

## Introduction of Physiotherapy

# Allied Health Assistant Clinics in Community Care

### Introduction

Demand for physiotherapy services is steadily increasing. The Service sought to improve utilisation of qualified allied health assistants (AHA) and physiotherapists by introducing AHA clinics to provide review appointments, between physiotherapist follow up.



### Methods

Literature review to scope AHA roles in other jurisdictions. Review of Australian Physiotherapy Association position statement on AHA scope of practice. Education for staff on roles, practice scope and appropriate referrals. Business rules, referral criteria and pathway developed. Clinics set up. Focus groups with AHAs and physiotherapists. Telephone surveys conducted with patients.

### Results

- 71 occasions of service were provided in 6 months, equating to 35.5 hours which physiotherapists used for more complex patients and new assessments.
  - Episode of care reduced from 150.9 days to 98.6 days = 34%.
  - AHAs reported increased job satisfaction and structure to their roles.
  - Physiotherapists reported feeling more confident that exercises were being performed regularly.
- In addition, they had time for more complex casework.

There were no adverse issues or dissatisfaction reported through patient feedback. Comments included:

*“They reinforced what I was doing”*

*“They helped me understand what to do”*

**AHA review clinics have increased from 2 to 4 clinics due to the success of this project.**

### Conclusion

AHA Physiotherapy clinics benefit staff and patients by providing more frequent review appointments and reducing the overall episode of care.