Allied health education and training: A framework to advocate for improvements.

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Background

The Health Education and Training Institute (HETI) provides state-wide leadership and coordination of education and training for allied health professionals working within NSW Health. Education and training should be driven by the provision of high quality, safe and evidence-based client care. There should be a shared responsibility between the organisation, clinicians and managers, but does this happen in practice?

Historically, in the allied health professions, there has been a poverty of formal policies, standards and guidelines to set expectations for post-graduate education and professional development. This differs from other professions, such as medicine, who traditionally have highly structured post-graduate training programs. As allied health professionals form a critical component of the health workforce, there is a need to improve the quality of education and training available for allied health professionals, and ensure education and training is embedded as core business. This is of particular importance in the current context of continuing professional development requirements for national registration in some allied health professions.

Aims

To develop a set of best practice guidelines to assist allied health directors and managers to advocate for improvements in education and training. These guidelines would provide a framework to enable the development of local systems and processes to support governance.

Methods

A series of consultation forums and focus groups were conducted with senior leaders in allied health across NSW Health. The Allied Health Portfolio of HETI developed a ‘Best Practice Governance Framework for Allied Health Education and Training’, to provide guidance to managers and senior allied health clinicians within NSW Health. The framework was developed based on existing literature, policy and guidelines to develop six key areas of education of training for allied health in the NSW Health context.

Results

The framework was produced with input from allied health stakeholders across NSW Health. Further work is now being done to evaluate implementation and develop online modules to support local implementation.

Conclusions

This presentation will demonstrate how this practical framework aims to raise the standard of education and training, both quality and access, for allied health professionals across NSW. It is envisaged that fostering the development of local
governance systems based on best practice would ultimately assist in developing a skilled allied health workforce which is responsive to the needs of their clients. It will include preliminary findings/feedback from the initial implementation phase.