

Hospital in the Home

As demand for health care continues to grow, Australia's public hospital budgets are increasingly under pressure. One way to reduce pressure on public hospitals is to reduce the number of admissions that would have been avoidable if timely and adequate non-hospital care had been provided. In 2012-13, there were over 307,000 potentially avoidable admissions to public hospitals relating to chronic disease.

Hospital in the Home (HITH) is one option for reducing admissions to hospital. HITH programs provide active treatment in a patient's home for conditions that would otherwise require admission to hospital. Programs may result in avoiding admission completely or may allow early discharge reducing the length of the admission.

For selected patient groups including pneumonia, deep vein thrombosis and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, HITH programs have been shown to:

- reduce mortality
- reduce readmissions
- reduce costs
- increase patient and carer satisfaction.

AHHA POSITION:

- ✧ Innovative approaches to health service delivery are necessary to reduce demand on hospitals and help contain costs.
- ✧ The development and expansion of programs and bundled funding packages that support safe, appropriate and cost-effective home-based alternatives to hospital admission must be a priority for governments and health services.

- ✧ HITH programs are a safe, appropriate and cost effective alternative for a range of patient groups.
- ✧ HITH programs can reduce unnecessary admissions to hospital, releasing resources to care for those for whom hospital admission is the only option.
- ✧ Decreasing avoidable admissions can reduce 'bed-block', which in turn helps hospitals achieve emergency department and elective surgery performance targets.
- ✧ Funding models must support the provision of safe, effective, patient-centred care in the most appropriate environment.
- ✧ Activity-based funding models can encourage adoption of innovative cost-effective service models by the hospital sector.
- ✧ While hospitals currently fund a range of HITH programs, other primary care and community-based providers need a defined funding source to encourage further expansion of services.
- ✧ The effective governance of HITH programs requires well developed communication and collaboration between service providers. The roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in care delivery must be clearly defined.
- ✧ Investment in the development and implementation of appropriate information and communication technology systems is necessary to manage the clinical and personal risks involved in delivering care out of the hospital setting.