



The Role of Health Services and Boards

Strong governance foundations for a safe, high quality, sustainable WA public health system

Why is the role of Health Services changing?

- WA Health is too large and complex to operate with decision-making and accountability resting solely with the Director General.
- The *Health Services Act 2016* (the Act) commenced on 1 July 2016 providing a legal framework for clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities at all levels of the system, and a devolved model of governance that will enable decision-making closer to service delivery and patient care.
- Health Services (North, South, WA Country, Child and Adolescent, and East Metropolitan Health Services) have been established as health service providers that are separate board-governed statutory authorities, legally responsible and accountable for the delivery of health services for their local areas and communities.
- Health Service Boards oversee Health Services rather than individual public hospitals, as existed in the past. Chief Executives manage the day-to-day operations of Health Services.
- The Department of Health, led by the Director General, has been established as the System Manager responsible for the overall management, performance and strategic direction of the WA public health system, ensuring the delivery of high quality, safe and timely health services.
- Health Support Services (HSS) has been established as a chief executive-governed health service provider that is a statutory authority accountable for the delivery of key support services such as payroll, supply and information and communications technology.

What is the role of the Health Services and Boards?

- Providing safe, high quality, efficient and economical health services to their local communities.
- Monitoring and improving the quality of health services.
- Accountable for delivering health services in accordance with Service Agreements with the Director General including funding, performance measures (for example clinical, financial, safety and quality, audit), and operational targets.
- Employing health service staff.
- Contributing to and implementing systemwide plans issued by the Department of Health.
- Complying with policy frameworks and directions issued by the Director General.
- Developing policies to suit the local context, within the guidelines of the policy frameworks set by the System Manager.
- Maintaining land, buildings and assets controlled and managed by the health service.
- Consulting with health professionals working in the health service and consultation with health consumers and community members about the provision of health services.
- Cooperating with other providers of health services, including providers of primary health care, in planning for, and providing, health services.

Who will sit on the Health Service Boards?

- Each Health Service Board can have six to 10 members.
- Collectively, Board Members must have skills, expertise and experience in the following areas:
 - Health services, business, financial and human resource management
 - Legal expertise
 - The provision of clinical and other health services
 - Primary health care
 - Education and training of health professionals
 - Knowledge and understanding of the community serviced by the health service
 - Experience as a consumer of health services or a carer
 - Other appropriate skills, expertise, knowledge or experience.
- Each Board is required to have at least three health professionals, two of whom must currently be practising.

Appointment of Board Chairs and Members

- Highly-qualified interim Chairs and Members were appointed into statutory roles on Health Service Boards by the Minister for Health, commencing 1 July 2016.

How will the transition to this role occur?

- To support the alignment to the roles and responsibilities under the Act, a Functional Review and Readiness Assessment of non-clinical functions was conducted across the system.
- Transition of these functions is being managed by senior leaders across the system and will conclude by 30 June 2018.

What are the benefits to patients, our workforce and the community?

- Greater authority and innovation in Health Services in meeting the needs of local communities, including greater local decision-making.
- Robust systemwide policy and standards, aligned to national and international best practice to assure the quality and safety of health services.
- Strong governance foundations with clear delineation of roles and responsibilities will enable stronger system decision-making, operation and risk management.

Related Fact Sheets

- *List of all Health Service Board Members*
- *Child and Adolescent Health Service Board*
- *East Metropolitan Health Service Board*
- *North Metropolitan Health Service Board*
- *South Metropolitan Health Service Board*
- *WA County Health Service Board*
- *Changes to the governance of WA Health*
- *The Health Services Act 2016: A Snapshot*
- *The Role of the Department of Health*
- *The Role of Health Support Services*
- *Functional Review & Readiness Assessment*
- *Policy Frameworks*
- *WA Health Reform Program 2015-2020*

For more information email health.reform@health.wa.gov.au.