



SHORTLISTED

Enhancing Clinical Governance through Improved Risk Management for Ageing Clients

Summary

The Clients at Risk (C@R) process at Hobart District Nursing Service Inc. involves a specialist clinical nurse working alongside case managers and care coordinators to oversee complex, high-risk clients. This initiative adopts a clinical case conference approach, proactively reviewing clients identified as at risk or experiencing deterioration. By integrating structured oversight, timely interventions, and multi-disciplinary coordination, the C@R process enhances clinical governance and strengthens risk management, ultimately improving client safety and well-being.

The Challenge

An increasing number of reported incidents, hazards, and near misses among ageing clients signaled the need for a more robust risk management framework. The rise in high-level care packages and extended service wait times highlighted growing clinical risks, necessitating a structured governance approach to mitigate them.

Key challenges included:

- **Escalating Complexity:** Clients required more intensive care, leading to increased case complexity and workload pressures on case managers and care coordinators.
- **Data Visibility & Communication Gaps:** Incident trends revealed inefficiencies in monitoring and responding to deteriorating conditions, requiring better oversight.
- **Fragmented Risk Management:** Traditional processes lacked a formal mechanism for timely intervention, increasing the risk of adverse health events.



The Solution

The District Nurses implemented an enhanced clinical governance process, integrating risk assessment, proactive oversight, and continuous monitoring:

- **Specialist Oversight:** A Complex Deterioration Nurse (CDN) supports case managers in coordinating timely and targeted interventions with allied health and medical professionals.
- **Continuous Monitoring:** A case conference approach ensures all stakeholders are informed of emerging risks through a dedicated communication tool.
- **Stronger Documentation:** Mandatory client notes enable real-time oversight, improving early issue detection.

Results and Next Steps

The C@R initiative has significantly improved patient safety and workforce capability:

- **Timely Interventions:** The structured approach ensures early detection and intervention, reducing client risk.
- **Increased Workforce Confidence:** Case managers report improved ability to manage complex cases and incidents.
- **Robust Incident Management:** Despite increasing client numbers and complexity, the program's oversight has stabilised the rate of falls, deterioration, and medication concerns.

- **Scalable Implementation:** The structured governance approach allows for adaptation across similar healthcare settings, ensuring sustained improvements in risk management.
- **Data-Driven Impact:** Surveyed case managers reported enhanced ability to manage complex cases, while incident data trends indicate stabilised risk levels despite increased client complexity.

The Clients at Risk program stands as a model for proactive, structured clinical governance, reinforcing safer healthcare experiences for ageing clients.