



5 COMPREHENSIVE CARE

This standard aims to ensure that patients receive comprehensive health care that meets their individual needs, and considers the impact of their health issues on their life and wellbeing. It also aims to ensure that risks of harm for patients during health care are prevented and managed through targeted strategies.

The new standard is an important development in the second edition of the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards. It integrates patient care processes to identify patient needs and prevent harm.

Why the standard is important

Comprehensive care is the coordinated delivery of the total health care required or requested by a patient. This care is aligned with the patient's goals of care and healthcare needs, considers the impact of the patient's health issues on their life and wellbeing, and is clinically appropriate.

Comprehensive care means that the patient receives care that is planned and coordinated around their physical, mental and cognitive health needs. Patients should also continue to receive comprehensive and compassionate care at the end of their life.

The delivery of comprehensive care is based on partnering with patients, carers and families to identify, assess and manage patients' clinical risks, and determine their preferences for care; and on communication and teamwork between members of the healthcare team.

It is also important that patients at risk of specific harm are identified, and their risk of harm is prevented or minimised through specific strategies. This means that health service organisations should screen and monitor patients to assess their risk of pressure injuries, falls, poor nutrition or delirium, and harm arising from cognitive impairment or unpredictable behaviours. Organisations should also have in place systems and processes for care when risk is identified.

This standard describes the strategies and actions needed to deliver comprehensive care, and to prevent and minimise the risk of specific harms.

If the standard is in place ...

- There are **systems** to help clinicians deliver comprehensive care
- **Comprehensive care plans** that meet individual patient needs are developed using appropriate screening and assessment, and discussion of goals and preferences
- **Care is delivered** based on the comprehensive care plan, and in partnership with patients, carers and families
- Patients receive comprehensive care at the **end of their life**
- Patients at risk of **specific harm** are identified, and clinicians work to prevent and manage harm.



Changes from the first edition

The second edition of the NSQHS Standards streamlines actions and addresses gaps identified in the first edition.

The Comprehensive Care Standard is an important new development in the second edition of the NSQHS Standards. The new standard addresses cross-cutting issues underlying many adverse events, and recognises the need for care that is centred on patient goals and wellbeing. It also addresses important issues not included in the first edition: mental health and cognitive impairment, health literacy, end-of-life care, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. These have the potential for significant improvements in care.

The new standard aims to ensure that a patient's goals and risks of harm are identified so that comprehensive care plans can be developed and delivered to meet their needs. It also recognises the importance of teamwork and collaboration to provide comprehensive care. Along with new actions, the new standard includes actions from the Preventing and Managing Pressure Injuries Standard, and the Preventing Falls and Harm from Falls Standard from the first edition.

Key steps you can take to prepare for the second edition

- Review and strengthen the governance arrangements for providing comprehensive care
- Continue to embed effective multidisciplinary teamwork in all patient care
- Review structures and processes for screening and assessment and for planning, documenting and implementing care plans that have been developed with patients, carers and families to reflect their physical, mental and cognitive health care needs.

Further information

A full copy of the Comprehensive Care Standard, including the criteria and actions required for health service organisations to meet it, is contained in the NSQHS Standards (second edition). The NSQHS Standards (second edition) is available on the website of the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care at www.safetyandquality.gov.au.

The **Advice Centre** provides support on implementing the NSQHS Standards for health service organisations, surveyors and accrediting agencies.

EMAIL accreditation@safetyandquality.gov.au

PHONE 1800 304 056

National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards

The National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards were developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care with the Australian Government, state and territory partners, consumers and the private sector. The primary aim of the NSQHS Standards is to protect the public from harm and improve the quality of health care. They describe the level of care that should be provided by health service organisations and the systems that are needed to deliver such care.

The second edition of the NSQHS Standards were released in November 2017. Organisations will be assessed against the new standards from January 2019.

