

Breast Care Nurse Needs Assessment

Client: McGrath Foundation

Services: Research and consultation to inform a report on future breast care nurse requirements nationally

Context

The AHHA conducted for the The McGrath Foundation an extensive assessment to determine the level of breast care nurse services required in the future to ensure the Foundation remained on track to meet the needs of new and existing patients and families.

The McGrath Foundation raises money to place breast care nurses in communities across all regions of Australia.

Approach

The project included survey-based data collection, stakeholder interviews, and desktop research to achieve the outcomes of the study. These included development of a comprehensive list of breast care nurse services available in Australia, a prioritised list of locations requiring the support of a dedicated McGrath breast care nurse and the overall number and full-time equivalency of dedicated breast care nurse positions required to meet the needs of all Australians diagnosed with breast cancer.

The AHHA team examined the evolution of the breast care nurse model of care in the past decade, reflecting changing technology, treatment strategies, increased survivorship and patient needs. Central to the approach was the understanding that until advances in the prevention and treatment of breast cancer are achieved, there will be a continual and growing demand for breast care nurse services.

Detailed analysis of the research and stakeholder survey data focused on identification of the impact of provider location, service type and breast care nurse status on variance in workload and service mix. The reported workloads and service characteristics were compared with the data contained in the NBCC *Specialist breast nurses: an evidence-based model for Australian practice*. This, in turn, informed the workload parameters incorporated in the workforce projections which were used to provide a basis for service planning and evaluation.

Result

The 10-month study contributed to the McGrath Foundation's report *Keeping Abreast of Future Need: the Growing Demand for Breast Care Nurses*, and released to coincide with the Foundation's 10th Anniversary. It found that increased breast cancer incidence, a surge of people living with breast cancer, an ageing population and increased patient contacts meant that demand for breast care nurses is expected to outstrip supply.

The McGrath Foundation is continuing to create new breast care nurse positions to address this demand.