

JustHealth Consultants is the consultancy service of AHHA, launched to support Australian healthcare organisations at national, state, regional hospital and community levels across all sectors to meet complex governance and organisational requirements of today's healthcare system.

**SERVICE EXAMPLE:**

## ARTHRITIS AUSTRALIA RHEUMATOLOGY NURSE IMPACT EVALUATION AND REVIEW

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**Client**                      **Arthritis Australia**

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**Services**                    **Literature review, stakeholder consultation, economic analysis**

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**Context**                    Around 1.7 million Australians live with chronic, inflammatory forms of arthritis and internationally models of care involving rheumatology nurses for people with severe and inflammatory forms of arthritis are considered best practice. At the time of the project there were very few rheumatology nurses in Australia and limited recognition of rheumatology nursing as a speciality.

Arthritis Australia commissioned JustHealth Consultants to assess the scope, activities and value of rheumatology nurses in the management of people with chronic inflammatory arthritis in Australia – from the perspective of patients, health care practitioners and the broader health system.

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**Approach**                    The project sought to understand the current evidence regarding the impact of rheumatology nurses; describe the existing rheumatology nursing workforce in Australia; assess the benefits in terms of patient experience and outcomes and health system efficiencies and costs of an increased utilisation of rheumatology nurses; and develop strategic recommendations to build the workforce.

To achieve this an extensive literature review of both local and international published research and grey literature was undertaken. Workforce and patients were consulted via online survey and in-depth interviews. Consultation involved a number of targeted online surveys and in-depth interviews with patients, carers and the health workforce, including rheumatologists, general practitioners, allied health, support workers and rheumatology nurses.

A cost benefit analysis was undertaken to determine the feasibility of funding rheumatology nurse positions from the perspective of the service provider and the wider health system. The final report incorporated a set of strategic recommendations for action by stakeholders across the sector.

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**Result**

Arthritis Australia launched the final report *Rheumatology nurses: Adding value to arthritis care* at a Parliamentary Friends of Arthritis Breakfast in October 2017, during which Minister for Health, Greg Hunt, committed to developing a National Strategic Action Plan for Arthritis that would include support for rheumatology nursing.

The final report can be accessed at

[https://arthritisaustralia.com.au/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/AA\\_RheumatologyNursesReport\\_screen-1.pdf](https://arthritisaustralia.com.au/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/AA_RheumatologyNursesReport_screen-1.pdf)

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