| Hospital in the Home (HITH)  Role of the Senior Medical Officer |  |
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# Hospital in the Home (HITH) overview

HITH is a specialised service that provides acute and subacute hospital equivalent care in a person’s residential environment.

HITH in Queensland is defined as providing care in a patient’s permanent or temporary residence for conditions requiring clinical governance, monitoring and/or input that would otherwise require treatment in a traditional hospital bed. The HITH program is focused exclusively on admitted inpatient care substitution with the admitting criteria governed by the authorised officer.

The assessment of whether substituted inpatient care can be safely given and the provision of that care, is the primary function of a HITH service. HITH services with a dedicated generalist skilled HITH Senior Medical Officer (SMO) as part of a multidisciplinary team, demonstrate improved clinical and operational capacity, function, and safety.

# Hospital in the Home Senior Medical Officer Role

## General description

This role provides strong governance, patient advocacy and engagement with the health system both tertiary and primary, through multiple domains of responsibility including, but not limited to: clinical care, patient selection, team coordination, communication and engagement, identifying and admitting patients, education, and advocacy for patients and the service.

## Scope of clinical practice

The scope of clinical practice includes but is not limited to, providing generalised inpatient comparable care in a HITH environment, including providing primary, tertiary, outpatient, inpatient and virtual care.

## Key responsibilities

The primary responsibility of the HITH SMO is to provide safe high value patient care, with other key responsibilities outlined below.

### Clinical care

* Review and assess patients being considered for HITH whatever their admission source (community, emergency, outpatients or in hospital) to determine if high value care can be safely provided in their residential environment
* Delegate appropriate assessment of the patient by nursing and other members of the multidisciplinary team
* Communicate patient suitability in a timely manner to health practitioners, other key stakeholders caring for the patient, and the patients or their carers
* Work closely with the HITH multidisciplinary team in daily service operations
* Deliver a 7 day per week service that allows all health care professionals including General Practitioners (GPs) timely access to direct HITH SMO clinical advice and referral pathways
* Actively select patients who would benefit from HITH by reviewing inpatients and emergency presentations
* Provide high value clinical care to patients in the HITH program
* Provide hospital comparable care with governance and oversight of the patient daily, including daily ward rounding, clinical review and appropriate therapy and investigations (this does not necessarily require a daily physical review by the doctor)
* Maintain patients’ safety while in HITH by daily clinical intervention, review, management, and leadership of a multidisciplinary team
* Formal admission and transfer of care and governance to the HITH service with appropriate assessment of the patient, a documented clinical management plan and specific demonstratable transfer of governance to the HITH SMO
* Ensure timely 24-hour /7 day per week identification of deterioration or the need for escalation of the patient by strong direct clinical governance and appropriate procedures and pathways
* Deliver specialist HITH expertise and advice for patients of surgical, medical and other specialty departments, in conjunction with relevant surgical/medical specialists and the broader interdisciplinary team
* Safely and timely transfer the care of patients to appropriate ongoing and maintenance care which may include, but is not limited to, their primary GP, post-acute funding programs, outpatient care or tertiary care
* Formally discharge and transfer patient’s care at cessation of the HITH episode of care to appropriate healthcare providers, through timely and effective communication consistent with best clinical handover process
* Coordinate patient care with other health care providers, including specialised review and advice as appropriate for safe high value quality patient-centric care
* Communicate in a timely manner with referring practitioners the progression and outcomes of HITH referrals
* Provide and oversee all aspects of patient clinical care, which may include inpatient consultations, inpatient reviews, outpatient consultations, daily reviews and home reviews
* Maintain 24-hour clinical governance with 24-hour medical support for patients on HITH, including being on call for advice, consultation, and escalations
* Actively engage in ongoing professional development to improve the clinical capability of the HITH service to care for a broader cohort of patients in terms of Diagnosis Related Groups (DRGs) and complexity.

### Clinical governance

* Provide clinical governance to all HITH patients, including their safe and timely transfer to and from other providers
* Provide 24-hour oversight and an escalation point for HITH patients
* Lead, coordinate and supervise the multidisciplinary team
* Work closely with the Nurse Unit Manager (NUM) and Clinical Nurse Consultant (CNC) on service developments and safety and quality matters
* Engage in and develop quality assurance programs for HITH, including audits and clinical meetings
* Monitor and investigate all clinical incidents
* Actively support risk management processes
* Lead and support continuous quality improvement and research
* Actively support Open Disclosure processes
* Develop clinical pathways, models of care and service delivery modes that enhance patients’ safety and expand the scope of clinical care delivered
* Provide authoritative and expert advice, counsel and leadership on clinical service delivery and development to appropriate committees and forums
* Monitor and manage appropriate key performance indicators to provide a safe high value service engaged in continual quality improvement.

### Engagement

* Champion and facilitate patient choice and access to HITH
* Communicate and engage with consumers to promote and improve health literacy related to HITH
* Communicate and engage with clinical teams individually, as partners in the provision of continuous holistic patient care
* Educate and inform the healthcare system of the existence, safety, and utility of HITH through education, presentations, research and collaborative projects
* Provide specialist HITH expertise and advice for patients of surgical and medical departments, in conjunction with the relevant surgical/medical specialists and the broader interdisciplinary team
* Engage with the appropriate Hospital and Health Service Executives to promote and expand HITH and escalate issues as required in conjunction with consumer engagement.

### Expansion

* Participate in the planning and development of strategic initiatives, programs and projects that support the expansion of HITH service capabilities, volumes and patient cohorts
* Actively support interdisciplinary service delivery and models of care that align HITH expansion with the strategic vision for the HITH service
* Promote the uptake of virtual health through the expansion of telehealth, remote patient monitoring and other IT solutions to improve the safety and quality of patient care.

### Education and research

* Mentor and supervise all relevant staff
* Maintain appropriate competencies
* Collaborate to provide maximum teaching and research opportunities for registrars and junior staff
* Provide close supervision and support of registrars and junior medical staff to ensure a high standard of supported clinical practice
* Support, as appropriate, training required for specialist registration as deemed by the colleges
* Engage in ongoing HITH research.

## Other requirements

It is expected that the Senior Medical Officer will meet the mandatory requirements for credentialling, and registration delineated in the local or state formal role description. It is strongly desirable that basic life support (BLS) and advanced life support (ALS) certification is a requirement given the need to support care of acute unexpected deterioration in an isolated setting.

## Version Control

| Version | Date | Comments |
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| 1.0 | 7 July 2021 | *Draft informed by Statewide HITH Working Group feedback.* |

## Document custodian

| Date created | Author | Comments |
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| 15 June 2021 | Dr Theodore Chamberlain, Statewide HITH Clinical Lead, Clinical Excellence Queensland | *Draft developed to assist public Statewide HITH services with Senior Medical Officer recruitment as required under Care4Qld Strategy 2021-2024* |