

In recent years, the Australian healthcare system has had to rapidly adapt to new challenges, in a way that hasn't happened before. This came to a head at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic when health services and clinicians were stretched beyond breaking points.

'How we learn from and adapt to adverse experiences is critical to how the health system responds to future challenges,' says Australian Health Review Editor-in-Chief Dr Sonj Hall.

'Reflecting on the importance of health system resilience, the August issue of the [Australian Health Review](#) explores health policy research that considers the health system response to the COVID-19 pandemic, strategies for surge planning and vaccination programs, and managing healthcare services during crisis situations.'

'Multidisciplinary teams, led by allied health professionals using a reverse triage model, were able to safely discharge patients from a Melbourne hospital into community care settings at the height of the pandemic, improving access to emergency departments.

'This is a prime example of how health services can learn from past events to plan for future emergencies,' says Dr Hall

'The COVID-19 pandemic also exposed other critical gaps in Australian healthcare services, including access to acute care, elective surgery, and hospital exit block.'

'A perspective by Looi et al, reflects on the challenge of workforce shortages and the increased need for skilled workers as a consequence of suspended services during the pandemic. Balancing supply and demand in healthcare is no easy task but is essential for a healthier future.

'Other research looks at the impact of governance on care quality in aged care services, whereby a study aimed at improving understanding of care quality for residents, has seen board members undertake site visits to residential aged care services.

'These visits enabled board members to look beyond what can often be an exclusive focus on clinical indicators and accreditation as measures of quality, rather than the experiences of residents, their families and staff.

'The collection of articles in this month's Australian Health Review underscores the dynamic nature of healthcare provision in Australia, stressing the need for proactive responses to challenges and changing circumstances.'

The online version of this [media release](#) and links to the [Australian Health Review](#) can be found on the AHHA website. **The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA) is the independent peak membership body and advocate for the Australian healthcare system and a national voice for universally accessible, high-quality healthcare in Australia.**

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