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# Nurse Unit Manager Succession Workplan

Initiative Type

Education and Training

Status

Sustained

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08 November 2018

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## Summary

Of the many 'what ifs' when running an oncology ward, clinical staff development and succession can have a significant impact on our day to day work. A lot can happen when someone goes on leave - uncertainty, lower productivity, even poor morale. If the vacancy is made by someone who holds key knowledge, the impact could be much worse. Whether it's planned leave, retirement or an

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emergency, it's critical for any ward to have a succession plan prepared when a core member of the team is unavailable. The Townsville Hospital and Health Service (THHS) oncology ward Nurse Unit Manager (NUM) Workplan outlines the processes and skills necessary for clinical nurses to fulfil higher duties and builds a NUM workforce for the future. (for a copy of the workplan, please contact the project lead using the details in the key contact box above). This project was developed and driven by skills learnt during the [Manage4Improvement](#) program: a six-month integrated leadership and management program designed to build the confidence and capabilities of clinicians to support improvements in health service delivery.

### Key dates

Jun 2018

Oct 2018

### Implementation sites

Townsville Hospital and Health Service

### Partnerships

THHS Nursing Director, THHS Director of Cancer Services Clinical Education Department, THHS Oncology Ward clinical nurses

## Key Contacts

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## **Aim**

Build a sustainable workforce of future Nurse Unit Managers.

## **Benefits**

- Increases the availability of experienced and capable employees that are ready to assume higher roles as they become available.
- Develops new leaders who can replace the NUM when they go on leave or retire.
- Identifies appropriate training requirements (mandatory and desirable) for Nurse Unit Manager roles.

## **Background**

The Townsville Hospital's oncology ward was experiencing difficulties backfilling the NUM role, largely due to a lack of formal succession and workforce planning.

## **Evaluation and Results**

Clinical nurses who have been exposed to the NUM succession workplan now have the knowledge and skills to act in in the NUM role in the oncology ward.

## **Lessons Learnt**

Documenting the NUM role criteria has built trust and confidence in the clinical workforce. This has improved our ability to manage skill shortages and manage workforce vacancies.

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## References

Innovative succession planning and leadership development in a tertiary Emergency Department: Developing the next generation of leaders through a clearly defined professional development pathway, education sessions and training days: Kimberly Jackson et al.

## Further Reading

This project aligns: [A strategy for Queensland 2017–2026](#) and Queensland Health's strategic vision, as presented in [My health, Queensland's future: Advancing health 2026](#) (Advancing health 2026).

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