

**Question on Notice
No. 719
Asked on 10 May 2006**

MR MESSENGER asked the Minister for Health (MR ROBERTSON)—

QUESTION:

What is the number of quality officers, patient safety officers, or patient liaison officers (reported separately) who are employed at each hospital or health service district, or corporate office (reported separately) and what are the classification levels and position descriptions of each position (also reported separately)?

ANSWER:

Although job title is maintained as a reporting field in the Queensland Health Human Resource Management Information Systems (HRMIS), there is no consistency in use of job titles across Queensland Health facilities. Identifying “Quality Officers” etc from that data source will result in inconsistent, inaccurate and potentially misleading information. Some Districts, for example, may use the title “officer”, others “manager” for the same role. A myriad other variations will also be possible.

The 37 Health Service Districts vary in the way they code such positions and there is no identifiable salary classification associated with the job title: such positions are frequently coded across a range of occupational streams including nursing, professional officers and administrative officers.

Further, many of these positions, roles or functions are also combined with other roles or functions i.e. a senior nurse may have part of their work role allocated to either a quality officer function or a patient liaison officer function, however the primary role or function may involve managing nurses or even delivering direct patient care.

Because of the significant variances, as described above, identifying who fulfils these roles or functions is impossible to capture accurately or reliably and could thus lead to a situation which could be potentially misleading.

Notwithstanding the above, the Patient Safety Centre has a program of designated Patient Safety Officers in each health service district with the exception of the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area Health Service District.

Details of these positions are as follows:

Patient Safety Officers:	36 staff (27.5 FTE).
Mental Health Patient Safety Officers:	Three Mental Health specific Patient Safety Officers are currently being recruited (three Health Service Districts).
Classification Level:	Administrative Officer Level 6 (AO6).
Position Description:	There is a standard set of duties outlined in a generic position description which is modified to address local requirements.

The generic core duties and responsibilities are as follows:

Incident Analysis (such as Root Cause Analysis, Task Safety Analysis and Human Error and Patient Safety (HEAPS) review

1. To facilitate and provide technical expertise for the multi disciplinary review and analysis of very high and extreme risk clinical incidents and sentinel events using the Queensland Health Incident Management Matrix and Root Cause Analysis (RCA) methodology.
2. Communicate on patient safety issues and develop strategies to disseminate “lessons learned” from RCA and other incident analysis /reviews at a local level.
3. Communicate with the Queensland Health Patient Safety Centre regarding RCA outcomes, preventative measures and relevant implications for state-wide learning.
4. Coordinate Health Service District reporting of sentinel events as outlined in the Queensland Health Incident Management Policy No 23360.
5. Maintenance of the local Health Service District RCA action registers.
6. Facilitate regular reporting to Health Service District Executive groups and relevant Health Service District Safety and Quality forums on RCA progress and outcomes for patient safety activities.
7. Provide support for low, medium and high risk incident analysis.
8. Evaluate, conduct and support regular audits to identify patient safety issues and assist in monitoring interventions.

Technical Advice

1. Provide technical and expert advice to the Health Service District Executive, District Safety and Quality forums and individual clinical units in regard to patient safety and clinical risk management issues.
2. Liaise with non clinical risk management personnel for incident management with both a clinical and non-clinical component.

Projects

1. Lead or support the development and implementation of projects designed to deliver improved safety outcomes for patients.

Training

1. Consult with clinicians and management to identify patient safety training needs. Assist in the development and/or delivery of patient safety training to support the development of a safety culture.

General Duties

1. Promote patient safety at local, state and national level by communicating achievements and “lessons learned” in all relevant forums.
2. Maintain current knowledge in the specialist area including new developments, legislation and industry standards.

3. Assist all employees within the (insert local Health Service District) to achieve an organisational culture, in which patient safety and clinical risk management becomes an integral part of core business.
4. To act in accordance and ensure compliance with relevant Workplace Health and Safety, Equal Employment Opportunity and Anti-discrimination Acts, legislation and requirements.
5. Perform other duties, activities and deliverables as outlined in the Queensland Health Patient Safety Centre Service Level Agreement.