

Investigating a Public-Private partnership model of Physiotherapy service delivery in a rural setting

A Constructive Inquiry

OBJECTIVES

Murrumbidgee Local Health District and a private physiotherapy business implemented a public-private partnership in four outer regional NSW towns to overcome longstanding gaps in physiotherapy service delivery. The physiotherapy business was contracted by the Local Health District to provide physiotherapy to hospital inpatients, aged care facility residents and outpatients.

METHOD

A qualitative methodology, using a Constructive Inquiry design, was used to investigate the success of the model from the perspective of the partnering organisations. Individual interviews were conducted with 5 staff from each partnering organisation, including managers and clinicians. Data were analysed using Framework Analysis and synthesised using a Program Logic approach.

RESULTS

All participants described the model as being successful. Elements of success included improved access to local services, a coordinated effort to meet the needs of the community, a service that is financially viable and satisfied stakeholders. Mechanisms to successfully implement the service delivery model included the use of multiple (but consistent) resources, motivated stakeholders, the content of the contract and referral schedule (including a time-block procurement model), streamlined administration processes for contracting and accounting, the workforce model, processes for managing private therapists in a public setting, processes for communication and consistency of stakeholders. Participants described uncertainty of future funding as the main emerging challenge. Participants identified emerging opportunities to expand the model including increasing the frequency and types of services provided, expanding to other locations, other allied health disciplines and utilising telehealth.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that a physiotherapy private partnership service model of service delivery can be a successful way to deliver services in a rural area. The mechanisms to successfully implement the model, described in this report, should be considered when setting up similar partnerships in rural physiotherapy or potentially other allied health disciplines.

KEYWORDS

physiotherapy, allied health, public-private partnership, rural, contracting



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