

Optimism on health quality at launch of Practice Standards

by Lynn Saul

A College quality workshop held on September 23 was very timely following on from the 1st Asia Pacific Forum on Quality Improvement in Health Care and falling during the Ministry of Health Quality in Health theme week. The workshop also coincided with a three day visit from Dr Donald Berwick, the CEO from the Institute for Healthcare in Boston, and a leader in quality in health care in the USA, which allowed Dr Berwick to be a key note speaker at the workshop.

An enthusiastic group of 60 people from general practice organisations, consumer groups and Ministry of Health attended the workshop in Wellington.

The focus for the day was Clinical Governance and Integrated Care. The scene was set for the day by consumers and general practice organisations talking about what they saw as the key quality issues facing New Zealand general practice. Dr Jonathan Simon provided a clear overview of Clinical Governance and this was followed by Jane Millington who talked about developing a framework for clinical governance in First Health.

Dr Berwick provided a motivational presentation on "Crossing the Quality Chasm" a report on proposed redesign of the American Health care



Dr Donald Berwick (right) makes a point during the panel discussion, watched by Dr Jonathan Simon (left) and Professor Gregor Coster.

system. Dr Berwick's presentation on the USA experience reaffirmed for us that NZ is not alone with the quality issues we face. Dr Berwick was very enthusiastic about NZ's ability to improve health quality, seeing that we were already well ahead of many countries. Dr Berwick identified the core principles for managing quality as:

- ⊙ An intention to improve
- ⊙ Focus on customers
- ⊙ Focus on process and systems
- ⊙ Proper use of measurement and statistics
- ⊙ Involvement of everyone
- ⊙ Continuous testing of changes
- ⊙ Improving upstream
- ⊙ Collaboration, valuing interdependency
- ⊙ Key role of leaders

Speakers choose the workshop as an opportune time to present or launch new reports. The College

launched the final report of the RNZCGP Practice Standards Field Trial.

This report summarised information collected from 81 practice assessments using the tool "Aiming for Excellence in General Practice". Professor Gregor Coster and Dr Stephen Buetow gave a joint presentation on their paper "Quality in the NZ Health System". This paper was commissioned by the National Health Committee (NHC) and is the background document to "Safe Systems Supporting Self Care" which was released by NHC in the week following the workshop.

Professor Laurence Malcolm launched the CLANZ report on "Clinical leadership, clinical governance and quality initiatives in NZ PCOs".

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IPAs/DHBs showcased their quality initiatives. Participants from the day gave positive feedback, finding it an opportunity to gain information on what is happening around the country and network with others working in similar areas.

Key messages from the day:

- ⊙ There are large numbers of quality initiatives taking place in NZ general practice but there is a need to coordinate these and share the learning experiences from these initiatives.
- ⊙ Put the patient at the centre of care.
- ⊙ We need to change the healthcare culture from one of blame to one of curiosity and learning from successes and mistakes.
- ⊙ Quality is the responsibility of all levels of healthcare and all levels of an organisation.
- ⊙ Comparing quality work internationally, New Zealand is doing well in its response to implementing quality health care strategies and systems.