

The Lighthouse Hospital Project at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital

Moorditj Koort (Good Heart)

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Background:

In 2017 Cardiovascular Medicine (CVM) Division at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital (SCGH) accepted an invitation from the National Heart Foundation to join The Lighthouse Hospital Project; a joint initiative of the National Heart Foundation and Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association funded by the Australian Government. The Lighthouse Hospital Project was established to reduce the incidence of discharge against medical advice by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples presenting at hospital with Acute Coronary Syndrome (ACS).

Approach: The aim of the project is to develop a culturally safe and clinically appropriate hospital experience for Aboriginal patients. The Lighthouse Hospital Project addresses four key areas to improve the experience and care of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients: governance, cultural competence, workforce and care pathways.

Outcomes: SCGH has implemented a range of initiatives under the four domains to improve the care and patient experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These include:

Governance

- Finding and increasing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' voices and leadership in the project. SCGH created a position for a Cultural Engagement Officer as part of the project team.
- Established and strengthened relationships with external Aboriginal Health Services, especially remote services. Visiting regional/remote Aboriginal Health Services has helped to better understand their needs, priorities and the challenges they experience.
- Placed a notice board in the clinical area titled the Message Stick to promote Aboriginal health through education.

Cultural competency

- Commissioned Aboriginal artwork for display in Cardiology that represents the eight regions of WA. The themed collaged artwork will be identified as the stamp of Aboriginal Health and will also be used on resources for patients admitted and discharged from CVM at SCGH.

Workforce

- Piloting an Aboriginal Healthcare Professional role to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cardiac patients across the whole hospital journey (from the Emergency Department to outpatients).
- Implementing online training which is being developed for frontline staff to improve identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.

Care Pathways

- Improving discharge planning and outpatient support for regional and remote patients through culturally appropriate education material and increased use of telehealth.

Results: By being a culturally engaging service, the CVM team at SCGH is working towards closing the gap and making significant changes to their culture and practice, as well as improving Aboriginal Health outcomes.