

Care before crisis: Reimagining prevention across the health system

Meeting summary: 23-24 April 2026

With growing pressure on the health system from an ageing population, increasing health challenges, and workforce shortages, the need to focus on prevention has never been more important. The Queensland Clinical Senate hosted 160 clinicians, consumers and healthcare leaders in person and more than 60 online to rethink prevention by exploring what role clinicians across the health system can play in preventing disease, keeping people well and out of hospital. Keynote speaker Dr Fiona Bull, the World Health Organisation's (WHO) lead of physical activity program spoke about the importance of physical activity as a valuable solution to disease prevention, and how integrating physical activity counselling into the healthcare system - short intervention and making every contact count - can make a difference to patients every day.

Members and guests represented the following groups:

- Australian Practice Nurses Association
- Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Assoc.
- CSIRO
- Health Consumers Queensland
- Health and Wellbeing Queensland
- Hospital and Health Services
- Institute for Urban Indigenous Health
- Mater Health
- Pharmaceutical Society of Australia
- Primary Health Networks
- Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council
- Queensland Ambulance Service
- Queensland Clinical Networks
- Queensland Health Prevention Strategy Branch
- Queensland General Practice Liaison Network
- Royal Flying Doctor Service

Principles that informed the recommendations

- Prevention is everyone's business and should be prioritised across the life course to reduce disease development and progression, improve population health outcomes and lessen demand on acute healthcare services.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's leadership, knowledge, and community-defined priorities should be embedded in the design, delivery, and evaluation of preventative health initiatives to ensure a culturally safe approach that leads to equitable health outcomes.
- Consumers, carers, families, and communities should be engaged as active partners in the co-design, implementation, and evaluation of preventative health activities.
- Recognising Queensland's vast geographical variability, preventative healthcare strategies should be tailored to local contexts acknowledging the unique challenges of social determinants of health, workforce availability, infrastructure, and community characteristics.
- Digital technologies should be leveraged to improve access to preventative care, ensuring accessible, equitable, and user-centred resources.

Next steps

The recommendations have been presented to Queensland Health's Executive Leadership Team. The Senate will seek updates on their implementation to keep stakeholders informed and provide further input into bodies of work as appropriate. For more information please contact the Senate Secretariat via email qldclinicalsenate@health.qld.gov.au.

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Recommendations

The need to strengthen prevention has never been more important for our health system. An ageing population, rising rates of chronic disease, increasing demand for healthcare and workforce shortages are placing unprecedented pressure on the system. The Senate's eight recommendations outline how clinicians and the broader health system can better support disease prevention through innovation, collaboration, leading by example, and embedding opportunistic health promotion into everyday care.

1. Strengthen workforce health and wellbeing through improved access to preventative health initiatives, enabling clinicians and staff to role model healthy choices.
2. Identify key local prevention priorities based on regional needs assessments and work collaboratively with Queensland Health to implement strategies, with measurable outcomes, to address them.
3. Identify Hospital and Health Service Board and Executive level prevention champions to drive cross-agency collaboration and lead prevention strategies.
4. Optimise digital tools, including integrated bidirectional portals that connect existing systems across organisations and care pathways, to improve risk identification and management, support tailored interventions, and enable innovative prevention models.
5. Conduct a statewide mapping of preventive health programs (both internal and external to Queensland Health) to identify gaps in service as well as opportunities to better integrate, working towards a prevention 'single front door' for clinicians and communities.
6. Incorporate evidence-based, age-appropriate prevention advice in 'Recommendations to Patient' section of discharge summaries.
7. Health and Wellbeing Queensland to identify opportunities to partner with other Queensland Government agencies and relevant partners to embed prevention across the lifespan targeting sociodemographic factors and specific settings and patient cohorts e.g. schools, higher education providers, correctional facilities, maternity, diabetes.
8. Devise a publicity campaign, co-designed with consumers and partner organisations, targeting prevention.