
FACT Program: Families and Carers as part of healthcare teams

Pilot Project - Health Services Expression of Interest

OFFICIAL

Safer Care Victoria (SCV) is seeking to partner with hospitals across metropolitan, regional, and rural Victoria to participate in a pilot project to promote the involvement of families and carers in acute healthcare teams.

Is your organisation:

- a public or private health service in metropolitan, regional, or rural Victoria?
- looking to improve patient experiences and outcomes?
- looking to support family/carer involvement in healthcare teams?
- increasing patient and carer engagement in healthcare?
- looking to improve staff and patient satisfaction?

If you responded yes, we invite you to apply to join our pilot program!

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic fundamentally changed the way patients in Victorian hospitals access support from their families and carers. The implementation of visitor restrictions to all Victorian health services was associated with an increase in avoidable harm to patients across the state and a reduction in patient, family/carer and staff satisfaction across the healthcare system. This highlighted the positive difference families and carers have on a patient's stay in hospital.

The Families and Carers as part of healthcare teams (FACT) program came about following overwhelming feedback from Victorian healthcare consumers and workers identifying family centred care as a key priority area of work. Literature also supports that encouraging patients and their families/carers to partner and collaborate with healthcare teams improves patient experiences and outcomes. The FACT pilot program was co-designed by a 14-member expert working group (EWG) made up of consumers and clinicians, including allied health, nursing, medicine and quality and safety experts. The EWG explored barriers to involving families and carers in acute healthcare teams and generated change ideas to be tested by health services recruited to this pilot project to improve patient experiences.

Project aim

Through the FACT pilot project, we aim to improve patient and family/carer experiences by 20 per cent in participating pilot site wards by integrating them into acute healthcare teams by November 2024. All

patients admitted to acute medical/surgical pilot wards of hospitals across Victoria will be offered participation in this pilot project. We also aim to explore data and experiences of the program for First Nations' and other culturally and linguistically diverse patients.

We will work with pilot sites to decide on which change ideas they will test and implement at their health service.

Change ideas that have been generated by the EWG include:

- family and carer involvement in aspects of care delivery during hospital admissions, e.g. feeding, dressing, washing, mobilising, oral hygiene, active orientation to surroundings, present for care/discharge planning
- adjustment to visitation hours (open visiting policy) for x 1-2 nominated carers per patient who are engaged in the pilot program and delivering care tasks
- optimisation of the ward environment to support family/carer presence, e.g. companion meals/access to kitchen area, chair/bed availability, bathroom.

We will collect data on patient, family/carer and staff experiences, work with health services to develop a measurement strategy, and will provide project tools and resources.

Who can apply?

- Applicants must work at a Victorian health service with acute medical and/or surgical wards.
- All acute Victorian hospitals (private, not-for-profit, or public care providers) are eligible to apply for this project.
- Health services need to form a multidisciplinary working group with a nominated project lead.

Why apply?

The pilot program will enable your health service to:

- be part of a pilot project to help improve patient/carer/staff experiences and patient outcomes, within the healthcare system in Victoria
- have meaningful, service- and system-wide impact on healthcare
- help test, refine and implement changes to increase family and carer involvement in acute healthcare teams
- gain experience in quality improvement (QI) science via testing and implementing change ideas to increase family/ carer involvement in acute healthcare teams. Participating project team members will be offered priority and free access to a tailored suite of QI programs and improvement coaching throughout the life of the project
- upskill hospital staff in QI science, a transferable skillset to support future QI initiatives
- build networks.

What else do I need to know?

- Participation in this pilot project is voluntary.
- Successful healthcare services must commit the 12-month duration of the project (concluding in November 2024), including participation in meetings/interactive learning sessions (tailored to requirements of the individual health service).
- Time commitment will be around 2-4 hours per week inclusive of attendance at learning sessions, training of staff and collection of data before, during and after the project.
- Learnings and data will be shared with participating services.
- Health services must have a local executive sponsor in order to participate in this pilot project.
- We will work with you to decide what change ideas are suitable to test on nominated ward/s.
- Project teams can be revised once your application has been submitted.
- We will work with health services around patient experience surveys to measure and monitor the success of the program.
- Project teams must be available to attend a first online meeting on Thursday 18 January 2024 from 2 pm to 3:30 pm.

How to apply

STEP 1: Review the [frequently asked questions](#) for further information about the project and SCV.

STEP 2: Decide on your project team with a minimum of 3 multidisciplinary representatives, comprising of:

- a project lead
- recommended other team member(s), e.g. allied health, consumers, doctors, nurses, quality coordinators.

STEP 3: Complete [the application form](#)

Email your expression of interest form to acutecarelhn@safercare.vic.gov.au. In the email, please include the subject: EOI Acute Care LHN FACT Program.

STEP 4: Applications will be reviewed by staff from our Acute Care Learning Health Network team.

Applications close at **5 pm** on **Thursday 11 January 2024**.

Application outcomes will be notified by email.

More information

For more information on the project, please contact Arabella Thomas on (03) 9500 7276 or via acutecarelhn@safercare.vic.gov.au.

To learn more about Safer Care Victoria, please visit www.safercare.vic.gov.au.