2017-18
Annual Review
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Leadership Update

The past year remained an ongoing environment of uncertainty and change within the primary healthcare sector. Despite the challenges inherent in such an environment, the Improvement Foundation continued to find opportunities to provide ongoing support to our expanding client base.

Our team, while small, has grown in skills and expertise, offering a broad range of services, particularly around consultation and training. Our Improvement Consultants engaged with a number of Primary Health Networks across the country, providing training in quality improvement, the collaborative model and supporting delivery of local collaborative programs.

Data collection and reporting has always been a big focus for our organisation, and an integral part of the projects we facilitate. Our work with the Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association and the Heart Foundation’s Lighthouse Hospital Project saw a new set of indicators developed for monthly collection and evaluation of the project’s outcomes. The challenge ahead for many organisations in the health sector is to move from measuring structure and process to that of measuring outcomes. It is our desire to assist organisations in this transition which is driven by an interest in the needs of patients and communities.

Amongst our expanding skills, the past year has seen IF commissioned to film, edit and produce a number of video productions for our clients. Our own video, ‘What is the difference between quality assurance and quality improvement’ from 2016 saw a spike in views over the year, as it was used in a quality training course in the USA.

As always, our organisation would be nothing without the dedication and drive of our experienced Board members and Advisors, our Finance, Audit and Risk Management committee and our highly motivated and committed team.

David Wright,
CHAIRMAN
“You can’t improve what you can’t measure”
Collaborative Support

Following the successful delivery of the Australian Primary Care Collaborative Program throughout Australia for 10 years, IF continues to support Primary Health Networks with the design and delivery of local Collaborative programs to ensure the correct components and underlying methods are used to achieve improvements on various topics, including dementia, patient blood management, cancer screening and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

IF supported the following Collaborative programs during 2017-2018:

- **Dementia Quality Improvement Program**  
  Sydney North Primary Health Network
- **Patient Blood Management Sustainability Support**  
  Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Health Care
- **Cancer Screening Collaborative**  
  Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network
- **Cancer Screening Collaborative Evaluation**  
  Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network
- **Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Collaborative Wave 1**  
  Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network
- **Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Collaborative Wave 2**  
  Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network
IF supported Sydney North PHN to develop quality indicators for their Dementia Care Quality Improvement Program in 2016. Using an Expert Reference Panel approach, this resulted in the development of quality indicators to support improvements in the care of patients with dementia in general practice, including improved detection, timely diagnosis and management.

Building on this work, IF provided advice to Sydney North PHN and the North Sydney Dementia Collaborative to design the Dementia Care Quality Improvement Program, which commenced in February 2018. IF presented at the orientation workshop to provide fundamental training on the Model for Improvement to participants. The program aims to support participating practices to analyse current dementia care management and develop individualised improvement plans to support implementation of evidence-based best practice care.

IF provided specialist advice and support to the Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Health Care to sustain the work achieved through the Patient Blood Management (PBM) Collaborative which commenced in 2015. The program officially ended in April 2017. IF was then commissioned to provide additional support until June 2018, to enable ongoing data submission by hospitals, allowing them to continue undertaking improvement activities and monitoring their progress.

The PBM Collaborative focused on anaemia management for patients having selected gastrointestinal, gynaecology and orthopaedic surgical procedures, with the specific aim of increasing the percentage of patients who have had their haemoglobin and iron stores optimised prior to elective surgery.

Twelve hospitals participated in this Collaborative across Australia with data collected from baseline in May 2015 to April 2018 demonstrating that overall sites showed positive trends for the program measures, including the following outcomes:

- Across participating sites, an average **98.6% of patients** received a **pre-operative assessment for anaemia** by the end of the program.

- Across participating sites an average **48% of patients** received a **pre-operative assessment for iron deficiency** at the end of the program, with the average range across participating health services increasing considerably since baseline, from approximately **25% to 70%**.

- A significant increase in the average percentage of patients with iron deficiency recorded as being managed per month with a value of approximately **40% at baseline and 79% at the end of the program**.
Eastern Melbourne PHN (EMPHN) commissioned IF to design and deliver a Cancer Screening Collaborative focusing on cervical cancer, which ran from August 2017 to June 2018. IF delivered training to the EMPHN practice support team, developed localised support materials and delivered an online orientation session and a four-part virtual learning workshop series to participants. Existing Collaborative methodology infrastructure was used as a basis with IF providing ongoing support and specialist quality improvement advice for the duration of the program.

IF and EMPHN engaged 17 health services to participate in this Collaborative, during which participants developed and tested change ideas to improve rates of cervical cancer screening and assessed the impact of the changes being made by analysing monthly improvement data.

Between September and December 2017, participants increased the rate of cervical cancer screening via pap testing by 22%.

Between January and 30 June 2018 a total of 2,452 women were screened for cervical cancer via the new CST method.

In addition, more than 220 models for improvement were submitted by the participating health services describing the change ideas that were tested at the service level.

As a result of IF’s implementation of the Cancer Screening Collaborative and previous experience in evaluating quality improvement initiatives, IF was contracted by EMPHN to produce an evaluation report of this Collaborative.

IF hosted meetings with relevant EMPHN staff to determine the scope of the evaluation, developed and distributed an online survey to the Collaborative participants to gain localised feedback, undertook a thematic review, and an analysis of all quantitative and qualitative data submitted throughout the Collaborative.
IF has been contracted to redesign and support a second COPD Collaborative in the NBMPHN region. The support will involve revising and updating the COPD Collaborative handbook, advising on the learning workshop curriculum and supporting the workshop series, including presenting at learning workshops.

It is expected that approximately 10 services will participate in the second Wave with development work currently being undertaken prior to orientation and workshops commencing late 2018.

IF provided support to Nepean Blue Mountains PHN (NBMPHN) with the implementation of a Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Collaborative, which aimed to improve the quality of life for patients with COPD by enhancing diagnostic processes and better using the systems and pathways of health care within the Nepean Blue Mountains region.

IF designed and facilitated an Expert Reference Panel meeting with local and national stakeholders to refine the program aims, improvement measures and ideas for making improvements. IF then developed a program specific handbook and provided Collaborative methodology training and ongoing support to the NBMPHN support team.

The COPD Collaborative supported 14 health services to learn from each other while gaining and utilising knowledge from leading experts and practitioners via an orientation webinar and a series of three face-to-face learning workshops. The participants implemented the learnings from these workshops during activity periods in which change ideas were tested at a local level, and the success of these tests was reviewed through analysis of monthly improvement data.

The participants increased the diagnostic rate of COPD by almost 12% over a six month period and the rates of spirometry being performed at the practice level increased from 21% at baseline to 33.5% at the conclusion of the Collaborative. Small improvements were also made to the recorded rates of pneumococcal vaccinations and the development of GP management plans.
QI Consulting

Over the past decade, IF has learnt a lot about improving systems and organisations using quality improvement. In the past financial year, our consultants have worked with key organisations within the hospital, primary care and fitness industries to support better health outcomes for the community, with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with heart conditions; for improving capacity during the winter/flu season; embedding a culture of continuous quality improvement and assessing organisations against industry standards for accreditation.

Our consulting projects include:

- **Lighthouse Hospital Project**  
  Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association and Heart Foundation

- **QI Program Scoping Report**  
  Northern Territory Primary Health Network

- **Winter Strategy Program**  
  Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network

- **QI Consultancy Services**  
  Gippsland Primary Health Network

- **Quality Accreditation Pilot**  
  Fitness Australia
The **Lighthouse Hospital Project (LHP)** is a Commonwealth government funded initiative of the national Heart Foundation and the Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA). The LHP uses a quality improvement approach to develop and promote culturally safe hospital care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with acute coronary syndrome, helping to ensure that the care they receive leads to improved health outcomes.

Specific objectives of the project include:

- **Reducing the incidence and impact of ‘discharge against medical advice’** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who experience coronary conditions, and
- **Enhancing relationships and coordination of care** between participating hospital sites, local Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Organisations/Aboriginal Medical Services and Primary Health Networks to **improve the patient journey** for these patients, within the context of their local environment.

IF was contracted in phase three of this project to develop and deliver two-day quality improvement workshops to the project teams based at each of the 18 hospital sites, as well as to the Heart Foundation and AHHA project management teams. The development of the workshop curriculum included the design and utilisation of a diagnostic tool aimed at ensuring a co-design approach was undertaken to customise content for each site’s learning needs.

IF is also providing ongoing support to the project management teams at the Heart Foundation and AHHA for the duration of the project, until June 2019.

In May 2018, IF was approached by Northern Territory PHN (NTPHN) to develop a **scoping report on primary care quality programs** being delivered by support organisations across Australia, and to advise on a package of continuous quality improvement (CQI) activities that could be delivered by the PHN’s practice support team to their local primary care services.

A desktop review will be undertaken of all CQI and quality activities currently provided by PHNs and Aboriginal Community Controlled health services and departments in the NT. Interviews with primary care services in the NT will also occur to gain feedback on their local support needs, which will contribute to the scoping report and proposed QI Program model for the NTPHN.
IF has been contracted to provide support in the development and operation of a Winter Strategy Program for the NBMPHN region in 2019. A winter strategy program is designed to better respond to healthcare demands over the peak winter months, when health is at its lowest. The strategy aims to support health services to provide enhanced care to patients with chronic and complex needs and to reduce the likelihood of them being hospitalised.

During 2018, IF will facilitate a planning workshop for local stakeholders to develop a list of possible interventions and to identify the main aims for this program. IF will also deliver a quality improvement workshop to participating general practices, provide ongoing support to NBMPHN and complete a program evaluation following the program’s conclusion.

Gippsland PHN (GPHN) has commissioned IF to provide consultancy services for a suite of quality improvement initiatives to be implemented by the PHN until June 2020.

IF will be providing a workshop to GPHN team members to increase their knowledge in quality improvement along with a practice coaching service called qiCoach for the PHN’s practice support team. qiCoach will be delivered on a ‘train the trainer’ basis, enabling the Team to support their local health services to initiate, implement and sustain change.

IF will also provide support to GPHN with the design and implementation of program specific quality improvement projects, including a Cancer Screening Collaborative, a QI Practice Incentive Payment (PIP) readiness program, and a regional ‘Innovation Workshop’ designed to gain multidisciplinary stakeholder input into developing change ideas to address a locally defined topic of interest.
Fitness Australia contracted IF as an independent body to **assess fitness businesses for accreditation** through their National Quality Improvement Accreditation Program. The accreditation program takes fitness businesses through a four step process, with the fourth step being IF’s assessment of the business’ acceptability for accreditation.

IF has developed a range of resources and a systematic approach to support these fitness organisations to gain accreditation in line with the national industry standards. Fitness Australia commenced a pilot phase in December 2017 to test the overall approach.

During the pilot phase a total of **43 fitness organisations enrolled in the accreditation program**. The first business to complete the process and achieve accreditation was Glen Eira Sports and Aquatic Centre, based in Melbourne. The learnings from the pilot phase informed improvements to the accreditation process in preparation for the industry launch in July 2018.
QI Training

In the 2017-2018 Financial Year, IF delivered training to a variety of organisations across Australia, including Northern Territory, Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. Training included both face to face and online via webinar, around topics such as the Model for Improvement, Quality Improvement tools, measuring for improvement, engaging health care professionals in change, and how to build a team culture focused on quality improvement.

IF provided training to the following clients:

- Heart Foundation Victoria
- South Western Sydney Primary Health Network
- Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network
- Murray Primary Health Network
- Heart Foundation Queensland
- GP Down South
- Northern Territory Primary Health Network
- Brisbane South Primary Health Network
- Western QLD Primary Health Network
IF has been working with the national Heart Foundation to deliver quality improvement workshops designed to upskill Clinical Change Facilitators working on the Heart Foundation’s PROMETHEUS project. This project was created and designed to pilot the implementation of a Heart Failure Toolkit developed by the Heart Foundation.

The first workshop held in June 2017 in Victoria largely focused on providing education and training in how to apply the Model for Improvement framework, using QI tools and managing change. The second workshop in November 2017 focused on analysing the Models for Improvement completed throughout the PROMETHEUS project, as well as developing a framework to evaluate the improvements realised as a result of trialling changes at the local implementation level.

Both workshops received an overall evaluation score of 90%.

Heart Foundation Victoria

South Western Sydney Primary Health Network

IF delivered a full day workshop to staff from South Western Sydney PHN in August 2017 with a focus on the Model for Improvement framework and how to use quality improvement tools to assist with quality improvement planning and implementation.

Twenty six staff from the PHN attended this workshop, receiving an overall evaluation score of 82%.

Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network

IF delivered a half day Collaborative methodology workshop in February 2018 to staff from the Nepean Blue Mountains PHN to assist them with delivering a local Collaborative program.

Twelve staff attended the training workshop, receiving an overall evaluation score of 89%.

Murray Primary Health Network

IF delivered two webinars for Murray PHN on the Model for Improvement in February 2018 and Measuring for Improvement in March 2018. A total of 68 primary healthcare clinicians and staff attended the first webinar, averaging an overall satisfaction rating of 80%, with six staff attending the second webinar, which did not capture evaluations.

In addition to the webinars, IF provided written expert feedback and guidance with the Models for Improvement that were submitted by health services in the Murray PHN region.
The Heart Foundation’s Queensland Health Professional Ambassador Program (HPAP) provides a professional development opportunity for health professionals to improve knowledge and skills and develop the confidence to improve cardiovascular health outcomes in their workplace. The HPAP is a 12 month program whereby participants attend three one day face-to-face workshops, and are required to undertake a small quality improvement activity in their workplace setting.

In March 2018 the Heart Foundation contracted IF to deliver training as part of the first face-to-face workshop based in Brisbane. The session was attended by 36 health professionals and focused on quality improvement, the Model for Improvement and leading and managing change.

The training was well received with 80% of participants rating the session as highly relevant to their role in the HPAP.
GP Down South

IF delivered two full day quality improvement workshops in April 2018 for GP Down South with the first day for PHN staff and the second for health service staff based in south west Western Australia. The topics included an introduction to quality improvement and systems thinking including QI tools, principles of measuring for improvement, engaging healthcare professionals in change, and how to build a team culture focused on quality improvement.

Fifteen people attended the first workshop which received an overall evaluation score of 89% and 19 people attended the health service workshop which received an overall evaluation rating of 91%.

Northern Territory Primary Health Network

IF delivered a two day training workshop in Darwin to staff from the Northern Territory PHN in May 2018, to enhance their understanding of quality improvement, change management and skills in the practical application of quality improvement tools and methods.

Eleven staff from the PHN attended this workshop, which received an evaluation score of 93%.

Brisbane South Primary Health Network

In June 2018, IF delivered the first of two training sessions for general practice staff involved in Brisbane South PHNs Optimal Care Program. This program supports general practices to deliver optimal care to people living with chronic disease through the application of quality improvement methods. The training session largely focused on understanding and applying the Model for Improvement and the value of adopting a team approach.

The workshop was well received demonstrating increased knowledge and confidence, and achieving an overall ‘entirely relevant’ score of 100%.

Western QLD Primary Health Network

Western Queensland PHN staff, along with stakeholders from Diabetes Australia, Heart Foundation and Health Workforce Queensland, gathered in Brisbane for a one day qiReady training session delivered by IF in June 2018. The qiReady training is designed to improve staff knowledge, skills and confidence in quality improvement, enabling them to better support local health services in readiness for the PIP Quality Improvement Incentive.

The interactive training focused on quality improvement in the primary healthcare sector, measuring for improvement, understanding and applying QI tools, and engaging health professionals in change.

The session was attended by a very engaged group of nine participants and achieved 98% overall satisfaction.
ICT Solutions

IF delivers a range of services around ICT solutions, data collection and analysis. In the past year, IF continued to successfully develop, manage and deliver projects across our custom built SharePoint platform. Being an organisation that promotes change and improvement, we’re now looking to the future of our ICT solutions and working toward upgrading the platform in 2018/2019, which will provide our clients with greater flexibility, functionality and access.

ICT solutions developed by IF include:

- **Data Driven Approach to QI**
  Heart Foundation

- **OCHRESTreams**
  Department of Health

- **Outreach Management System**
  CheckUP

- **Be Well, Learn Well Program Site**
  CheckUP

- **CARAlert**
  Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Health Care
In July 2017, IF was contracted by the Heart Foundation to support the Lighthouse Hospital Project (LHP) by developing a data driven approach to quality improvement. To implement this approach, IF worked with the Heart Foundation to identify and define an indicator set that could be used to provide monthly benchmarking feedback to hospitals participating in this project.

Data collection has commenced with participating hospitals encouraged to submit data on a monthly basis. IF will continue to support this project through to June 2019 with the data collected to be used by the Heart Foundation to evaluate the LHP.

In its sixth year of operation, the OCHREStreams reporting system for health services supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, continued to facilitate national reporting for more than 260 individual organisations, across three reports, including the Online Services Report, the National Key Performance Indicators Reports and the Health Care Provider Report.

The data included in these reports provides consistent up-to-date information on the performance of Indigenous specific health services, supporting them to “improve patient outcomes and achieve health related targets with the aim of closing the gap in life expectancy within a generation, and halving the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade.”

In the 2017/18 Financial Year a total of 841 reports were submitted via OCHREStreams, across two reporting periods for three programs:

1. The National Key Performance Indicators
2. The Online Services Report
3. The Health Care Providers Report

The IF help desk took approximately 1,844 calls during this period, providing support to health services across Australia.

The Outreach Management System (OMS) continued to operate effectively throughout the year, supporting CheckUP, Rural Health West and the Northern Territory PHN to manage their outreach activity.

In 2017, the Western Queensland PHN contacted IF to build a custom Outreach site to enable them to manage their outreach activity and co-commissioning with CheckUP. This new co-commissioning approach will be developed in the second half of 2018 bringing with it an exciting prospect for the future of the OMS as a whole.
Building upon the success of the OMS, IF was contracted to build a secure program site to allow CheckUP to administer the Be Well, Learn Well (BWLW) schools program for the Queensland Department of Education and Training (QDET).

This new site within the OMS allows CheckUP and their contracted service providers to commission, maintain and report on allied health services being delivered to students at a number of remote state schools in Queensland. The BWLW site provides a secure portal location for approved users from the schools and the QDET to access reports and outcomes.

Elise Gorman, Business Lead for BWLW at Check UP says,

“After testing the new system, the Be Well Learn Well Allied Health teams were excited to say goodbye to data spreadsheets and hello to the new system that will allow them to complete service delivery reports during school visits while in community.”

In 2015, the Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) contracted IF to develop and maintain a national online alert system for the reporting of Critical Antimicrobial Resistances by confirming laboratories. Known as CARAlert, the web-based interface allows laboratory end users to efficiently enter confirmed Critical Antimicrobial Resistance records, and permits authorised users to view submitted records in real time, allowing for quicker alert and response times.

During 2018, CARAlert was successfully migrated to a new cloud-based platform, ensuring its ongoing operation until June 2020.
Videography

In the last financial year, IF was commissioned to develop and deliver a series of training videos for online use. This work evolved into developing animated promotional videos for other clients and for our own services and products. IF continues to explore and create videos which can be used for internal and external training, marketing and awareness campaigns. Commissioned videos include:

- **Training Videos**
  Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Health Care

- **Animated Videos**
  Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network
Training Videos
Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Health Care

In October 2017, IF was contracted to film, edit and publish a short online series of training videos for the Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) on how to navigate their Australian Passive Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance system (otherwise known as OrgTRx).

The series consisted of three videos with the final products being loaded to Vimeo and Hightail (digital video sharing platforms).

Animated Videos
Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network

IF has been contracted from June 2018 to create a suite of QI animated training videos that will aim to assist general practices with foundation knowledge in readiness for future reforms such as the QI Practice Incentive Program (PIP) and Integrated Patient Centred Care Models.

The video topics will include introduction to QI, QI tools, Model for Improvement, building teams, change management and data quality. This project is expected to be finalised by December 2018.