HB 228:2001

Guidelines for managing risk in the healthcare sector

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Australian/New Zealand handbook

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to assist in the application of the Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 4360:1999 to healthcare.

AS/NZS 4360:1999 was developed by the Joint Technical Committee OB/7, Risk Management on which the following interests are represented:

Australian Computer Society
Australian Customs Service
Australian Institute of Risk Management
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Department of Defence, Australia
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Insurance Council of Australia
Insurance Institute of New Zealand
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Preface

Good outcomes in healthcare can only happen if two key elements are present—sound interdisciplinary processes and the right information. Therefore it is important to foster the implementation of sound review processes that involve broad interdisciplinary participation and which focus on improved communication.

The use of a risk management process, as outlined in AS/NZS 4360:1999 *Risk Management* (THE STANDARD) meets these criteria. THE STANDARD outlines a pro-active integrated multidisciplinary approach and highlights the need for communication at all steps along the care continuum. Evidence of improvement is called for and the need for continuous monitoring and review is also stressed. THE STANDARD outlines a move away from the traditionally accepted insurance and litigation driven methodology to a more 'holistic' one, driven by the desire to balance stability and innovation. Applying the definition of risk from THE STANDARD—anything that threatens your ability to meet your objectives—makes you deal with risk in an entirely different way.

One of the primary macro-benefits of risk management is that it fosters consistent and systematic management behaviour which historically has been lacking in healthcare This is important for achieving improved outcomes and also represents responsible diligence in an area of high exposure. Risk management is beginning to drive public sector and private sector management in many countries. In the United Kingdom, the Turnbull and Cadbury Reports and in the USA the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 are both fostering a greater consciousness of risk management in the public and private sectors. Similarly, revisions to the Listing rules of the Australian Stock Exchange have focused on the inclusion of management of risk as a desirable corporate governance practice. As a flow on, we have witnessed the development of programmes like Controls Assurance within the National Health Service in England, which has adopted THE STANDARD as part of its framework.

Organisational performance shortfalls in healthcare can yield an endless array of learning and improvement opportunities The advent of a model like AS/NZS 4360 provides a tool for planned performance measurement and review. It opens the door to achieving effective systems analysis and can provide key stakeholders at all levels with an increased ability to achieve better patient outcomes.

Maree Bellamy
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