

A Partnership Framework for Health Advisory Councils and Country Health SA

A guide to collaboration and engagement to
help meet the health care needs of country
South Australians

2017-2022

A summary document



In short

The Partnership Framework for Health Advisory Councils and Country Health SA has been developed to validate the position of the Health Advisory Councils (HACs) as a key consumer engagement and advocacy structure across country South Australia and to raise the profile of HACs across country health sites and communities.

Recognising the value of sustainable HACs in strengthening health services, and in response to the wide ranging constructive feedback provided by these participants, Country Health SA and the Governing Council asked the Presiding Members Panel to establish a working party to respond. This working party comprised key Country Health SA staff and interested HAC members, and was tasked with constructing an improved engagement strategy specifically between Country Health SA and HACs. Two key themes emerged:

1. The need for improved communication pathways and more effective engagement opportunities between Country Health SA and HACs, and between HACs and their respective communities.
2. The requirement that the Annual HAC Conference be used as a tool by the HAC membership to inform, engage, influence decisionmaking on statewide issues relevant to the HACs and their communities, and to provide educational opportunities to HAC members.

Purpose

The purpose of the Framework is to establish the Health Advisory Council structure as the key consumer organisation in the Country Health SA system.

The Framework acknowledges the special role that HACs have in their local communities and the value systematic local engagement can bring to country health services. It also acknowledges the legislative responsibility applied to HACs that ensures they are best placed to provide a broad whole-of-community perspective to community participation and engagement.

HACs also acknowledge that representation by other consumer, carer, and community groups at various levels in Country Health SA is important and is not excluded by this specific partnership that Country Health SA has with HACs.

Strategies

1. Partnership between Country Health SA and HACs

Our commitment is to work in a partnership framework that will:

- > strengthen the quality and timeliness of information sharing and consultation processes
- > provide improved collaboration and engagement opportunities
- > empower HACs to effectively engage with their communities
- > provide accurate advice and successful advocacy on behalf of their communities.

Under this strategy there are 11 objectives with corresponding actions relating to resourcing, health literacy and governance, promotion and communication, consultation and information sharing, working relationships and partnerships with staff, Aboriginal Health Experts by Experience and capacity building.

2. Partnership between HACs and their communities

Our commitment is to work in a partnership framework that will:






- > support the effective provision of advice to communities
- > afford improved consultation and engagement opportunities
- > empower our communities to be involved in reasonable and authentic decision-making processes.

Under this strategy there are eight objectives with corresponding actions relating to resourcing, promotion and communication, representation in the broader community, population health needs planning, capacity building and decision-making.

Principles and values

The Framework embraces principles and values developed by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2). The IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation was developed as a framework of participation and engagement and is recognised internationally as a guide to best practice in community participation for health and other service industries.

The IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

	INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION → → → → →				
	 INFORM	 CONSULT	 INVOLVE	 COLLABORATE	 EMPOWER
Public Participation Goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the Public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

(Used with permission from the International Association of Public Participation www.iap2.org. This version adapted by the South Australian Government's Better Together program www.bettertogether.sa.gov.au)

Other key values identified by the Partnership Framework include:

- > early engagement
- > honesty
- > developing trust
- > respectful behaviour
- > communications in appropriate language and in accessible formats
- > always identifying the role and purpose of any message or activity
- > creating meaningful opportunities to engage.

Country Health SA engages because we know that partnering with consumers and community in the planning, design and evaluation of health services results in safer and better quality services for all.

Health Advisory Councils engage because we recognise the wealth of knowledge and experience that our community has, particularly with relation to the community's health and wellbeing.

Evaluation

A consumer participation activity is required to be recorded as ongoing evidence to support health service accreditation (NSQHSS Standard 2).

The Framework and any developed operational plan will be evaluated through an annual review and reporting process facilitated by Country Health SA in consultation with the Presiding Members Panel.

For more information

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