

## Opinion Editorial

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### Australia's health system under the microscope: Report Card to identify key safety risks

What are the most important risks that could threaten the delivery of safe, high-quality care in the Australian healthcare system? That is the question the Australian Institute of Health Innovation (AIHI) at Macquarie University – in partnership with Avant, Australia's largest medical indemnity insurer – is seeking to answer.

This month we launched the survey that will underpin the *Australian Health Systems Safety Report Card*, an initiative set to identify and rank the most important risks to the delivery of safe, high-quality healthcare in Australia. We plan for the *Report Card* to become an annual national benchmark for health system safety.

Australia's healthcare system is highly regarded internationally. We measure waiting times, track hospital activity and monitor individual adverse events. However, what we do not have is a shared national view of the system-level factors that pose risks to the delivery of safe, high-quality care. The *Report Card* will provide a consistent way to identify and track these risks over time, including emerging issues that may not yet be fully understood or captured by existing measures.

Understanding these risks now is imperative as Australia's healthcare system comes under ever-growing pressure. Private hospitals are continuing to close across the country, waiting times for care in public hospitals are increasing, and workforce shortages continue to stress the system – with all of these issues more acute in our rural and regional areas. At the same time, the expectations of patients, clinicians and health system managers around digital health and artificial intelligence are evolving rapidly.

Just as clinicians use data to improve outcomes for individual patients, policymakers, health services and researchers need clear evidence to improve outcomes for the healthcare system. The *Report Card* will combine the experience and expertise of healthcare stakeholders with the best national and international evidence.

The *Report Card* will take a systems-level view of safety across healthcare, from national policy and funding settings to healthcare organisations and services, to the everyday interactions between clinicians and patients.

It will examine broad trends shaping health outcomes across the country, including workforce sustainability, funding models, artificial intelligence and changing patterns of disease. It will also explore the organisational factors that influence care, such as culture, governance, interprofessional relationships and workplace systems. Importantly, the clinician-patient interactions that ultimately define care experiences will also be examined, including communication, decision-making and patient choices.

This approach recognises that health system safety is not solely determined in hospitals or clinics. It is shaped by the policies, structures and relationships that influence care long before a patient enters a consulting room.

We want to hear from a broad range of stakeholders, everyone from patients to doctors, to policy makers, hospital leaders and other health professionals including allied health, nurses

and pharmacists, across public and private healthcare and primary, secondary and community care. Bringing together these different perspectives will help ensure the *Report Card* reflects the complexity of the Australian health system—and captures the wisdom of the whole healthcare community.

To find out more or to take part in the survey, click [here](#).

## Authors

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## About Avant

As Australia's largest medical defence organisation and a member owned mutual, Avant represents more than 95,000 members—over half the nation's medical workforce—across general practice and every specialty. Alongside medical indemnity, we provide services such as private health insurance and practice management support, giving us unique insight into the healthcare system in which doctors work.

For further information, please visit [www.avant.org.au](http://www.avant.org.au)

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## About AIHI

The Australian Institute of Health Innovation (AIHI) is a globally-recognised research institute, committed to revolutionising healthcare services, systems, and policies in Australia and internationally. Headquartered within Macquarie University Health – Australia's first fully integrated academic health sciences centre – and with a footprint in both the Faculty of Medicine, Health and Human Sciences and Macquarie Business School, AIHI boasts the largest team of dedicated health services researchers in the nation.

For further information, please visit [aihi.mq.edu.au](http://aihi.mq.edu.au)

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