



## 2 PARTNERING WITH CONSUMERS

This standard aims to ensure that consumers are partners in the design, delivery and evaluation of healthcare systems and services; and that patients are given the opportunity to be partners in their own care.

This standard, together with the Clinical Governance Standard, underpins all the other standards.

The revised standard recognises the importance of involving patients in their own care and providing clear communication to patients.

### Why the standard is important

Health care that is based on partnerships can benefit patients, consumers, clinicians, health service organisations and the health system. There is evidence that effective partnerships are linked to a positive experience for patients, as well as high-quality health care and improved safety.<sup>1</sup>

The involvement of patients and consumers in healthcare design, delivery and evaluation can improve service planning and development, communication, and the attitudes of healthcare providers.<sup>2</sup> Studies in the United States have found that delivering health care that is based on partnerships can reduce hospital costs, the costs per patient and the length of hospital stays.<sup>3</sup>

Partnerships are effective when people are treated with dignity and respect, information is shared openly, and participation and collaboration in healthcare processes are encouraged and supported.

This standard sets out the expectations for partnerships at all levels. These include the interactions between clinicians and patients; the participation of patients, carers and families in the design of a healthcare service, department or program; and the involvement of consumers in overall health governance, policy and planning.

### If the standard is in place ...

- There are **systems** to help patients, carers and families to be partners in healthcare design and evaluation
- Consumers are **partners in the design and governance** of the health service organisation
- The **delivery of care** is based on partnering with patients
- Patients are able to be **partners in their own care**
- The organisation **communicates** with patients in a way that supports effective partnerships.

## Changes from the first edition

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

The Partnering with Consumers Standard builds on the existing standard from the first edition. The new standard recognises the importance of involving patients in decision-making about their own care. It combines some of the actions on engaging consumers in governance from the first edition and adds some new actions on engaging consumers in their own care. All actions are now essential – recognising the primary importance of partnership in safe and high-quality care.

The new standard also recognises the importance of providing clear communication to patients to support health literacy, and addressing the diverse needs of consumers who use the service

## Key steps you can take to prepare for the second edition

- Review the involvement of consumers in the design, delivery and evaluation of systems and processes, and identify where these can be improved
- Consider your service context, and how consumers can be involved in the evaluation and redesign of structures and processes for improvement
- Address gaps by collaborating with consumers.

## Further information

A full copy of the Partnering with Consumers 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](http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au).

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

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## References

- 1 Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care. Patient centred care: improving quality and safety through partnerships with patients and consumers. Sydney: ACSQHC; 2011.
- 2 Crawford MJ, Rutter D, Manley C, Weaver T, Bhui K, Fulop N, et al. Systematic review of involving patients in the planning and development of health care. *BMJ* 2002;325(7375):1263.
- 7 Sweeney L, Halpert A, Waranoff J. Patient-centred management of complex conditions can reduce costs without shortening life. *Am J Man Care* 2007;13:84–92.

### **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.**