Action Against Violence in NSW Hospitals Working Group

Work Plan: June 2023 – December 2023

Vision – that all NSW hospitals are free from work-related violence and aggression so workers can safely deliver high quality care.

Work-related violence is any incident in which someone is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.

The Action Against Violence in NSW Hospitals Working Group (Working Group) has been established following the completion of a systems thinking project facilitated by SafeWork NSW to identify issues in response to the increasing incidence of work-related violence against workers in the NSW hospital environment.

The Working Group was established to develop key strategies, priorities and initiatives to address the issue of work- related violence in NSW Hospitals for implementation by PCBUs.

The Working Group will:

- influence policy and decision-makers;
- promote and communicate key messages to stakeholders and the community;
- act as advocates for driving change, and
- promote and advocate for safer work, safer care in the health care sector.

Background

The initiatives undertaken by the Working Group will align with the following strategies:

- The SafeWork NSW Regulatory Priorities 2023 focusing on psychological safety and respect at work.
- The Health Care and Social Assistance Action Plan to 2023 which has a focus area of preventing violence and aggression.
- The Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2023–2033 which identifies health care and social assistance as a targeted high risk industry.

Recent research that applied systems thinking to the issue of work-related violence in hospital settings in NSW identified nine key themes. These themes will underpin the approach to the key strategies, priorities and initiatives of the Working Group.

1. Risk management
2. Sufficient & capable staffing
3. Timely & effective incident response
4. Promoting the safety & dignity of patients & healthcare worker
5. Incident reporting & learning systems
6. Managing risk of patients with high propensity of violence
7. The design of hospital environments
8. Collaboration, consultation & coordination across the system
9. Public attitudes and behaviours towards healthcare workers

Outcome/Approach	Activity	Activity Lead
Prevention by design (work environment)	• Research available evidence-based resources (Australian and international) on prevention by design principles and develop a catalogue.	SafeWork NSW
	• Share and promote catalogue	All working group members
	• Engage with Health Infrastructure to identify how they use the Australasian Health Facility Guidelines and explore opportunities for collaboration.	SafeWork NSW
Good work design (systems of work)	• Develop a suite of case studies specific to good work design in relation to the prevention, management, and investigation of work-related violence incidents in hospitals.	SafeWork NSW
	• Develop a fact sheet on practical mechanism's for how to communicate and provide feedback on incidents and near misses – i.e. staff newsletter, beginning of shift handover, whiteboard in nurses station.	SafeWork NSW
	• Share learnings and resources on good work design in hospitals.	All working group members
	• Review existing WHS training for managers and develop a gap analysis and recommendations on what to include to better address work-related violence.	All working group members
	• Share and promote *WHS Duties and Obligations* poster.	All working group members
	• Publish systems thinking resources developed by University of the Sunshine Coast and release introductory animation video. • Working group members promote resources, implement, and participate in evaluation.	All working group members
Guidance and systems to support consultation, collaboration, and coordination	• Identify existing guidance on effective consultation, including translated resources, and adapt to hospital setting where required.	SafeWork NSW
	• Share and promote guidance.	All working group members
Improved incident investigation, reporting and learning systems	• Identify and develop a list of incident investigation tools/systems used by public and private hospitals and share with working group members.	SafeWork NSW
Awareness raising and behavioural change	• Share insights and research on the effectiveness of community attitudes and behavioural change initiatives on work-related violence.	SafeWork NSW
	• Share insights and research on the effectiveness of organisational prevention interventions on work-related violence.	All working group members
Compliance and enforcement action	• SafeWork NSW to share learnings of compliance activities relevant to the sector.	SafeWork NSW