



CLINICIAN ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

2024–2026



Government
of South Australia

Health

Northern Adelaide
Local Health Network

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Northern Adelaide Local Health Network (NALHN) tampinhi Kurna miyurna yaiya yarta-mathanya Kurna yartarna-arra ngadlu warpulayinhi.

Ngadlu tampinhi purkarna pukinangku, yalaka, tarrkaritya.

Ngadlu tampinhi yaiya mathanya kuma parnaku tuwila yartangka.

Northern Adelaide Local Health Network (NALHN) acknowledges the Kurna people as the traditional custodians of the land where we proudly work and deliver health and wellbeing services.

We also honour Kurna Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise Aboriginal cultural authority, and their ongoing spiritual connection to Country.



ARTWORK AND STORY

The artwork was by Ngarrindjeri artist, Jordan Lovegrove. The Story was told by the NALHN Aboriginal Consumer Reference Group.

The artwork represents NALHN's journey assisting Aboriginal people with health and wellbeing and the pathway is NALHN's catchment area. The centre represents the core values of NALHN where everyone has a story, everyone matters, everyone contributes, and everyone grows. The pathways and footprints show we are all on a journey towards better health outcomes, working together with our consumers, their families and NALHN.

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**EVERYONE
HAS A STORY.
MATTERS.
CONTRIBUTES.
GROWS.**



GOVERNING BOARD CHAIR FOREWORD

As a clinician myself and now Governing Board Chair, I am delighted to present NALHN's Clinician Engagement Strategy 2024–26. This Strategy outlines our commitment to effectively engaging with clinicians across our hospitals and healthcare sites.

Our local health network runs on the remarkable efforts of the thousands of highly skilled health care professionals. This Strategy is our blueprint for how we will engage with our clinicians to enhance care to our community.

Over the last several years, the way in which we communicate and engage with our workforce has changed dramatically. As part of this Strategy, we have established new technological platforms to engage with our clinicians including, Team North Boards and social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. But nothing replaces face to face 'on the floor' interactions with our staff. The Board will continue to drive this through its own rounding and staff engagement activities.

Our staff are our greatest asset. Their tireless efforts to provide safe high quality care day in and day out are greatly appreciated. The Board seeks to drive an inclusive, safe and accountable culture that underpins this care. As part of this Strategy, we also look for opportunities to support the wellbeing of our clinicians through safe work practices and staff recognition.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank those who gave their time to develop this Strategy and I look forward to seeing the benefits of its implementation.



PROFESSOR JUDY SEARLE

**Governing Board, Chair
NALHN**

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER FOREWORD

I am delighted to share with you NALHN's Clinician Engagement Strategy 2024–26 which builds on key learnings from our 2019–2022 Strategy.

At NALHN, our values are embedded into everything we do – from the quality care we provide to consumers, to how we foster relationships with our staff. The dedication and commitment of our workforce is our strength, and this Strategy has been developed in partnership with our clinicians to ensure their voices are heard.

Whilst the majority of our workforce are clinicians, they are supported by an army of administrative staff who work hand-in-hand with our clinicians to support the function and efficiency of our health services. The values highlighted in this Strategy are widely applicable to all our staff who each have an important role in serving our community, however the initiatives in this strategy target our clinicians who oversee the treatment and care of our consumers.

Effective communication and engagement with our clinical workforce are vital in ensuring the quality of our services are upheld and that we provide a positive workplace culture for our staff. Current workforce shortages in the healthcare sector mean we must ensure we are a preferred employer by cementing our workplace culture as inclusive and responsive to the needs of our staff.

NALHN takes pride in its diverse workforce, and we firmly believe that increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment participation will not only strengthen our organisation and values, but also uphold our commitment to value our patients' time by providing culturally responsive and accessible health and wellbeing services to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Through collaboration with our community, we strive to become the employer of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in northern Adelaide. By working together, we can create an inclusive and supportive environment that fosters the growth, development, and empowerment of First Nation people within our workforce.

I look forward to engaging with our clinicians as we strive to continually improve the health outcomes of our diverse community in northern Adelaide.



KAREN PUVOGEL
Chief Executive Officer
NALHN



INTRODUCTION FROM THE CLINICAL LEADS

The development of this Clinician Engagement Strategy 2024–26 has provided us with an opportunity to better understand the evolving needs of our clinicians.

Prior to its development, we set the groundwork by inviting all NALHN clinicians to participate in a survey so we could determine their current priorities and how, when and where we can best engage with them.

We understand that clinician needs will change overtime and therefore, we must be flexible and provide multiple engagement platforms to cater for all clinicians’ requirements.

Our clinicians told us that these three key points were important to them:

1. Time considerations- providing clinicians with advance notice of engagement opportunities and allocating adequate time for them to consider proposals before responding.
2. Evidence of action- establishing feedback mechanisms to inform clinicians of end results.
3. Measurable actions- targeted activities which help us achieve our engagement objectives.

Through this Strategy, we aim to establish strong engagement practices with our staff and also consider broader factors that influence our clinicians’ ability to participate meaningfully in engagement opportunities.

We would like to thank all staff who provided their time and input into the development of this strategy and look forward to seeing the outcomes of its implementation over the next two years.



**ADJUNCT ASSOCIATE
PROFESSOR, VANESSA OWEN**
Executive Director,
Nursing and Midwifery
NALHN



DR JOHN MADDISON
Executive Director,
Medical Services
NALHN



SANDRA PARR
Executive Director,
Allied Health
NALHN

OUR LOCAL HEALTH NETWORK

The Northern Adelaide Local Health Network (NALHN) delivers services to more than 400,000 people in northern Adelaide. We provide a range of services: medical, surgical (both elective and emergency), obstetric, neonatal, paediatric, mental health, oncology, geriatric medicine, palliative care and rehabilitation. Increasingly, these are provided across a range of hospital, community and home-based settings.

NALHN is located in the fastest growing region in South Australia and as a result, demand on healthcare services is increasing. To effectively respond to this increasing pressure, timely and transparent engagement with NALHN's clinicians is vital.

This Clinician Engagement Strategy 2024–26 (the Strategy) provides guidance to NALHN's clinical engagement activities over the next two years and seeks to ensure that staff working across any roster or NALHN site feel connected, heard and have opportunities to contribute to the design and operation of NALHN services.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

In July 2019, amendments to the Health Care (Governance) Amendment Act 2018 (the Act) came into effect which decentralised the governance of South Australia's public health care system by establishing Local Health Network Governing Boards. Governing Boards provide oversight of local health service delivery and in turn, allow for strengthened engagement with clinicians at a localised level.

A key requirement of the Act is the Governing Board engages to develop an engagement strategy for clinicians, consumers and communities. This Strategy aligns with NALHN's below strategic documents:

- Strategic Plan 2020–25
- Aboriginal Workforce Plan 2023–31
- Aboriginal Health Framework and Action Plan 2021–26
- Consumer and Community Engagement Strategy 2020–25
- Research Strategy 2021–24

The Clinician Engagement Strategy will be enlivened through an implementation plan.



What is a clinician?

A clinician is any SA Health staff who participate in providing clinical care to patients. This includes all clinical professionals and other clinically trained staff not involved in direct patient contact. It includes staff at all levels or stages of their career.

FORMULATING THE STRATEGY

To inform the development of this Strategy, extensive research was undertaken on best practice clinical engagement models from hospitals and healthcare settings throughout Australia and internationally. This research provided NALHN with a baseline standard on which to develop this Strategy. These models recognise clinician burn-out as a fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic and associated risks of clinician disengagement.

A broad range of NALHN clinicians were surveyed to provide a better understanding of the engagement needs of clinicians. Survey results showed that clinicians are passionate about improving the health outcomes of NALHN’s community and want to be actively involved in operational decisions that will impact patient treatment and care.

Clinicians have expressed their need for timely engagement (both allocated time for participation in engagement initiatives as well as responsiveness- when matters arise, clinicians are communicated with promptly). The survey highlighted further opportunities for more clinician engagement with the leadership team.

The Strategic Executive Council (SEC) and Governing Board also provided insights via a series of workshops which explored pathways to improved clinician engagement. Similar challenges were also recognised by the leadership teams which built the basis of the key focus areas as identified on page 12.

Diagram 1: How the Strategy provides over-arching direction to NALHN engagement activities



As shown in Diagram 1, this Strategy provides an over-arching approach on what NALHN hopes to achieve through its clinician engagement. The NALHN Clinician Engagement Plan sits under this document and outlines how NALHN will achieve the objectives as mentioned in this Strategy in a practical and detailed manner. Subsequent project planning should then be undertaken to identify the logistical requirements and timelines for individual engagement opportunities.

OUR CLINICIANS

NALHN is committed to building a Local Health Network that is integrated and collaborative, and which acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and values and respects their contribution to delivering culturally safe and responsive health care.

NALHN employs over 6,300 staff and over 5,000 are clinicians who form an integral part of the design and delivery of NALHN's healthcare services. Our clinicians comprise of 70% nurses/midwives, 19% medical and 11% allied health clinicians, and Aboriginal Health Practitioners. Clinicians are supported by a workforce of 1,260 non-clinical staff who work across a range of NALHN sites to support healthcare operations.

We have a vision to grow, nurture and strengthen our Aboriginal workforce, which will be a critical part of our journey if we are to achieve our goal of becoming leaders in the provision of healthcare to our Aboriginal population.

OUR CLINICIANS WORK ACROSS VARIOUS NALHN SITES



Lyell McEwin Hospital

The major hospital in the north and north-east for emergency care, complex and multi-day surgery, medicine, obstetrics, paediatrics and outpatient services.



Modbury Hospital

A general hospital with emergency care, elective surgery, medicine, outpatient and sub-acute services, rehabilitation, geriatric and palliative care.



Northern Mental Health Services

Across community and hospital settings, including adult and older persons' mental health services and statewide forensic mental health services.



Watto Purrunga Aboriginal Primary Health Care Service

With four sites including Muna Paiendi (Elizabeth Vale), Kanggawodli (Dudley Park), Maringga Turtpandi (Gilles Plains) and Wonggangga Turtpandi (Port Adelaide).



Primary health, sub-acute and transitional care services

Including the GP Plus Health Care Centre Elizabeth, the Modbury GP Plus Super Clinic, and the satellite Gilles Plains GP Plus Super Clinic.



South Australian Intellectual Disability Service

Providing medical and mental health care for adults with diagnosed intellectual disability and complex needs.



Actively engaging clinicians at all NALHN sites is complex, particularly as clinicians have expressed that face-to-face engagement is their preferred method of communication. Given the nature of clinical work which is undertaken 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, in-person engagement will not always be possible. This Strategy identifies alternative engagement methods which aim to maximise clinicians' engagement across NALHN.

“ The purpose of clinician engagement is ultimately to improve the patient and staff experience. ”



“ NALHN's clinicians are from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and we understand that diversity has been part of the Australian landscape since before colonisation, when distinct Aboriginal nations spoke around 700 different languages. ”

CURRENT CLIMATE

Northern Adelaide is the fastest growing region in South Australia and there are increasing pressures on our frontline workers to meet the growing demands of our community.

NALHN's community has the highest population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers in metro Adelaide, South Australia .

Navigating the lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and clinical workforce shortages mean NALHN clinicians are at risk of burnout and exhaustion.

Evidence has shown that staff working in healthcare are among the most at risk of all industries to experience burnout and the preventable cascade of poor mental and physical health . This research has also shown that the below actions can make a difference:

- Social connections
- Positive and engaged leadership
- Opportunities for pre-briefings and de-briefings
- Positive workplace cultures that embrace staff recognition and appreciation.

Providing platforms for two-way communication will be vital in ensuring clinician's concerns and challenges are being heard and addressed. This Strategy also recognises a need to celebrate staff so they feel valued and appreciated.

Clinician input into the design and implementation of change management initiatives is considered essential, this Strategy provides the framework for this to occur.

“ Showcasing changes that have been made from staff suggestions will make a difference. ”





PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

This Strategy reflects the SA Government's 'Better Together: Principles of Engagement as required under the *Premier and Cabinet Circular PC036- Community and Stakeholder Engagement*.

These principles are:



WE KNOW WHY WE ARE ENGAGING

We are clear about what clinicians are being asked to consider and the extent to which they can influence the decision or outcome to avoid raising unrealistic expectations. We clearly articulate time frames, processes and how decisions will be communicated.



WE KNOW WHO TO ENGAGE

We identify stakeholders using a transparent process to ensure we promote trust in the engagement process. We ensure that clinicians at all levels have opportunities to contribute their opinions and expertise.



WE KNOW THE HISTORY

We determine what we already know and research background information. Where possible, we build on previous engagement activities and identify opportunities to coordinate current engagement activities. If a new process is required, we explain why.



WE START TOGETHER

Meaningful engagement takes time and continued effort. We start together to build a sense of ownership and to save time and resources down the track. Clinician engagement takes place before any decision is made.



WE ARE GENUINE

We are honest about our intent, and clear about our purpose and level of engagement. Our commitment to considered communication and engagement is reflected within our plans and actions. We listen to understand. We close the feedback loop and let clinicians know how they contributed to and influenced outcomes to show their voice has been heard.




WE ARE RELEVANT AND ENGAGING

We put our clinicians at the centre of the engagement process and make it relevant, accessible and interesting. We are creative, innovative and responsive in the various ways we engage.

KEY FOCUS AREAS

Key themes have been established by listening to clinician and leadership feedback. This Strategy will implement the below focus areas which are aligned to NALHN’s values to strengthen and guide NALHN’s engagement process with clinicians.

 <p>SERVICE DELIVERY, DESIGN & INNOVATION</p> <p>Clinicians are integral in the design and delivery of NALHN’s healthcare services through innovation and research – we value their expertise, opinion and input.</p>	 <p>COMMUNICATION</p> <p>Our engagement with clinicians will be genuine. We will utilise multiple communication platforms to maximise clinicians’ participation and ensure our engagement processes are timely, targeted and purpose-driven.</p>	 <p>LEADERSHIP</p> <p>Engagement is embedded as a crucial element within the leadership team. Leaders will foster a culture of trust where there is a connection between what is said, and what is being done.</p>	 <p>WELLBEING & CULTURE</p> <p>All clinicians feel valued, respected and their opinions are acknowledged.</p>
<h2>NALHN VALUES</h2>			
<p>EVERYONE HAS A STORY.</p> <p>We are compassionate and will walk a mile in your shoes – patients, families and staff.</p>	<p>EVERYONE MATTERS.</p> <p>We are welcoming, respectful and inclusive. In NALHN, rank doesn’t have it’s usual privileges.</p>	<p>EVERYONE CONTRIBUTES.</p> <p>Everyone builds the culture and makes NALHN better. We listen and learn.</p>	<p>EVERYONE GROWS.</p> <p>We promote recovery, wellbeing, creativity and innovation. We are all on a growth journey – patients, families and staff.</p>



OUR APPROACH AND ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES



FOCUS AREA 1: SERVICE DELIVERY, DESIGN AND INNOVATION

Our commitment:

- Creating opportunities for clinicians to provide input into the design of new healthcare facilities and the development of new services.
- Establishing platforms for clinicians to provide direct feedback to leadership on their perceived barriers to providing care.
- Encouraging and promoting staff to be innovative in the delivery of clinical care through quality improvements and translation of evidence-based research.
- Listening and acting on clinician advice and feedback regarding the design and delivery of NALHN services.

Measures of success:

- Clinicians provide feedback on the barriers to providing care via leadership listening posts, team huddles, Grand Round consultations, staff forums and world cafes.
- Recognise innovation through the NALHN Staff Awards initiative (Minister's Award for Innovation).
- Clinician involvement in Clinical Services Plans and Models of Care for Capital Works Projects.
- Clinicians are provided with opportunities to showcase their innovative work through platforms such as conferences, Grand Rounds, Ways of Working (WOW) forums and via media promotion.



FOCUS AREA 2: COMMUNICATION

Our commitment:

- Providing clinicians with multiple opportunities via various platforms to participate in engagement activities, while recognising that face-to-face communication is the preferred method of engagement. For example enhancing rounding opportunities and huddles.
- Ensuring communication is well-planned and timely - we understand clinicians are busy and need to schedule their participation in engagement activities ahead of time.
- Our engagement with clinicians will be genuine, transparent and targeted- we will be clear on the purpose of our engagement.
- 'Closing the loop' by communicating final outcomes of engagement processes to clinicians.

Measures of success:

- Establishment of new timely platforms for clinician engagement such as the NALHN Workforce Facebook Group, leadership listening posts, REDCap (data collection app), North 4 Boards and NALHN Television News.
- Development of regular leadership communications such as listening posts and leadership insights incorporated into existing internal communication channels.
- Forward calendar of engagement opportunities available to clinicians via Inside North (intranet) and the Weekly Wrap.



FOCUS AREA 3: LEADERSHIP

Our commitment:

- Leadership recognises workforce shortages and the current climate of clinician burnout within the healthcare sector.
- Staff know who their leaders are, and feel comfortable reaching out to them.
- Establishing a stronger presence of leadership ‘on the floor’ to see first-hand the challenges and successes of service models.
- Leaders are responsive to feedback and the needs of clinicians.

Measures of success:

- Strengthened engagement practices that are frequent and consistent via leadership listening posts and the introduction of CEO updates in NALHN’s weekly internal newsletter.
- Increased visibility of executives and the leadership team ‘on the floor’ and across various NALHN sites.
- Workforce shortages are addressed via innovative recruitment techniques, scope of practice and workforce innovations.
- Implementation of staff ‘thank you’ and wellbeing events across NALHN.



FOCUS AREA 4: WELLBEING AND CULTURE

Our commitment:

- The safety and wellbeing of all staff is paramount in the delivery of NALHN services.
- Fostering an inclusive culture where all clinicians feel valued, heard and appreciated.
- All engagement will be undertaken with trust and respect.
- Embracing opportunities to celebrate clinicians and their vital contribution to the community.

Measures of success:

- Provision of support initiatives for clinicians, such as self-care sessions integrated into Clinical Education and the establishment of Mental Health First Aid Officers across NALHN.
- Investment in service recognition programs to celebrate clinician tenure as well as outstanding service and commitment via the NALHN Staff Awards.
- Outcome of surveys such as the SA Government ‘People Matters Employee Survey’.
- Stronger collaboration between frontline workers and those who design and manage health services via the establishment of a new Health and Safety Representative Committee.
- Supporting Aboriginal staff to participate in the ‘Deadly Team. Deadly Communities’ Aboriginal Employee Network.
- Development and implementation of a Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Belonging Strategy and People Experience Strategy.



EVALUATING OUR ENGAGEMENT WITH CLINICIANS

NALHN has undertaken broad consultation and research to inform the development of this Strategy.

We have listened to the needs of our clinicians and put in place additional communication channels to respond to the changing pressures that face our clinicians, hospitals, and services. The results of the clinician survey showed that clinicians want more engagement with the NALHN's leadership team as well as opportunities to meet with them 'on the floor' operationally.

Additional engagement opportunities have been introduced through CEO listening posts, which involve the CEO regularly visiting staff common areas to meet with clinicians (drop-in sessions). In addition, regular CEO communiques will be sent to staff (via the Weekly Wrap) to inform clinicians of the key activities and critical issues impacting NALHN.

The introduction of more digital platforms such as the NALHN Workforce Facebook Group, NALHN TV news, and REDCap (a data collection application), and North 4 Boards aim to provide clinicians with easier and more timely access to communications.

We recognise the engagement needs of our clinicians will evolve over time and NALHN must be flexible when and how it engages.

The evaluation of this Strategy will not only be defined by the achievement of actions under each focus area but via additional staff surveys that will be distributed annually to identify future improvements to NALHN's clinical engagement processes.



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INFORMATION
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