

Healthcare service innovations are a vital part of our constantly evolving healthcare system, but they depend on a wide range of stakeholders, all of whom hold differing interests.

‘When stakeholder engagement is effectively accomplished, it has the potential to transform healthcare outcomes. However, when this crucial element is overlooked, innovations often fall short of achieving their intended impact.’ said AHHA Acting Chief Executive Adj AProf Rebecca Haddock.

In a new Perspectives Brief, released today by AHHA’s Deeble Institute for Health Policy Research, researchers from the Queensland Department of Health and the University of Queensland explore lessons learnt from the implementation of three allied health-led service innovations. The Brief also proposes a new, more deliberate, and strategic approach to stakeholder engagement to implement sustainable innovative practices in healthcare using a service logic.

‘The issue is that, although allied health professionals are experts in their fields and have a strong evidence base for clinical practice, they are often not equipped with the management skills and experience needed to develop and implement sustainable services,’ continued Professor Haddock.

Prior to undertaking their research, the authors of this Brief asked a group of senior allied health leaders to identify which key stakeholders they would engage with when developing and implementing health service innovations.

They found the selection of key stakeholders was influenced by convenience, previous professional relationships and positional authority more than any roles, resources or influence that would impact on the aims and outcomes of the project.

‘After completing case studies on the three allied health-led service innovations, the findings have informed a new Service Logic approach to Stakeholder Engagement,’ said Professor Haddock.

‘It provides an evidence-based approach to understanding, influencing, and negotiating with stakeholders to co-create and sustain outcomes that are mutually beneficial.’

‘This brief also outlines an informed framework for stakeholder engagement, with six key steps that include understanding the context, identifying the right stakeholders to engage, inviting them to participate, influencing and negotiating mutually beneficial outcomes, sustaining support and participation and monitoring and evaluating engagement.

‘It is also important to incorporate a service-lens approach to stakeholder engagement, as this can provide a practical framework to reveal strategies and leverage resources that create solutions and value creation effectively.’

The Brief [‘Engaging stakeholders in healthcare innovation: How hard can it be?’](#) and an online version of this [media release](#) can be found on the AHHA website.

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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.