



Hon Roger Cook MLA  
Minister for Health  
13<sup>th</sup> Floor, Dumas House  
2 Havelock Street  
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Minister

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS FOR THE SOUTH METROPOLITAN HEALTH SERVICE BOARD**

Thank you for your Statement of Expectation for the South Metropolitan Health Service (SMHS) dated 4 June 2021.

This response outlines how the SMHS Board (the Board) will meet your expectations.

As Board Chair, I formally commit the Board to meet your expectations and ensure that the Government's key strategic priorities for SMHS are realised. We will work to safeguard and strengthen the community's confidence in the Board and SMHS and in all our activities, we will operate in a way that promotes collaboration and demonstrates accountability and transparency in support of the Government's strategic public healthcare priorities.

In response to the specific expectations you have raised, I advise the following:

### **COVID-19**

Since March 2021, SMHS has undertaken a major drive in the vaccination program for staff with a total of five vaccination clinics opened across SMHS sites, including at the St John of God Murdoch Hospital site. SMHS is now supporting the community vaccination program through the clinic in Kwinana.

SMHS continues to operate COVID clinics at FSH and RGH for screening and surveillance of the community, flexing up as required to effectively manage surge situations.

Whilst we are cognisant of the ongoing risk from COVID-19, SMHS has transitioned services back to business as usual, while instituting 'learning to live with COVID' attitudes and practices. This includes the development of plans for large or small scale outbreaks of COVID-19 in the south metropolitan area.

COVID-19 research was encouraged and prioritised from March 2020 with the establishment of a SMHS COVID Research Response team and SMHS Human Research Ethics Committee which allowed SMHS patients to access the latest clinical trials for COVID-19. Two SMHS researchers were among 12 WA projects

awarded grants through the Department of Health (DoH) and WA Health Translation Network COVID-19 Research Grants Program for their research project, sharing in close to \$2 million of WA Government funding to support COVID-19-related research.

### **Safety and quality**

Patient safety continues to be the highest priority for SMHS. The Board's Safety and Quality Committee works to ensure safety and quality in patient care across SMHS, to provide assurance that the Clinical Governance, Safety and Quality Policy Framework is implemented and adhered to, and clinical systems, processes and outcomes are effective. SMHS publishes patient safety and quality data on its webpage in order to support transparency. For example, SMHS' performance against the National Hand Hygiene Initiative standards and Healthcare-associated *Staphylococcus aureus* bloodstream infections.

Patient experience surveying of all SMHS inpatient and day procedure patients commenced in July 2020. SMHS led the development of the 'MySay Healthcare' survey across the State, with the survey now implemented in all Health Service Providers (HSP) in Western Australia (WA). This includes the development of dashboards for the reporting and benchmarking of the survey results across HSPs.

Through the monthly Board to Ward program instigated by the Board's Safety and Quality Committee, Board members have the opportunity to visit patients, their families and staff across all SMHS hospital and community service sites to engage with, and hear about their experiences. This feedback provides valuable information about where SMHS can improve, as well as provide opportunities for members to identify areas of exemplary practice.

### **Mental health priorities**

Mental health and alcohol and other drug demand continues to have a significant impact on SMHS services, particularly on emergency department capacity. The increase in mental health demand on workforce and community acute services has identified a need for change in how public mental health services are delivered. This was discussed by the SMHS Board when we met with the Minister for Mental Health on 14 July 2021 where, in particular, we discussed sub acute care and the need for contemporary models of care in the community.

SMHS continues to work with DoH, HSPs, the Mental Health Commission and community organisations in this important area with a number of significant initiatives achieved in the past year including increased bed capacity through the introduction of the Hospital in the Home service at Fremantle Hospital (FH) and Rockingham General Hospital (RGH) and the commissioning of voluntary mental health inpatient beds from the private sector.

SMHS worked with the Mental Health Commission and WA Primary Health Alliance in March 2021 to deliver a workshop in Peel focusing on how to prevent people with mental illness getting into crisis. The workshop delivered engaged representation from more than 30 non-government organisations that deliver services in the region plus other government departments.

SMHS is working very closely with Richmond Health to open a Community Care Unit (CCU) in the Rockingham area of Orelia. This will create capacity for 20 long stay mental health patients.

In addition, work continues on the 40-bed mental health facility expansion at FH enabling greater inpatient admission capacity and easing bed block for mental health patients in the south metropolitan region.

### **Workforce safety, wellbeing and engagement**

SMHS continues its focus on achieving a highly engaged workforce and an effective organisational culture in line with its strategic priority to *Engage, develop and provide opportunities for our workforce*.

Over the past two years, the SMHS Board People, Culture and Engagement Committee has provided oversight to SMHS' engagement with staff, patients and the community. The SMHS Board commits to continuing to promote participation in the Your Voice in Health Survey and taking action to address any significant issues identified in the results.

SMHS has collated key priorities in response to the Minister for Health's Your Voice in Health Survey 2020 and reports quarterly to the DoH on outcomes and achievements as well as the planned activities for the next quarter. All activities and priority areas are on track or completed for SMHS. When the results of the 2021 survey are received, the SMHS Board will consider the results and monitor plans for improvement.

SMHS workforce strategies to support the health and wellbeing of the SMHS workforce continue to be oversighted by the Board. Employee / management groups across SMHS sites coordinate a range of programs and activities in this space, including the introduction of a staff psychologist at the Fiona Stanley Fremantle Hospitals Group and the establishment of a project to specifically support junior doctors across SMHS.

In previous years, the SMHS Board has undertaken annual safety walk arounds across all SMHS sites as part of National Safety Work Month however in 2021, this has been expanded to a program of quarterly safety walk arounds. Similar to the SMHS Board to Ward program, these visits provide an opportunity for Board members to speak to staff and ensure a culture of safety across all SMHS sites.

### **Commitment to permanent employment**

SMHS remains fully committed to employing staff on a permanent basis. SMHS continues to comply with the requirements of the Conversion to Permanency Provisions (CPP) under each of the Industrial Agreements. Mechanisms have also been created for the ongoing reviews of staff as they become eligible.

However, SMHS is going beyond the CPP in order to further increase permanency rates. All fixed term and casual employees who have two years or more service will be reviewed under Commissioner's Instruction No. 2 to determine if the criteria of section 7 Permanent appointment of fixed term contract employees can apply. This will be a concurrent process with the CPP and will also apply to those whose reviews have already occurred.

In keeping with good practice, a review of our recruitment, selection and appointment practices is underway to ensure recruitment managers are clear that permanent employment is the preferred method of engaging staff.

### **Sustainable Health Review**

The Board continues its commitment to the eight enduring strategies and the recommendations of the Sustainable Health Review (SHR), as applicable to SMHS, in our strategic planning and discussions.

Despite the SHR implementation being paused by the State Government in 2020 when resources were reallocated to support the COVID-19 response, the implementation of some recommendations, such as those relating to digital and telehealth and outpatient reform, were accelerated. For example, the Fiona Stanly Hospital (FSH) paediatric dietetics team trialled a pilot 'digital consultations at home' program to support accurate patient assessments and appropriate treatment choices. This initiative reduced waiting times from over four years to six months.

SMHS remains active and engaged in supporting other areas of delivery for the SHR.

### **Research and innovation**

SMHS continues to maintain a strong focus on research and innovation.

The 2020 SMHS Research Report demonstrates the breadth of research across the health service. A copy of the report can be accessed at <https://smhs.health.wa.gov.au/-/media/HSPs/SMHS/Corporate/Files/Research/2020-SMHS-Research-rpt.pdf>. Four major research leads were appointed in 2020 to continue to build and improve our research culture; an Executive Director Transformation was appointed in August 2020 to lead Innovation, Informatics and Research and Development for SMHS; Head of Research and Development; Clinical Director of Research; and Allied Health Research Director (joint appointment with Curtin University).

In relation to innovation, the Kaartdijin Innovation Centre continues to support staff and teams across SMHS to develop their projects. A number of projects are currently registered in the pipeline of the Kaartdijin Innovation Centre which centre around the use of technology to support digitisation of processes, virtual models of care, artificial intelligence to support decision making, and virtual reality for simulation-based education. The Virtual Emergency Medicine Pilot commenced in February 2021 and initial data suggests a positive impact on emergency department flow at FSH.

Kaartdijin Innovation is committed to promoting and developing the next generation of health workers through programs such as iPrep and Biodesign, DoH's Graduate program and Innovation Central Perth's (Curtin University) Internship program.

### **Election commitments**

SMHS complies with quarterly reporting obligations to DoH on the implementation of election commitments and welcomes the recent announcement of a Mental Health Emergency Centre and Behavioural Assessment Urgent Care Centre for the Rockingham area.

As reported to you previously in our Statement of Intent in February 2020, the Family Birth Centre at FSH election commitment is completed. Since this time, SMHS has fully implemented the 'Protection of Frontline Staff' election commitment, with the Director General DoH formally approving the closure of this commitment in May 2021. As part of SMHS' quarter 4 election commitment reporting, SMHS applied to the Director General DoH to formally close the 'FH Review' election commitment. I am also pleased to report that SMHS is on track to implement the 'Healthcare in Public Hands' election commitment by August 2021, and 'Acute Mental Health Beds' by March 2024.

The SMHS Board and Chief Executive continue to support the work being undertaken by DoH in relation to other election commitments within the SMHS catchment.

### **Key SMHS workstreams**

SMHS Board and Committees have robust oversight of all key workstreams outlined in your Letter of Expectation, and regularly discuss these items at Board-level.

Planning for the delivery of the Peel Health Campus (PHC) expansion and the transfer of the PHC to SMHS in 2023 has commenced with the appointment of an Executive Director for Commissioning and Redevelopment. A clear project plan has been developed and a team is currently being recruited to achieve this important area of work.

As above, the FH 40 Mental Health beds project remains on track with practical completion scheduled for December 2023. The FH theatres project is progressing well with additional surgical sessions being taken on by FSH and RGH and staff movement to ensure no reduction in performance.

The progression of the FSH critical works for emergency power supply and water quality is an important area of focus for the Board's Audit and Risk Committee.

### **Hospital performance targets**

The SMHS Board continues to focus on meeting the Western Australian Emergency Access Target (WEAT) and Western Australian Elective Surgery Target (WEST). The Chief Executive reports on both of these key performance indicators at monthly Board meetings.

WEAT is a significant area of focus for the SMHS Board and Safety and Quality Committee and a number of initiatives are being progressed to improve the WEAT score, including:

- Establishment of the Virtual Emergency Medicine pilot (as mentioned above) to achieve diversion of ambulances to the most appropriate point of care for the patient which has already seen a reduction in the number of ambulances to FSH.
- Establishment of ambulatory clinics to enable patients in the emergency department who do not require admission to be discharged to next day clinics.
- Introduction of a clinical psychology in-reach service to the FSH Emergency Department for the diversion of some adult mental health presentations to outpatient clinical psychology, thus avoiding inpatient stays.
- Expansion of mental health Home Treatment Teams.

SMHS continues to actively manage the Elective Surgery Waitlist to work towards achieving the zero over boundary target across all SMHS sites. Excellent progress was made in 2020-21 in this area however it is noted that the cancellation of some category 2 and 3 surgery due to COVID-19 restrictions has impacted on this positive performance.

Patient flow is one of the major constraints for delivery of both WEAT and WEST. We have opened an additional 24 beds in May this year and will open a further 18 beds at the beginning of August. Capital bids have been submitted to DoH to enable the remaining three wards at FH to be refitted and opened over coming years.

### **Care Opinion**

The Board supports SMHS' active participation in Care Opinion and the feedback and improvement opportunities that are gained through this and other feedback platforms. Care Opinion is just one mechanism by which SMHS seeks and acts on patient and consumer feedback.

### **Financial performance**

The Board's Finance and Governance Committee works diligently to ensure that SMHS operates within and achieves the best possible outcomes within the available budget. We are proud that significant improvements in both SMHS productivity and efficiency have been achieved across the past three years.

Despite the extraordinary financial impact COVID-19 had, and continues to have across SMHS, I am extremely pleased to report that SMHS continues to maintain financial stability. Such an outcome is not easily achieved in a demanding public health environment and is essential to SMHS investing more into the services that create both better patient and staff experiences.

There are 12 projects in the SMHS Stimulus program totalling \$2.975M. Nine projects have been completed to date, with the remaining projects at various stages of progress. Two projects have experienced delays, however, are anticipated to be completed by August 2021. The other project is anticipated to be completed in the first half of March 2022.

SMHS met all primary efficiency indicators in the Health Service Performance Report based on the average cost per weighted activity unit and is currently operating at a cost per weighted activity below target levels for inpatients, emergency and outpatient services; the only health service to do so in 2020-21. SMHS also delivered activity above the annual activity target in 2021-21.

As an indicator of financial achievements, SMHS has increased its cash balance from \$0.5m in 2019 to in excess of \$80m today.

### **Recovery**

Working with the CE, the SMHS Board has provided leadership to the organisation over the past 12 months as recovery plans are implemented across the State. It is noted that high quality and effective healthcare is the way in which SMHS is contributing to the recovery of the State.

### **WA Health system governance**

The SMHS Board acknowledges its accountability to you as the responsible Minister and manages its operations in accordance with the *HSP Boards Governance Policy* and the *Statutory Board Operations Policy Framework*.

The SMHS Board has developed a Board Charter which sets out the framework for governance within SMHS and defines the roles, responsibilities and authorities of the SMHS Board in line with the *Health Services Act 2016*, other relevant legislation, relevant policy frameworks and mandatory requirements outlined in the *HSP Board Governance Policy* and associated documents.

The SMHS Board has completed a process of external evaluation to review performance, strengths and opportunities for enhanced performance, and to ensure appropriate governance practices are in place. Whilst the evaluation provided the Board with strategies for improvement, it confirmed that SMHS has a high performing and effective Board.

### **Advice to Government**

SMHS submitted the SMHS Board Annual Governance Attestation Statement 2019-20 in September 2020, in which SMHS provided detailed information about compliance with board governance practices and controls during 2019-20. To continue to maintain timeliness in reporting in 2020-21, a Board calendar has been developed.

The SMHS Board commits to continuing to provide accurate and timely advice to the Minister and Government on significant issues relating to the delivery of healthcare in the south metropolitan region. The Board will provide vigorous oversight to ensure that the Government's priorities are achieved.

SMHS will be pleased to provide regular reporting on the expectations you have outlined, and we are working with DoH to develop a suitable reporting template to provide consistency across HSPs.

The Board looks forward to working with you over the next 12 months to deliver the strategic priorities for SMHS and the Western Australia community.

Yours sincerely



Adj. Assoc. Prof. Robyn Collins

**CHAIR**

**SOUTH METROPOLITAN HEALTH SERVICE BOARD**

26 July 2021