



FACT SHEET

Integrated Care Strategy

NSW Ambulance has initiated a number of key clinical and demand management programs in recent years.

The Integrated Care Strategy focuses on improving the integration and connectedness of these initiatives with other health and social service providers, Medicare Locals and non-government organisations within and across Local Health District (LHD) boundaries.

The work profile of NSW Ambulance is continuing to evolve from its traditional focus on acute care and transport to one of ever-increasing out-of-hospital care provision. This is due primarily to the changing demographics of our patients.

NSW Ambulance's new concept of operations is based on four domains (see diagram, below). NSW Ambulance has a unique position as the health-care arm of the emergency services, and the emergency arm of the health service.

The domain of urgent/unscheduled care offers the most opportunity and likelihood for providing care in the home – in consultation with other health service providers using an integrated approach where necessary – with no need for transport to hospital. It is, therefore, this domain which will have the most impact on decreasing hospital presentations and connecting patients with the most appropriate health care.



Right patient, right care, right place, right time

The philosophy of an integrated care approach involves the provision of continuous, effective and efficient care that responds to a person's whole of health needs. This is a partnership with the patient, their carer, family and health care providers, ensuring the patient receives the right care in the right place at the right time in the most effective manner. An integrated and coordinated approach from NSW Ambulance ensures paramedics are linking patients with the appropriate service providers and are not working in isolation or duplicating services.

Managing and delivering key ambulance clinical programs involves input from many areas within NSW Ambulance, including the Clinical Services and Service Delivery directorates as well as operational managers and paramedics across the organisation. The integrated care opportunities proposed in this strategy are based on the principle of 'centrally-coordinated and locally-delivered', so it is important the capability and capacity of NSW Ambulance and LHDs in each local area is clearly identified and understood.

A cohort of patient groups with a clear affiliation with the philosophy associated with integrated care has been identified, enabling NSW Ambulance to focus on programs which enhance service provision to these patients. These programs would see paramedics working in collaboration with the patient and care providers to deliver:

- aged care
- palliative and end-of-life care
- referral of low acuity patients to alternate destinations
- frequent user management
- mental health care

“ Today's paramedic is a clinician – focusing on the provision of emergency care from unscheduled primary health care through to acute emergency care – contributing to the broader health effort. ”



FACT SHEET – INTEGRATED CARE STRATEGY

Predicted outcomes

These integrated care initiatives seek to add value to the estimated savings for the wider health system and are calculated in terms of non-presentation to the Emergency Department/per patient. Additionally, NSW Ambulance will benefit from increased capacity due to ambulance resources being 'freed up' sooner, not contributing to the causation of sustainable access issues in the ED.

As the uptake of these programs progress, there will be a need to ensure sufficient capacity is available to provide key administrative, data evaluation and management functions within NSW Ambulance's Clinical Services directorate.

The predicted outcomes of a coordinated approach to integrated care models are:

- Building of confidence and networks amongst LHDs, local community health providers, Primary Health Networks, non-government health providers and across NSW Health.
- Improved patient experience of the health system.
- Reduced waiting times for patients as they navigate the system.
- Improved health outcomes.
- Reduced avoidable or unnecessary hospitalisations.
- Reduced duplication of services.
- Clarity in relation to the role of NSW Ambulance across the identified patient groups.
- Reduced transports and presentations to EDs.



Interrelated initiatives

The integrated care programs will play a pivotal role in connecting health care services with other well established NSW Ambulance initiatives, including those outlined below which specifically address challenges of managing demand around low acuity patients.

Low Acuity Patient pathways

This initiative has provided paramedics with enhanced patient assessment and history taking training, enabling them to make safe decisions regarding non-transport alternatives (including self-care with advice and referral) to offer to low-risk patients when transport to an ED is not the best care option. The primary aim of entering into low acuity patient pathways is to deliver the right patient to the right place to receive the most appropriate care.

Paramedic Connect

Paramedic Connect comprises a range of initiatives which integrate paramedics into the broader health workforce in small rural communities to provide a more comprehensive range of care options whilst maintaining emergency response capacity. It involves community and primary health care and shared training.

Clinical Emergency Response System (CERS) Assistance

Paramedics have been identified as a valuable resource in the escalation of care for patients in rural and remote locations across NSW. CERS Assist means that, where NSW Ambulance has the capacity to respond, paramedics will provide a pre-determined emergency response to the level of basic life support, i.e. cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, including airway management and defibrillation skills.

CERS Assist means that paramedics work as part of the health care facility team providing additional assistance in the management of a rapidly deteriorating (red zone) patient until local resources are activated or medical retrieval services are available.