



Queensland
Government

Preventing pitfalls of service planning through early engagement of allied health

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Background

As a result of infrastructure change, one Queensland Health facility sought to engage contract foodservice providers to meet their catering needs.

During the planning and consultation phase there was no engagement of a dietitian and minimal speech pathology input.

Findings

Non-adherence to standards impacted on patient safety & clinical care.

- No on-site allergen identification breached the Health Service Directive: Food and Nutrition Safety
- Texture modified foods did not comply with the National Standards for Texture Modified Foods & Fluids (2007)
- Food choices, quality and quantity of food provision did not meet the Qld Health Nutrition Standards for Meals and Menus (2011)

Project Actions

- Patient safety concerns raised and placed on facility's risk register
- Advocated for extra FTE to conduct service assessment
- Engaged key stakeholders in a solution focussed collaborative partnership
- Reported to the Hospital and Health Service Board of Directors
- Maintained open and transparent lines of communication



Evaluation

The pitfalls of not engaging relevant allied health professionals in the planning phase of a major change to service delivery were:

- Missed opportunity for timely identification and proactive avoidance of issues prior to the implementation of new foodservice provision
- Inadequate consultation negatively impacted on consumers, their families, staff and the organisation

Conclusion

- Engaging relevant stakeholders delivers safer and better quality outcomes and is critical to the successful delivery of services
- Allied health have specialist skills and knowledge that are valuable when changes to service delivery interface with their scope of practice
- Allied health can improve their impact by engaging influential allied health leaders to promote, advocate and raise the profile of allied health to ensure involvement in relevant strategic planning opportunities