

# Clinical Governance Framework

## 1. What is clinical governance?

Clinical governance is defined by the National Commission on Safety and Quality as a systematic approach to ensuring that healthcare services are provided in a safe, effective, and efficient manner. It involves a range of policies, procedures, and practices that aim to improve the quality of care and protect patient safety. A critical component of clinical governance for services provided to Aboriginal people is that the services provided are culturally safe. This requires cultural safety in the services provided and also in the health service itself as an organisation.

## 2. Why a Clinical Governance Framework for AHCSA?

AHCSA supports Member Services to provide high quality and safe clinical care that is responsive to the needs of the community. This role includes support for clinical governance, workforce development and best practice program delivery and community engagement. The work requires a Clinical Governance Framework to ensure AHCSA provides high quality and safe services to our Member Services, and for the Aboriginal community of South Australia.

Good clinical governance ensures that Member Services, the community and AHCSA can be confident that systems are in place to ensure high quality and safe service provision by AHCSA, with benefits through to the community.

## 3. Approach

AHCSA is governed by an Aboriginal Controlled Community Board which is responsible for both cultural governance and corporate governance, with the Executive responsible for operational leadership.

The Clinical Governance Framework is part of both the cultural governance and corporate governance for AHCSA. It takes a risk management approach to clinical governance.

This framework aligns closely with the National Model Clinical Governance Framework and Chapter 2 from Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations in practice: Sharing ways of working in the ACCHO sector.

National Model Clinical Governance Framework. Australian Commission on Safety and Quality.  
<https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/publications-and-resources/resource-library/national-model-clinical-governance-framework>

Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations in practice: Sharing ways of working in the ACCHO sector (2020), Wardliparingga.  
[https://sahmri.blob.core.windows.net/communications/schapter\\_2\\_Governance.pdf](https://sahmri.blob.core.windows.net/communications/schapter_2_Governance.pdf)

Core Services and Outcomes Framework. NACCHO. <https://csof.naccho.org.au/>



## 4. Policy statement

AHCSA is the peak body for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health in South Australia. Under the Constitution, AHCSA offers for Member Services:

- support and capacity building
- regulatory assistance
- advocacy
- leadership and leadership development
- workforce support and development.

AHCSA's mission is to strengthen community participation and ownership of Aboriginal health in a way that values cultural diversity, community history and knowledge, and community strength. In fulfilling this mission AHCSA is committed to providing high quality, clinically safe and culturally safe services for Member Services and the communities they serve.

In undertaking these services, AHCSA provides non-clinical services, indirect clinical care and on occasion direct clinical care. While the services are generally in support of Member Services undertaking the direct clinical work, it is important that AHCSA demonstrates the highest standards of clinical governance for the work that is in scope.

Clinical risk is included on the AHCSA risk register. AHCSA's risk appetite for clinical governance is low.

Board, executive, managers and staff are required to have an understanding of the AHCSA Clinical Governance Framework and to demonstrate accountability for the delivery of safe, high-quality care against legislative and regulatory requirements, within their scope of practice and responsibility.

## 5. Scope of services under the Clinical Governance Framework

There are a range of non-clinical services provided by AHCSA, including legal support, leadership development, communications, health promotion, research and corporate governance support, for example. These are not included in the Clinical Governance Framework because they are not relevant to clinical work. The scope considers two service types: indirect clinical services and direct clinical services.

### Supporting clinical services within the clinic (indirect clinical services)

AHCSA staff may support clinical service delivery, where clinical services are provided by a Member Service. The clinical service is delivered within the clinical governance framework of the Member Service. AHCSA supports this in a number of ways:

- formal training of Aboriginal Health Workers and Aboriginal Health Practitioners in the Registered Training Organisation
- provision of best practice guidelines and guidance on clinical practice
- training in the use of those guidelines or on clinical machines (e.g. point of care testing)
- support for accreditation including clinical policy writing and system development
- support with continuous quality improvement including data analysis, system assessment and plans to change/improve practice in a continuous sequence.

### Direct clinical service delivery

Direct clinical services may be delivered by AHCSA from time to time in the setting of market failure (to urgently backfill staff vacancies), in emergency situations or as clearly defined within the scope of practice for the role for AHPRA registered staff.



## 6. Guiding principles

The quality and safety of the services AHCSA provides are underpinned by a series of guiding principles:

- A deep and abiding respect for the inalienable right of Aboriginal communities to determine and control the composition, operation and delivery of health services for the benefit of their community
- Aboriginal health is inclusive of physical, social and emotional wellbeing
- Governing, managing and delivery of services in culturally safe and appropriate ways
- Open and transparent processes that support the identification and reporting of clinical and safety risk and adverse events
- Accountabilities are clearly defined with responsibilities
- Commitment to high quality services through ongoing continuous quality improvement and application of evidence based models of care
- Responsive to the needs of the community and Member Services, within the scope of AHCSA services.

## 7. Clinical governance domains

The focus on AHCSA Clinical Governance Framework is on four main areas as outlined below.

### 1. Governance, leadership and culture

- a. Develop, implement and undertake ongoing review of the AHCSA Clinical Governance Framework and associated policies. Implementation includes induction of staff and training of ongoing staff in meeting the obligations of the Framework.
- b. Take a risk management approach including Clinical Governance as part of the Risk Register and associated risk appetite and necessary insurance.
- c. Lead the development of a safety culture, including blame free, accountable learning culture.
- d. Monitor the system to identify improvement opportunities.

### 2. Patient safety and quality improvement systems

- a. Incorporate audits of practice as part of clinical supervision
- b. Develop, implement and ongoing review of an incident management system relevant to clinical governance
- c. Develop, implement and review of a regular feedback and complaints management system from Member Services, including a survey
- d. Ensure systems to securely manage personal or sensitive health information, through policy.

### 3. Clinical performance and effectiveness

- a. Develop, implement and review policy and procedures for scope of practice for all staff under the Clinical Governance Framework scope.
- b. Access to safety and quality training in line with the Clinical Governance Framework and relevant professional development training for all staff and practice needs to maintain AHPRA registration for staff.
- c. Performance monitoring and clinical supervision of staff in their clinical support or direct clinical roles.



- d. Clinical guidelines developed by AHCSA for staff and Member Services undergo a formal process of clinical review by a PHMO, and training in their use for AHCSA staff.

#### 4. Safe environment for the delivery of services

- a. AHCSA provides culturally safe health care service support and interactions with Aboriginal community
- b. AHCSA supports service improvements that increases accessibility to all local Aboriginal community.

### 8. Roles and responsibilities

**Board:** Responsible for ensuring AHCSA is well run and delivers high quality care support and where relevant, direct care. They do this through establishing a strong safety culture through an effective clinical governance system, satisfying themselves that the system operates effectively.

**CEO, Executive and Senior management:** Responsible for oversight of clinical governance systems within AHCSA. Where implementation is delegated, a system of monitoring will be put in place to confirm the systems are working well. They advise and inform the Board about the clinical governance system performance.

**Program managers and their teams:** Work within the clinical governance system including their scope of practice to support high quality clinical care in Member Services. AHPRA registered staff are accountable for the safety and quality of their own professional practice and codes of conduct.

### 9. Relevant policies and procedures

Policies and procedures must be formally endorsed, shared with staff, adherence monitored and action taken if not complied with.

- Clinical governance policy
- Scope of practice guideline
- Risk register and statement of risk appetite
- Incident reporting and management system
- Compliments and complaints
- Member portal resource guideline
- Immunisation policy
- Data privacy policy
- Criminal history check policy
- Code of conduct policy
- Conflict of interest policy
- Clinical governance committee terms of reference.