information

About BHI

BHI is a board-governed statutory health corporation that produces independent reports and information about the performance of the healthcare system in NSW.

Using advanced data analytics, data visualisation and communications, we deliver reports and information products that describe key aspects of healthcare performance for a range of audiences in ways that align with the priorities of consumer, healthcare and policy audiences.

We provide this information to strengthen accountability and support system-wide and local improvements in patients' healthcare experiences and outcomes. Public reporting of this information enhances transparency and understanding of healthcare performance for consumers and local communities.

We work closely with the Ministry of Health and other pillar organisations including the NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation, NSW Clinical Excellence Commission, Health Education and Training Institute, and Cancer Institute of NSW to support the health system to deliver on NSW Government and NSW Health priorities.

A brief history

BHI was established by the NSW Government in 2009 in response to the Special Commission of Inquiry into Acute Care Services in NSW Public Hospitals and a call for greater transparency of health information, with a focus on information about the safety and quality of clinical care.

At the time, Commissioner Peter Garling SC observed:

"I am firmly convinced that the public reporting of information about the health system and hospital performance is essential for the future of NSW Health. It is the single most important driver (or lever) for the creation of public confidence in the health system, engagement of clinicians, improvement and enhancement of clinical practice and cost efficiency."

From 2009, BHI established quarterly and annual reports, and also started to focus on specific health topics (e.g. maternity care, clinical variation).

In 2011, BHI's unique role was recognised in the NSW Health Secretary's report, *Future Governance Arrangements for NSW Health*, stating that it would:

"...clearly delineate the role of the Bureau as the system 'expert' in analysis and reporting of patient outcome information to the public and to clinicians."

In 2012, the management of the NSW Patient Survey Program was transferred to BHI from the NSW Ministry of Health.

In 2013, BHI published hospital-level risk-adjusted mortality and readmission ratios for a suite of conditions – a first for Australia.

Over the course of the *Strategic Plan 2015–2019* we have:

- introduced detailed quarterly reporting on ambulance performance
- introduced patient surveys covering maternity care, small and rural hospitals, breast screening and outpatient cancer clinics
- published in-depth assessments of care for specific population groups, including children, people with a disability and Aboriginal people
- undertaken detailed development work in relation to measuring and reporting on new areas, such as patient safety and mental health.

In August 2018, BHI published our eighth annual report to the Minister for Health and Parliament on the NSW public health system – *Healthcare in Focus*. In December 2018, BHI released the 34th issue of *Healthcare Quarterly* – our regular report on the performance of NSW public hospitals and ambulance services.

Information for safer, better value care

Useful, accurate information based on evidence is an essential building block of a healthcare system that provides world-class care and puts patient safety first.

Clinicians and other healthcare professionals rely on robust, comparative information to help them identify opportunities to improve care. It can help identify those leading the way towards safer, better value care and encourage the sharing of good practice. Such information also helps gauge the impact of improvement efforts and health policy in NSW.

It is increasingly accepted that a virtuous circle of improvement and accountability is enhanced when trusted information about healthcare performance is made readily available to those responsible for improvements. These improvements are further stimulated when information about the performance of local health services is also made publicly available.¹

Transparency about healthcare and the performance of particular health services allows consumers and local communities – and those who act on their behalf – to hold their local health services to account. Such information may also empower consumers to better participate in decisions about their own health and care.

Evidence shows that public reporting has an impact on healthcare providers, specifically clinicians. Improvement efforts are stimulated by public reporting in a way that internal reporting of the same data does not always achieve.^{2,3} The motivation for change is considered to be professional pride and reputational standing.^{4,5} This is particularly true where comparative information is objective, actionable, meaningful, timely and accurate.⁶

BHI is an influential partner in international collaborations and implements international best practice in responsible reporting to maximise impact and enhance value.

1. Totten AM, Wagner J, Tiwari A, O'Haire C, Griffin J, Walker M. Closing the Quality Gap: Revisiting the State of the Science (vol. 5: Public reporting as a quality improvement strategy). *Evid Rep Technol Assess (Full Rep)*. 2012;(208.5):1-645.
2. Hibbard JH, Stockard J, Tusler M. Hospital performance reports: impact on quality, market share, and reputation. *Health Aff (Millwood)* 2005;24(4):1150–60.
3. Bevan G, Hamblin R. Hitting and missing targets by ambulance services for emergency calls: effects of different systems of performance measurement within the UK. *J R Stat Soc Ser A Stat Soc* 2009;172(1):161–90.
4. Contandriopoulos D, Champagne F, Denis JL. The multiple causal pathways between performance measures' use and effects. *Med Care Res Rev* 2014;71(1):3–20.
5. Hamblin R. Regulation, measurements and incentives. The experience in the US and UK: does context matter? *J R Soc Promot Health* 2008;128(6):291–98.
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Context for this strategic plan

Safer, better value care

Healthcare worldwide is changing, along with the needs and expectations of patients, carers, clinicians and communities. People are living longer with chronic medical conditions. Healthcare inflation is a constant challenge for most systems. Unexplained and sometimes unwarranted clinical variation persists. Consumers are developing higher expectations as to when, how and where care is delivered. In common with other health systems around the world, NSW is responding to these challenges and making the shift from volume-based to value-based care. This involves system-wide approaches that improve health outcomes that matter to patients, the experience of giving and receiving care, and the effectiveness and efficiency of care.

Identifying and addressing gaps in the appropriateness and effectiveness of care, and the strengthening of system integration and accountability are among the emerging strategic priorities for the NSW health system. There is a clear recognition of the fundamental importance of listening to the voices of patients regarding their experiences and the outcomes of their care.

Health information landscape

The landscape of health information in NSW is changing in response to emerging system priorities. There is growing interest from healthcare providers in meaningful information to support better decision making. Demand is increasing for more contextualised performance information, longitudinal data and use of linked data sources to provide more meaningful and coherent pictures of the performance of health services, clinical units and clinical teams. There is a clear need to address gaps in information on performance and patient outcomes. Information also needs to be tailored to the needs of different audiences if acceleration of system-wide and local improvements is to be achieved.

Shaping our strategy

This third BHI strategic plan supports NSW Health strategic priorities, in particular:

- Patient Safety First
- Leading Better Value Care
- Digital Health and Analytics
- Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing.

This plan has been developed with extensive input from a wide range of stakeholders, including local health district and specialty network chief executives and managers, Ministry of Health staff, pillar chief executives, directors of clinical governance, consumer organisations and others.

What we heard from stakeholders was a clear acknowledgement of the importance of transparency within the health system and to consumers, and the unique value and skills of BHI and its staff.

We also heard that BHI has established a reputation for: objectivity and accuracy; creative and effective communication; and fair and independent comparative reporting of performance on behalf of the people of NSW. In an independent 2018 survey, conducted by Roy Morgan Research on behalf of BHI, 86% of our stakeholders agreed that we report objectively and fairly and 88% rated us as trustworthy.

Context for this strategic plan

New opportunities

Conversations with stakeholders have helped us identify opportunities for the future. In response, we will provide more useful and timely information to support improvement and accountability, especially in clinical areas. This will include continuing to identify trends and variation in performance on particular measures, but will also broaden to include identifying patterns across multiple measures – for example, identifying hospitals that are ‘fast improvers’ across various aspects of performance.

We will increase our focus on triangulating analysis and using linked data to help identify associations between different measures of performance, experience and outcomes. We will also seek to encourage greater use of the NSW Patient Survey Program data for which we are data custodian.

Our publications will help in broadening public understanding of quality in healthcare beyond the traditional focus on access to care and waiting times.

BHI has also identified opportunities to:

- improve the ‘relevance and helpfulness’ of our information products
- focus on brevity
- significantly enhance our website and data portal, making information easy to find, interpret and use
- clearly articulate the role of our patient survey program in the contemporary patient feedback landscape.

BHI aims to work more closely with those within the health system on information for improvement, while maintaining our objectivity and editorial independence. This will include, through our analysis and reporting, supporting other pillars to fulfil their roles around understanding the causes of variation in performance and identifying solutions to improve patients’ experiences and outcomes. We will work with NSW Health colleagues to support consistent and complementary system-wide approaches in key areas, guided for, example, by the NSW Health Analytics Framework and the Patient Reported Measures Framework.

BHI will seek to align its work programs more closely with the priorities of our consumer, health professional and policy audiences, and openly engage and respond to them.

The functions of BHI as determined by the NSW Minister for Health:

- To prepare and publish regular reports on the performance of the NSW Public Health System, including the safety and quality, effectiveness, efficiency and responsiveness of the system to the health needs of the people of NSW
- To provide an annual report to the Minister and Parliament on the performance of the NSW Public Health System
- To publish reports benchmarking the performance of the NSW Public Health System with comparable health systems
- To establish and maintain a website providing information and analysis on the performance of the NSW Public Health System, including tools for data analysis
- To develop reports and tools to enable analysis of the performance of health services, clinical units and clinical teams across the NSW Public Health System
- To undertake analysis of data at the request of the Health Secretary to:
 - support planning and oversight for effective, efficient and safe health services in NSW
 - meet NSW national commitments on Health (including but not limited to commitments arising from the National Health Reform Agreement)
- To advise the NSW Ministry of Health on the quality of existing data sets and the development of enhanced information analysis and reporting to support performance reporting to clinicians, the community and Parliament
- To undertake and/or commission research to support the performance by the Bureau of its functions
- To liaise with other bodies and organisations undertaking reporting on the performance of health systems in Australia and internationally
- To provide advice to the Minister for Health and the Health Secretary on issues arising out of its functions.

Key facts and figures from our 2018 stakeholder survey*:

85%

rate us positively on the extent to which we are fulfilling our purpose

92%

rate the validity and strength of our measures positively

77%

find our reports and products helpful

62%

prefer short 'at a glance' summary reports

65%

say information is easy to find on our website

* Survey conducted by Roy Morgan Research on behalf of BHI

Key facts and figures from our 2018 People Matter survey:

73%

BHI's employee engagement index

74%

BHI's culture index

Our strategy for 2019–2022

Between 2019 and 2022 we will build on our successes and seize new opportunities to maximise our impact on behalf of NSW patients and communities, and enhance our value to the NSW health system.

Our **vision** is to be a trusted provider of health performance information, for our information to be used to inform action, and that patients' experiences and outcomes continue to improve (see page 13).

Our **purpose** is to provide the community, health professionals and policy makers with information that enhances transparency of healthcare system performance in NSW, informing actions to improve the safety and quality of healthcare, and strengthening accountability (see page 13).

Our **future work** will align with our functions as determined by the NSW Minister for Health (see page 10).

We will take steps to strengthen our engagement processes and relationships and to ensure our reporting aligns with and responds to the priorities of our key audiences. This includes health professionals' need for information to support improvement and the needs of consumers and local communities for greater transparency.

We will tailor our products to target audiences in ways that align with their information needs, and package our information in ways that are accessible and engaging.

We will increase our efforts to deliver better insights into patient experiences of care, outcomes and service settings by using increasingly sophisticated data and analytic methods.

We will advise, support and collaborate with partners across the NSW health system to facilitate the use of our information and to support the development of capacity in the system, for example, in relation to analytic methods and data visualisation in those areas where we report.

Our commitment is to produce information about healthcare performance that is:

- **Objective** – impartial and grounded in evidence
- **Actionable** – of practical value
- **Meaningful** – clearly conveys the information intended to a given audience
- **Timely** – available at a useful or opportune time
- **Accurate** – without error.

Our strategy for 2019–2022

Our vision

Trusted information. Informed decisions. Improved healthcare

BHI is a trusted provider of health performance information.
Information is used to inform action.
Patients' experiences and outcomes continue to improve.

Our purpose

Provide information to inform improvement and strengthen accountability

We provide the community, healthcare professionals and policy makers with information that enhances transparency of the performance of the healthcare system in NSW, in order to inform actions to improve healthcare and strengthen accountability.

Our strategic priorities for 2019–2022

We aim to maximise our impact on behalf of NSW patients and communities, and enhance our value to the NSW health system

Excellence in analytics, data visualisation and communication

We will maintain our excellence in performance measurement and reporting, ensuring objective, actionable, meaningful, timely and accurate information is clearly presented and broadly disseminated.

Information for improvement

We will enhance the value of our reports and interactive information products to support actions to improve patients' experiences and outcomes.

Transparency for consumers and local communities

We will continue to expand public reporting about healthcare performance in areas that matter to consumers and local communities.

Alignment and Responsiveness

We will strengthen engagement processes and relationships to ensure our reports and interactive information products respond to need and better align with the priorities of consumer, healthcare and policy audiences.

Key enablers

High performing teams

Highly skilled people are proud to work at BHI and are supported to work together as part of a happy and highly engaged workforce.

Rigorous processes

Rigorous, systematic and reliable processes support effective data management, engagement, report production and corporate governance.

Innovation and improvement

Innovation and improvement supports excellence in measurement and reporting.

Our values

Collaboration

Openness

Respect

Empowerment

Key strategies

<p>Advanced analytics</p> <p>Focus new indicator development and assessments of performance on areas identified as priorities and which make best use of increasingly sophisticated data and analytic methods.</p> <p>In relation to areas on which we report, develop approaches that support analytics capacity-building across NSW Health.</p>	<p>Informing improvement</p> <p>Increase the usefulness of reports and information products to clinicians and healthcare professionals – helping them to identify statewide leaders and improvement opportunities, plan improvement action and gauge progress.</p>	<p>Measuring and reporting what matters</p> <p>Enhance the focus and value of information for consumers, carers and local communities. We will prioritise areas which evidence and feedback tell us matter most – and increase the relevance and usefulness of reporting for consumers.</p>
<p>Planning and prioritisation</p> <p>Determine and regularly reassess priorities for indicator development, reporting and information products based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National priorities and NSW's commitment to value-based healthcare • Opportunities to improve care experiences and outcomes among Aboriginal and other priority populations. 	<p>Digital strategy</p> <p>Transform our digital presence, by redesigning and upgrading our website, online data portal and interactive tools, to make it easier for key audiences to find and use our reporting and information products.</p>	<p>Engagement and collaboration</p> <p>Strengthen engagement with key consumer, clinical, local health district and policy audiences. Renew our framework for collaboration with key pillar organisations to contribute to a seamless support system for local health districts and the clinicians and managers who work in them.</p>

Enabling strategies

<p>High performing teams</p> <p>Recruitment and development – Enhance our team's capabilities and contribution through effective recruitment, induction and performance development processes and the provision of professional development opportunities.</p> <p>Culture and leadership – Develop leadership, culture and management capability with a particular focus on cultivating positivity and rewarding teamwork, and ensuring BHI is a desirable place to work.</p> <p>Supportive, agile environment – Ensure a safe and supportive work environment, through effective workplace health and safety procedures and policies that promote new, flexible ways of working.</p>	<p>Rigorous processes</p> <p>Data management and quality assurance – Continue to ensure the highest standards of data governance and improve consistency and efficiency in key processes underpinning analysis, production, quality assurance and data release.</p> <p>Project governance and management – Improve the efficiency, consistency and teamwork involved in project planning and delivery through effective project governance and management.</p> <p>Corporate governance – Maintain our record of rigour and effectiveness in corporate governance, including financial and risk management and legislative and policy compliance.</p>	<p>Innovation and improvement</p> <p>Learn and challenge – Facilitate staff learning, both formal and informal, and stimulate innovation and improvement in what we do and how we work.</p> <p>Evaluate the value and usefulness of our reporting and information products, contribute to academic research and participate in leading edge development of performance measurement and reporting.</p>
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BHI reporting and information products

BHI draws on data from a variety of sources to analyse and report on healthcare performance in NSW, providing trends and benchmarks at state, local health district and hospital level.

BHI uses administrative data that is routinely collected by NSW Health. We also collect data for analysis and reporting through statewide patient surveys, which each year give more than 270,000 patients the opportunity to provide feedback on their care in more than 170 hospitals or clinics.

Comparative and trend information is published in our reports, which include:

- quarterly reports that track activity and performance across public hospitals and ambulance services in NSW
- an annual report looking at the performance of the NSW health system
- in-depth reports – looking at particular aspects of healthcare by population, condition or sector
- reports of the results from statewide patient surveys on experiences and outcomes
- reports about issues, challenges and developments in healthcare performance measurement
- technical reports and supplements.

Alongside these, we have a suite of information products that help make the contents of our reports more accessible and useful. These include:

- performance apps on the BHI website that allow people to search for key findings that relate to their local hospital or ambulance service
- data tables and analytic tools that enable people to interrogate the underlying data
- an online interactive data portal that provides searchable access to BHI published data.

Every report and information product is subject to rigorous quality assurance, stakeholder engagement and advice, and a structured data release process that includes external review.

BHI continually develops and adapts new methods of performance measurement. We publish information about the development of reporting measures to ensure transparent understanding of our methods and any limitations of the analyses.

BHI's work program is underpinned by:

- research and methodology development, including scientific advice and challenge from interstate and international healthcare experts
- data management and analytic expertise to support performance measurement and reporting
- continuous development and innovation in design and data visualisations
- engagement with stakeholders, including clinical and other subject matter experts, to understand needs, shape priorities, inform measurement and reporting approaches, and to review emerging findings.

Our target audiences

Consumers and communities

The work of BHI is designed to serve consumers, carers and local communities by providing trusted information about how their healthcare system and local healthcare services are performing. Our work enhances public accountability and, in turn, our information supports the healthcare system to improve patients' experiences and outcomes. Our information is available to empower consumers, help them ask questions and inform decisions about their care.

BHI reports and information products are publicly available on our website, and we actively engage with the media to communicate key findings and encourage responsible, informed reporting. We offer accessible information specifically aimed at the general public, including summary results for public hospitals and ambulance zones that are updated every quarter.

Clinicians, local managers and other healthcare professionals

BHI reports and information products provide a professional audience with peer group comparisons, trend information and key insights into specific aspects of performance. Our information equips them to identify and explore opportunities to improve care and to gauge improvement. BHI reporting also informs system-wide improvement programs led by fellow pillar organisations, including NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation, NSW Clinical Excellence Commission, Cancer Institute of NSW, and the Health Education and Training Institute.

Additional technical supplements are designed to help professional audiences use and interpret our reporting, and assure them of the robustness of our analysis.

Healthcare boards and executives

The leaders of local health districts, specialty networks and other healthcare providers are accountable for the performance of their services, and responsible for setting and monitoring improvement priorities. For this they must have access to trusted and credible information, including comparative and trend data, of which BHI is a key supplier. To support them in these roles, we provide advance notification of all report and information releases to help support interpretation, scrutinise performance and prepare to respond to media coverage and other requests.

Academia and peer organisations

We actively engage with academics, researchers and other organisations measuring healthcare performance in Australia and overseas.

Ministers and Ministry of Health

BHI plays a unique role in NSW Health as an objective source of trusted information about healthcare performance. Our information is available to shape policy directions and support accountability and system management.

We work with the NSW Ministry of Health to align our work program to system priorities and secure essential access to the data we need to analyse healthcare performance. We support the Ministry of Health and Minister for Health by providing advance notification of upcoming reports and information releases to support interpretation, scrutinise performance and prepare to respond to media coverage and other requests.

Measuring our success

We aim to maximise our impact on the safety and quality of healthcare on behalf of NSW patients and communities, and enhance our value to NSW Health. We have identified a number of key criteria against which to measure our success in achieving these goals and the effectiveness of our strategy for 2019 to 2022. Where relevant targets can be set, they are listed below.

We will monitor and report our achievements against each of these criteria annually. In addition to reporting on key strategies and activities, we will continue to conduct an annual external stakeholder survey and monitor and report key performance indicators in each year's performance agreement with the NSW Ministry of Health. In the evaluation of reports and information products, we will also aim to identify case studies demonstrating the value and impact of BHI's work.

Strategic priorities	Success criteria	
<p>Excellence in analytics, data visualisation and communication</p>	<p>BHI is a trusted provider of health performance information</p>	<p>BHI reporting and information products are objective – impartial and grounded in evidence</p>
	<p>BHI reporting and information products are actionable – of practical value</p>	<p>BHI reporting and information products are meaningful – clearly conveying the information intended to a given audience</p>
	<p>BHI reporting and information products are timely – available at a useful or opportune time</p>	<p>BHI reporting and information products are accurate – without error</p>
<p>Alignment and responsiveness</p>	<p>BHI measures what matters</p>	<p>BHI is responsive to the needs of consumer, professional and policy audiences</p>
<p>Information for improvement</p>	<p>The work of BHI supports action to improve patients' experiences and outcomes</p>	
<p>Transparency for consumers and local communities</p>	<p>The work of BHI enhances public accountability</p>	
<p>A successful organisation</p>	<p>BHI supports high performing teams</p>	<p>BHI maintains rigorous processes</p>
	<p>BHI demonstrates innovation and improvement in measurement and reporting</p>	

About the Bureau of Health Information

The Bureau of Health Information (BHI) is a board-governed organisation that provides independent information about the performance of the NSW healthcare system.

BHI was established in 2009 and supports the accountability of the healthcare system by providing regular and detailed information to the community, government and healthcare professionals. This in turn supports quality improvement by highlighting how well the healthcare system is functioning and where there are opportunities to improve.

BHI manages the NSW Patient Survey Program, gathering information from patients about their experiences and outcomes of care in public hospitals and other healthcare facilities.

BHI publishes a range of reports and information products, including interactive tools, that provide objective, accurate and meaningful information about how the health system is performing.

BHI's work relies on the efforts of a wide range of healthcare, data and policy experts. All of our assessment efforts leverage the work of hospital coders, analysts, technicians and healthcare providers who gather, codify and supply data. Our public reporting of performance information is enabled and enhanced by the infrastructure, expertise and stewardship provided by colleagues from NSW Health and its pillar organisations.

bhi.nsw.gov.au