

Queensland Health – Addressing institutional barriers to health equity

26 November 2018

In March 2017, the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland (ADCQ) and the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Council (QAIHC) presented Queensland Health with a report *Addressing Institutional Barriers to Health Equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in Queensland's Public Hospital and Health Services*.

Since receiving the Report in March 2017, Queensland Health has put in place a number of strategies to address institutional racism in the health system.

Statement of Action

- The *Statement of Action towards Closing the Gap in health outcomes* (the Statement of Action) commits all areas of Queensland Health to undertake organisational, system-level changes to build sustainable cultural capability across the organisation.
- The Statement of Action was developed and agreed through a collaborative partnership between Hospital and Health Boards and the Department of Health. It was launched in December 2017 and is available on the Queensland Health website.
- The system-wide change required under the Statement of Action must be driven from the highest level – the Hospital and Health Boards and Executive Management must champion change and carefully monitor implementation. It is only with this level of leadership that sustainable change will be made.
- The vision of the Statement of Action is to develop a health system that offers culturally appropriate, culturally capable, safe and responsive health care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.
- The Statement of Action identifies the need to take a coordinated approach to embedding system-wide change – building cultural capability and reducing institutional racism in the health system.
- The Statement of Action commits all areas of Queensland Health to three key actions:
 1. Promoting opportunities to **embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation** in Queensland Health leadership, governance and workforce.
 2. Improving **local engagement and partnerships** between Queensland Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations.
 3. Improving **transparency, reporting and accountability** in Closing the Gap progress.

Closing the Gap Health Plans

- All Hospital and Health Services (HHSs) have been required to develop *Closing the Gap Health Plans* to demonstrate activities across the three key areas in the Statement of Action.
- In recognition of the importance of addressing institutional racism across the health system, the responsibility for implementing and monitoring the Plans sits with the HHS Boards and Executive.
- HHS Plans are currently being analysed by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Branch to develop a system-level response.

Key Performance Indicators

- In order to improve transparency and accountability, HHSs are required to report against two new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific key performance indicators (in relation to low birthweight babies and workforce) from 2018-19.

Workforce

- HHSs are currently developing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Action Plans in response to Queensland Health's *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework 2016—2026*.

Refining the matrix audit tool

- On 12 November 2018 ADCQ, QAIHC and Queensland Health hosted a workshop of experts to review the matrix, with an aim to having a tool which can be used repeatedly to measure change and improvements in the health system over time.
- Queensland Health is supportive of using the tool in the future.