



SMHS Board Communiqué

Excellent health care, every time

September 2021 Meeting

This communiqué highlights key discussions of interest at the South Metropolitan Health Service (SMHS) Board's most recent monthly meeting, which was held on 30 September 2021 at Fiona Stanley Hospital (FSH).

Below is a recent photo of the SMHS Board members taken for the 2020-21 Annual Report (*Rear L-R: Colin Murphy, Liam Roche, Yvonne Parnell, Ryan Atkinson, Sue Le Souef, David Rowe, Amanda Boudville, Julian Henderson; front L-R Kim Gibson and Robin Collins*).



Dr Amanda Boudville provided a very thoughtful acknowledgement of country and its traditional owners and reflected on the parallel experiences of the Indigenous people of Australia and Canada, where she lived for several years. As a result of colonisation, both peoples have experienced dispossession, isolation from their culture and the trauma associated with stolen children. In Canada's case, approximately 150,000 indigenous children were taken from their families and placed in ["residential schools"](#) where they were often the victims of abuse. Earlier this year, more than [1,000 unmarked graves](#) were discovered at these schools which prompted a great deal of discussion in Canadian society in relation to the celebration of "Canada Day", which is a similar celebration to Australia Day. As a Board, we reflected that it is useful to consider issues in our own society from the perspective of other countries and cultures.

Board members always reflect on patient stories at the start of each meeting to ensure that the organisation continues to be patient and consumer focused. This month the Board were provided with a heart-warming story of a mother who was cared for at Rockingham General Hospital with pregnancy complications when she was 21 weeks pregnant. Staff at the hospital safely cared for her until she was transferred to King Edward Memorial Hospital, where her baby boy was born five weeks later at 26 weeks gestation. The baby recently turned two years of age which prompted the mother to write to the maternity staff at Rockingham thanking them for the outstanding care and support they provided to her and her family during such a stressful event in her life. It was rewarding for the staff and Board to know that the actions of our caring and compassionate staff have an impact on patients and their families long after the care is provided.

The A/Chief Executive provided a report highlighting several important areas and issues including:

- The significant amount of work around continued COVID-19 preparedness, including scenario testing at SMHS sites and revision of the COVID checklist tool.
- The SMHS Care to Lead program which is an important leadership development initiative in which 50 staff are currently enrolled.
- The Australian Medical Association (AMA) “Climate change, health and sustainability in WA – linking science to action” which Chief Executive Paul Forden attended to discuss the important work being done by SMHS to encourage climate and sustainability awareness and change.
- The “Aussie Kids ED” documentary which has now finished filming at Fiona Stanley Hospital (FSH).
- The expansion of the FSH Intensive Care Outreach Service which provides 24/7 clinical support across FSH.
- The first dedicated Advance Care Planning clinic at Fremantle Hospital Rehabilitation Centre. The clinic is designed to provide patients with the opportunity to plan their preferences for future treatment and care.

As part of my monthly Board Chair report:

- I thanked the Executive for the unqualified audit opinion that SMHS recently received from the Office of the Auditor General.
- I reflected on my attendance at the 25th anniversary of the Health and Disability Complaints Office (HaDSCO), noting complaints and feedback are valuable tools for continuous quality improvement. It was pleasing to be a part of commemorating the important role that HaDSCO plays.
- I informed the Board that I have written to Professor Ed Litton to congratulate him on winning the Premier’s Science Award for 2021 in the category of Early Career Scientist of the Year. Professor Litton’s inspiring work relates to research and development of intensive care practices which have gone on to inform local, national and international policies and approaches. You can read more about his award and research work [here](#).

The meeting also included regular Board reports and discussion of the following items:

- A review of the monthly SMHS Board Dashboard – which assists the Board to monitor key indicators that have been discussed at committee-level.
- Consideration of the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards Annual Governing Body Attestation Statement. The Standards were developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care to protect the public from harm and to improve the quality of health service provision. They provide a quality-assurance mechanism that tests whether relevant systems are in place to ensure expected standards of safety and quality are met.
- The recent ‘Your Voice in Health’ survey results which provided the Board with an understanding of how engaged SMHS staff are feeling. Survey results reinforced that staff have an ongoing commitment to delivering on SMHS’ vision and values. However, they also showed that wellbeing and emotional care, along with being recognised and valued, remain very important to staff and SMHS needs to go further in making staff feel engaged and connected to our health service.

The Chairs of the Board Committees provided reports on the issues considered at their most recent meetings and highlighted specific items including:

- The Safety and Quality Committee discussed the the SMHS Safety and Quality dashboard and monthly reports. Members also appreciated the attendance of SMHS Emergency Department (ED) clinicians at the meeting and welcomed the opportunity to hear about the issues being experienced directly from front line staff.
- The Finance and Governance Committee discussed the finance, activity and staffing reports and reviewed the contract management report. The Committee also considered several business cases seeking funding for various programs of work and recommended these be approved by the Board.
- The Audit and Risk Committee considered the SMHS Audit Log, corporate risks and work health and safety reports.

SMHS Board meetings are held monthly at all major sites across SMHS. The next Board meeting will be held at Rockingham General Hospital on 25 October 2021.

Adjunct Associate Professor Robyn Collins
Chair, South Metropolitan Health Service Board

4 October 2021