

THE IMPACT OF ALLIED HEALTH CLINICAL DEVELOPMENT ROLES ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, ATTRACTION AND RETENTION -AN IMPACT EVALUATION

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AFFILIATIONS:

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INTRODUCTION

Do you want to retain 65% of your graduates over 3 years and double your student placement numbers?

Bass Coast Health is a growing sub-regional health service on the South Gippsland Coast. Workforce growth and recruitment challenges led to an increasing number of allied health graduates entering the workforce. Staff turnover was high, consistent with an average length of stay in early career rural allied health positions of 3 years, resulting in a vacancy rate of 18% in Allied Health team EFT. An innovative approach was required to improve retention and attraction (1,2,3).

Clinical development roles were implemented in Occupational Therapy (OT) and Physiotherapy in 2021, then Pharmacy in 2022 to support students, graduates and their supervisors. Short term objectives were to develop structured graduate and student placement programs that supported learning, skill attainment and wellbeing. Longer-term priorities included impacting workforce attraction and retention via developing growth opportunities for early career clinicians and fostering partnerships with key stakeholders.

METHOD

Executive encouragement to pursue allied health graduate program - Sponsor identified

Dual business cases developed to Clinical development pharmacist role implement graduate year programs in OT implemented, planned to increase to two and Physiotherapy and clinical intern roles and the initiation of student development roles (1 day per week) to placement program

Heavy focus on

graduates including

the set up of the

grad program

Significant recruitment challenges in the broader workforce. Grad programs Graduate year program implemented expanded as a mitigation in OT and Physiotherapy strategy Medication safety training

2023

Physiotherapy graduate intake increases to 4. Continuation of paired and project placements. OT graduates x 2 Pharmacy interns x 2

Focus shifts more towards students as graduate programs become more mature

2019

Graduates report that transitioning through rotations was challenging and there was a lack of support Allied Health Manager reports difficulty recruiting and retaining graduates

2021

Quarter 4 2021 clinical development roles were implemented

Vacant EFT became available,

EFT was quarantined to implement

graduate year program in 2022.

OT and Physiotherapy clinical development roles increase to 3 days per fortnight to support increasing student and graduate activity.

delivered for over 200 nurses.

2024

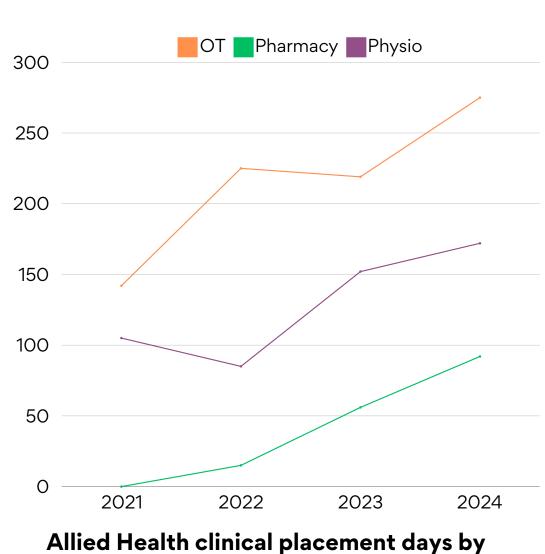
OT, Pharmacy and Physiotherapy graduate programs increases to 2 each Paired placements implemented. Project placements implemented in OT. Physiotherapy graduate intake 3 at start of year.

2025

OT and Pharmacy intake of 2 each. Clinical school model of student placements implemented in physiotherapy

Implementation of OT competency program

RESULTS/FINDINGS - QUANTITATIVE



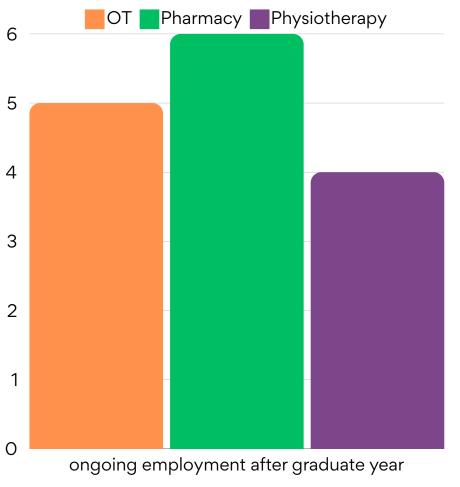
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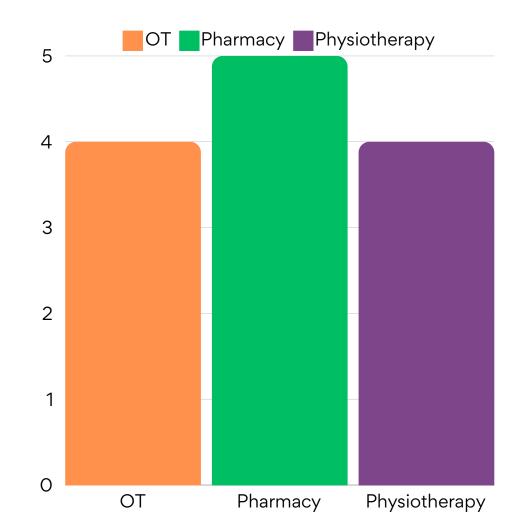
Allied Health graduates who completed their full graduate year 2021-2024

n=20 "I have felt well supported by my

clinical development therapist through a combination of reflective practices, personaldevelopment/ planned education sessions, general catch-ups/checkins, and her presence on the ward if/when I've needed it"



Allied Health graduates who continued employment after their graduate year n = 15/20



Allied Health graduates still employed at BCH (February 2025) n=13/20

RESULTS/FINDINGS - QUALITATIVE

New graduate feedback

"Being able to discuss complex interactions has improved my confidence transitioning from student to professional - having support to do so I think is vital in the transition"

Clinical development therapist feedback

"Our roles help to improve quality and safety. We work through a competency checklist and give graduates the opportunity to shadow first. This means that the graduates have more oversight and support when they need it."

"It is rewarding to strengthen partnerships within our teams. The support we offer during rotations helps with recruitment of staff. The impact of this support is ongoing as supported staff then refer on other new staff for employment"

RECOMMENDATIONS

Implementation of a clinical schools model for physiotherapy placements to support learning and future graduate attraction

Expand clinical development roles as graduate and student programs grow

Continue development of new graduate formal competencies

Investing in clinical development roles delivers a return on investment via improving retention and recruitment

This model is transferrable and could be impactful at other health services

Clinical development roles should be supernumerary and not get absorbed into the role of clinical supervisor

