Garrison Health Services

Delivering a world-class military health service to the Australian Defence Force

The 2014 Annual Review reflects on the second year of healthcare service delivery to the Australian Defence Force (ADF) by Medibank’s Garrison Health Services (GHS).

To support the ADF, GHS provides a national, integrated healthcare solution, with consistent clinical governance and management practices, to provide seamless access to quality healthcare – from point of injury or illness to recovery.

This review is an overview of the key activities, challenges and accomplishments over the 2014 financial year. It outlines the progress made in the delivery of a nationally consistent approach to healthcare requirements, which meets the unique needs of ADF personnel.

During this time the delivery of healthcare services has realised efficiencies and improved capabilities as a result of the experience gained in service provision to the ADF in the first year and the stability of the operating environment.

GHS has moved beyond the initial transition and operational transaction phases and is now transforming the way it delivers healthcare to the ADF.
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As Garrison Health Services achieves its second year of service to the Australian Defence Force, I reflect on how this initiative has evolved to where we stand today.

Moving well beyond the setup transition stage, and early transactional delivery phase, we are now transforming the way we deliver healthcare to the ADF.

For nearly two decades Medibank has set the pace for health innovation in Australia and today provides a substantial portfolio of national healthcare services and systems that meet the changing needs of our society. These solutions have garnered a reputation for innovation, efficiency and clinical excellence and benchmark favourably against global best practice in the industry.

These strengths and capabilities underpin why Medibank was successful in winning the contract with Joint Health Command (JHC) to remodel the ADF health delivery system. Our understanding of the complexity of healthcare delivery, experience, access to healthcare providers, industry know-how and robust processes have all contributed to delivery of these vital services.

I thank JHC for working with us to develop a collaborative relationship. Their continuous support and guidance is evident in how far the agreement has progressed in a relatively short amount of time.

The past year has continued to challenge the GHS team to look beyond everyday solutions to deliver tailored coordination that can positively impact the healthcare experience of all ADF personnel. The team has focused on using a complete annual year of data to gain insights on health trends to strategically guide their efforts and purpose. Their ongoing commitment to advance the provider network – across the whole spectrum of Australian health professionals – continues to result in quicker and easier access to quality care.

Medibank will keep investing to deliver a consistent and cohesive service to the ADF. We take great pride in our collective purpose – the professional provision of a world class military health service.

Dr Andrew Wilson
Executive General Manager
Provider Networks and Integrated Care
Medibank’s Garrison Health Services (GHS) delivers a national integrated healthcare service to the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

Through Medibank’s extensive network, GHS provides seamless access to quality healthcare to the 60 000+ permanent and 20 000+ reservist uniformed ADF personnel – from point of injury or illness to recovery.

The GHS team manages and coordinates over 1100 On-base primary healthcare experts, over 4000 Medical Specialists, over 250 Hospitals and over 800 Allied Health professionals, working in collaboration across all states and territories.

Medibank provides comprehensive management of the provision and clinical oversight of health services to the ADF through an innovative model. These services are delivered through its GHS business and include prevention, treatment and rehabilitation for both physical and mental health conditions. These capabilities are provided through excellence and consistency in clinical governance and management practices.

**A common goal**

In mid-2012, the ADF announced a ground breaking agreement with Medibank to reform and deliver a national healthcare solution.

This resulted in the creation of Medibank’s Garrison Health Services business unit. This four-year first-of-a-kind contract, with revenues of $1.3 billion, redefines integrated healthcare delivery in Australia.

Leveraging Medibank’s health industry experience, access to providers, know-how and clinical expertise, the arrangement saw the ADF’s Joint Health Command (JHC) and GHS provide greater efficiency and national consistency in the delivery of healthcare services with consistent clinical governance and management practices.

GHS does not manage or influence the ADF budget or policies. The focus is on guaranteeing healthcare continuity, clinical excellence, coordination of the best access to healthcare providers, and improving the value of every healthcare dollar spent by the ADF and, ultimately, by the Australian taxpayer.

As well as being Australia’s largest health insurer, providing cover to more than 3.8 million people, Medibank provides contracted health management services for government and corporate clients including online and telephone-based health services. This results in over 3 million health related interactions per year through a scalable, multi-channel healthcare services model. This model provides high-quality, clinically appropriate, accessible care at an efficient cost.
A customised approach

As stated in the Cooperation Charter GHS delivers 'co-ordinated, managed and nationally consistent universal access to healthcare services for entitled Defence Force personnel that are clinically appropriate, patient centred and timely'.

Drawing on nearly two decades of Medibank’s experience and strength in the healthcare industry, and built on the foundations of existing health provider networks, GHS connects all ADF personnel to quality healthcare practitioners; regardless of location.

Spanning the ADF’s specific end-to-end healthcare requirements, the following services are provided:

- Primary care (On-base)
- Continued care (Off-base secondary and tertiary services)
- Imaging and radiology services
- Pathology services
- Health Hotline services.

1 Vision
The vision of the Co-operation Charter is to develop a successful relationship between the Department of Defence (Commonwealth) and Medibank Health Solutions based on the timely, efficient and professional delivery of the garrison component of “a world class military health service” for entitled Defence Force personnel in Australia.*

2 Organisation and Operation
The members of this Co-operation Charter will endeavour to work together to ensure the health care services are delivered in accordance with the following principles:

2.1 Delivery
- Coordinated, managed and nationally consistent universal access to health care services for entitled Defence Force personnel that are clinically appropriate, patient centred and timely.
- Collaborative delivery of episodes of care that are effective, efficient and to a standard generally commensurate with that available to the general population of Australia.
- Delivery of a full-suite of health care services to ensure entitled Defence Force personnel are:
  - fit, from a health perspective, to discharge their respective duties including preparation for deployment on operations; and
  - able to access, as appropriate, a range of rehabilitation, preventative and treatment services.
- Commitment to efficiency and continuous improvement in health service delivery.
- Provide JHC management with a single point of contact and accountability for contracted garrison health services.

*Nothing in this Co-operation Charter constitutes a binding legal relationship

EXECUTION VERSION

2.2 People
- Health care services to be provided in a co-operative and collegiate manner.
- Encourage staff development and continuing training opportunities.
- Safe and clinically appropriate working environment that fosters tolerance.

2.3 Commercial
- Comprehensive data to be collected and reported to improve transparency of service delivery.
- Certainty of cost for access to each episode of care.
- Strive to improve efficiency in health service delivery.

3 Conduct of Members
- Act in good faith and in an open and trusting manner.
- Value the skills, and respect the responsibilities, of each other.
- Resolve potential issues early and in a proactive manner so as to avoid dispute

Signed by

Dr Matthew Cullen
Group Executive
Medibank Health Solutions

Rear Admiral Robyn Walker AM
Commander Joint Health
Department of Defence (Commonwealth)

Date: 28 June 2012
The health of the ADF is central to everything we do

The GHS framework is designed to provide a world-class healthcare service that continually delivers quality care to all ADF personnel.

**The Medibank capability**

Medibank’s experience, access to healthcare providers and knowledge is leveraged to manage the ADF’s end-to-end healthcare needs.

**Easy and efficient to work with**

The delivery of simple, quality outcomes in a complex health environment.

**Innovate to deliver**

GHS explores and implements unique solutions to deliver a complex and unprecedented contract.

**Clinical excellence**

GHS services are underpinned by clinical quality frameworks and processes to ensure best practice healthcare delivery.

**Mutually beneficial outcomes**

GHS strikes an optimum balance between clinical excellence and efficiency, providing high-quality accessible healthcare at an efficient cost.

**Values driven**

GHS goals are achieved by living the core Medibank values of customer focus, accountability, integrity and respect.
A nationally consistent approach

An integrated delivery team
Managing end-to-end healthcare requirements

GHS has a strong national presence with its team spanning every state and territory. All parts of the business operate under a governance framework that puts ADF personnel at the centre.

The integrated GHS structure means JHC has a single point of contact to ensure streamlined and simplified processes and accountability. Encompassing all aspects of contract delivery – from clinical and corporate governance, to booking medical appointments, to finance, data collection, reporting and administration – GHS offers the balance of a nationally consistent approach with the flexibility to deliver regionally-focused solutions.

Recognising the commitment to deliver optimal levels of care, GHS implements stringent continual improvement processes across all services. This includes monthly, quarterly and annual reviews and reports to monitor and maintain KPIs, quality improvement initiatives and clinical incident monitoring, reporting and remediation. Further to performance reporting, essential trend analysis data is collected to inform and influence the evolution of the delivery model. This data is essential to GHS’ operational and strategic planning and decision making; providing valuable insights to shape the business for continued delivery and response to the healthcare needs of the ADF.

The GHS Corporate Governance Framework
Clinical governance

Maintaining and improving all elements of medical care

GHS services are underpinned by clinical quality frameworks and processes to ensure best practice healthcare delivery.

The framework details clinical obligations and standards, which create accountability and compliance, resulting in risk mitigation and consistent excellence in healthcare. Key pillars include:

- Workforce preparedness
- Quality services
- Risk management
- Clinical effectiveness.

A further two supporting pillars of Support systems and Leadership promote effective delivery of the framework.

To demonstrate their commitment and ability to meet the framework, sub-contractors and suppliers must participate in a range of defined assurance activities to confirm they are delivering. This activity includes credentialing, legislative compliance, KPI and reporting requirements, training, meetings and audits – all designed to promote, review, measure and monitor the quality of clinical care. GHS also regularly reviews the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency registration status of all service providers treating ADF personnel to ensure their ongoing compliance.

Although all contractors and service providers are expected to achieve and maintain clinical excellence, a strong emphasis on the Complaints and Clinical Incident Management (CCIM) process requires meticulous recording and examining of all incidents. This careful monitoring enables the implementation of improvements that support a robust system, in turn minimising the risk of incidents and maximising the standard of care.

Complementary to the clinical framework, GHS’ seven core pillars of quality care guide all activities and encourage advancement in service standards and outcomes.

1. Safety of healthcare
2. Effectiveness of healthcare
3. Appropriateness of care
4. Consumer participation in healthcare
5. Access to service
6. Efficiency of service provision
7. Health informatics

Note: Pillars are and adaptation of the six dimensions of quality of care as referenced in The Framework for Managing the Quality of Health Services in New South Wales (NSW Health, 1999, The Framework for Management the Quality of Health Services in NSW, p11-12).

The GHS network of healthcare professionals, both sub-contractors and service providers, follow service guidelines and are managed within the GHS Clinical and Corporate Governance frameworks to ensure compliance with all delivery requirements. As well as having extensive experience in their respective fields, they are required to meet and maintain all insurance, registration and accreditation.

21,000+ providers credentialed by GHS since contract inception

0.01% substantiated clinical incidents of all services delivered in FY14
The year in review 2013-14

1.41 million
On-base health professional hours (approximate)

270 000+
Pathology items

153 300+
Medical Specialist invoices processed

136 000+
Optical items and tests

127 600+
Allied Health invoices processed

103 800+
Referrals managed by the CAT

70 000+
Imaging and radiology procedures

30 900+
Hospital invoices processed

11 000+
Health Hotline calls

6300+
ADF personnel accessing occupational rehabilitation services

All numbers are reflective of FY14.
From transaction to transformation

A stable platform

During the second year of service to the ADF, operational stability has been achieved, providing the GHS team with the opportunity to improve efficiencies and explore innovations.

The range of healthcare services provided nationally with consistency in clinical and management governance, forms a complex service delivery model that represents substantial reform. Since inception, there has been a period of rapid implementation, steep learning curves and competing priorities. The phase of swift transition-in and process embedment which drove the first year of operation has now progressed to a period of analysis and improvement; a transformation in the way GHS delivers healthcare to the ADF.

The past years’ focus has been to review and refine processes to generate efficiencies, and examine service delivery models to improve capabilities. This experience has resulted in a comprehensive understanding of the specific needs of ADF personnel which has influenced unique solutions.

Looking forward, GHS will continue to collaborate with providers and contractors to enhance relationships and quality of service. GHS will use data insights and trends to encourage innovation to constantly improve an agile and flexible service model which is equipped to deliver all aspects of the contract.

Service challenges and highlights

- Improved operational processes
- Managed adherence to nationally consistent processes
- Reviewed and reformed management of On-base services
- Explored and implemented new service delivery models for Off-base to improve access
- Maintained consistent service delivery in unforeseen circumstances
- Provided data and analysis to inform strategic decision making
- Leveraged Medibank’s industry relationships to improve access and expand the provider network
- Enhanced and expanded alternate supply models
- Provided flexibility in responding to meet the operational needs of the ADF.
I was out training and I just put my foot down the wrong way. It hurt. Before I knew it I was at the base Health Centre seeing the doctor. He told me that I needed to see a specialist. That afternoon I got a text message advising me I had an appointment later that week. My specialist was a short drive away, and she organised scans and other assessments. It turns out the injury wasn’t as serious as we thought and could be treated with some physio back at the base. I was back training with my unit in no time.

Being based up here in Darwin, getting my annual skin check done was more important than ever. My base doctor wanted a second opinion on a few spots I had. I was relieved when the dermatologist, who regularly flies in for appointments, checked me out and confirmed the spots were harmless.

I was on holidays and I woke up in the middle of the night with excruciating stomach pains. I was a bit worried so I called the Health Hotline. I spoke to a very helpful nurse who asked me a number of questions and told me to go straight to emergency. She even told me the closest hospital. It was lucky I followed her advice as it turned out to be my appendix and they operated on me that night.
Primary care (On-base)

GHS delivers primary care services across 59 On-base Health Centres through subcontractor Aspen Medical.

More than 1100 contracted health professionals offer a broad range of multi-disciplinary Medical and Allied Health services including:

- General Practitioners
- General Practitioner Trainers
- Aviation Specialists
- Underwater Dive Medical Specialists
- Mental Health Clinicians (Psychologists and Mental Health Nurses)
- Allied Health Professionals including:
  - Pharmacists
  - Physiotherapists
  - Exercise Therapists
- Dental Professionals and support staff
  - Dentists
  - Hygienists
  - Sterilisation Technicians
  - Dental Assistants
- Nurses
  - Nurse Coordinators
  - Registered Nurses
  - Endorsed Enrolled Nurses
  - Enrolled Nurses
  - Theatre Nurses
- Quality Managers
- other supporting roles.

The past year has seen a focus on the management of security clearances and an increase in the maintenance of staffing levels in challenging locations.

The following On-base services were delivered in FY14

1,410,000 health professional hours – approximate annual total

24,700+ on average GP visits per month
Continued care (Off-base secondary and tertiary services)

A comprehensive Off-base national network

Medibank have developed a service provider network of Medical Specialists, Allied Health professionals and Hospitals to enable GHS to deliver Off-base services to ADF personnel.

GHS are responsible for the coordination, administration and clinical governance of this Off-base provider network.

The GHS central appointment team (CAT) coordinates access and bookings for Medical and Surgical Specialists, Allied Health professionals; and the provision of other services as required. The CAT is central to access, managing day-to-day workflow to ensure a seamless transition between On-base and Off-base healthcare. The team engages with the On-base ADF Health Centres and regional providers to build and manage relationships to ensure the highest quality healthcare experience for ADF personnel.

The CAT is the hub of data collection to inform strategic and tactical delivery decisions. This includes data trends on access, timeframes, locations and demographics. All information collected and stored is managed in strict accordance with required Medibank and JHC privacy and information security policies.

In the past year, the CAT advanced its strategic approach to provide ADF personnel with improved access to more service providers. When access to services in a local community is limited, the CAT uses informed selection methodologies based on factors such as relationships, access lead times, charging behaviours and strategic network development potential. This function aligns to GHS’ goal of delivering better access to quality healthcare at an efficient cost.

With this objective in mind, a focus for the past year has been to:

- Expand the network size and reach
- Embed comprehensive onsite clinical support and system controls including the development of a clinical audit framework to ensure appointments are made under strict clinical governance protocols
- Define and refine operational procedures, with a focus on enhancing internal systems to streamline the appointment process
- Analyse and investigate alternative supply options in areas of need
- Work in collaboration with service providers to make it easier to do business with GHS.
Further highlights included the launch of:

**A web-based Fee Calculator**

Based on MBS percentages, this online tool helps Medical and Surgical Specialists calculate the correct fees for the services rendered.

**Provider Network Newsletter**

Distributed to 6000+ service suppliers, the Provider Network Newsletter recognises the important role GHS suppliers play in delivering excellent health services to the ADF.

Initiatives to expand and provide alternate supply options in areas of need have included:

**A dedicated ADF hospital ward**

For the exclusive use of ADF personnel, a dedicated ADF hospital ward is conveniently located in St Luke’s Hospital, Sydney. The ward consists of 12 private rooms with ensuite facilities, a dedicated recreation area, and is assisted by an onsite ADF Liaison Unit that provides full administration and discharge support.

**Fly-in-fly-out services**

To improve access and meet demand, fly-in-fly-out (FIFO) clinics have been established in areas where there is limited supply of medical services. For example, in Darwin the FIFO clinics have successfully overcome previous difficulties delivering Orthopaedic and Dermatology services.

**Enhanced services in Tasmania**

To ensure service access in Tasmania, GHS contracted the Independent Practitioner Network (IPN) to deliver traditional primary care GP services (usually delivered On-base) through an Off-base provider. Five different IPN sites offer a range of GP appointment choices to suite ADF personnel needs.

**Hospital partnership pilot**

GHS is currently building relationships with major hospital groups to streamline access for ADF personnel to specialist services. The hospital partnership pilot is currently being trialled with Healthscope in Southern Sydney. They engage the relevant specialist and care team for ADF personnel on behalf of GHS. This enables ADF personnel requiring surgery to have timely and efficient access to a team of quality health professionals, coordinated through a single contact point.

GHS is continuing to work closely with clinicians and JHC to build sustainable, mutually beneficial models to allow further locations and specialty groups to be serviced in a timely manner.

**Working in collaboration across all states, the national provider network includes:**

- 4000+ Medical Specialists
- 8000+ Allied Health professionals
- 250+ hospitals

7% the average wait times to see a specialist decreased in FY14
Diagnostic care

Alignment with robust expertise

GHS provides ADF personnel with access to nationwide diagnostic expertise, supported by state-of-the-art technology to identify, treat and monitor illness and disease.

GHS has subcontracted I-MED to supply imaging and radiology services noting their provision of the highest standard of skilled radiologists, equipment and technology. I-MED is Australia’s largest medical imaging clinic network, comprising over 200 clinics covering all major metropolitan areas and significant parts of rural and regional Australia.

I-MED offers the full range of medical imaging services from general x-ray procedures, through to CT, PET, MRI, ultrasound, mammography, dental scans and nuclear medicine procedures. To ensure the largest possible national reach, I-MED works with Sonic Imaging and other parties to ensure national access; each with a professional standing in their local communities and in the wider profession.

In line with the GHS commitment to continual improvement, the ADF Direct (PACS) Portal was launched in 2014. The portal has resulted in ADF personnel’s medical images and reports, if carried out by I-MED or their sub-contractors, to be accessible anytime (with appropriate controls in place) by On-base Medical Officers, Off-base service providers and registered health professionals involved in their medical care. This central access is especially convenient for the ADF, with personnel posted to different bases across the country.

70 000+ imaging and radiology procedures performed in FY14
GHS has subcontracted Special Diagnostic Services (SDS) to supply **pathology** services to provide access to practices that diagnose, prevent, treat and monitor disease. SDS manages Australia’s largest network of collection centres, with more than 6000 pathology professionals, including pathologists, scientists, technicians, collectors and couriers supporting the system. SDS has four large-scale accredited laboratories and a further 100 regional or hospital based laboratories. The organisation comprises five state-based pathology suppliers including:

- QML Pathology – QLD
- Laverty Pathology – NSW/ACT
- Dorevitch Pathology – VIC
- Abbott Pathology – SA
- Western Diagnostic Pathology – WA/NT.

Through a customised web-based repository, all ADF personnel results and reports can be accessed (with appropriate controls in place) from anywhere at any time, ensuring continuity of care.

Pathology services have maintained robust performance standards over the past year. Particular highlights included:

- SDS securing an ongoing NATA accreditation at the Enoggera Heath Centre lab (with no non-conformances recorded)
- Providing standard infection control reports for the 14 ADF Health Centres with inpatient facilities
- The addition of new tests to aid in the early detection of a number of pathogens.

270 000+ pathology items delivered in FY14
24/7 Care

The assurance of immediate attention, anytime

Medibank is Australia’s largest provider of telehealth solutions, enabling GHS to offer the Health Hotline—a customised national telephone-based triage service to all ADF personnel.

The 24/7 service provides triage, health information and provider referrals. Further to afterhours support, the Health Hotline plays an important role when ADF bases are closed or operating at a reduced capacity.

In the past 12 months, the Health Hotline team continually refined and improved scripts and call handling guidelines, with special attention given to mental health calls. The Health Hotline implemented a range of IT upgrades and system advancements to deliver more efficient outcomes.

In 2014 the Health Hotline provided support during unforeseen times such as temporary base closures due to testing and treatment for Legionnaires disease, a bushfire and a tropical cyclone threat.

In unexpected times of need, the Health Hotline provides a further layer of assistance to ADF personnel. In fact, in 2014 20% of callers required immediate medical attention.
Could you support the ADF and the vital role they play for Australia?

By the nature of their profession, ADF personnel need to maintain operational readiness or regain a peak health condition to fulfil their duties – it’s crucial they have access to world-class healthcare.

If you are a qualified healthcare provider, use your medical expertise to support this interesting, important and unique group of Australians. Apply to the GHS preferred provider network and you could benefit from priority status in referral systems and favourable payments terms, while taking pride in playing the essential role of serving the health needs of Australia’s Defence Force.

For more information
Call: 1300 126 420
Email: adfenquiries@medibank.com.au

Image courtesy of Dept of Defence