

NT Health Performance Framework



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Acronyms	Full form
AHPF	Australian Health Performance Framework
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
HLB	Health Leadership Board
NHRA	National Health Reform Agreement
NTG	Northern Territory Government
NTRHS	NT Regional Health Services
REDs	Regional Executive Directors
DCERHS	Deputy Chief Executive Regional Health Services

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1. Overview and Purpose

The Performance Framework (the Framework) reflects a shared commitment between the Department of Health and the NT Regional Health Services (NTRHS) to work together to deliver better health for all Territorians and improve access to efficient, timely, quality, and patient focused health care across the NT. The annual Service Plan is central to the Framework in setting out the funding and service delivery expectation of the NTRHS.

The Framework is consistent with the requirements of the NT *Health Services Act 2021* (the Act) and the National Health Reform Agreement (NHRA) and outlines a performance management and accountability system, including agreed processes to collaboratively remediate unsatisfactory performance.

1.1. NT Health Realignment

NT Health is undertaking a system realignment in 2024 to further progress the One NT Health integration that commenced in 2021, ensuring our structure and culture is one that can deliver great health care for Territorians. The new structure realigns how we are operating to ensure we have the best support in place for the NTRHS as our service delivery arm. Underpinned by a hub and spoke model, the new structure aims to create better cohesion and connection between a centralised support system (the Department of Health) and our NT Regional Health Service.

The Department and the NTRHS will work closely over 2024-25 to ensure that the NTRHS Service Plan and Performance Framework reflects the principles of the NT Health Realignment.

1.2. Principles of the Performance Framework

The Framework is guided by the following principles, adapted from the Australian Health Performance Framework (AHPF):

Transparency	The Framework is based around clear pre-determined measures of performance which are accessible and easy to understand
Consistency	The Framework is applied consistently and is consistent with NT Health and NT Government objectives
Accountability	The NTRHS, Chief Executive Officer as the System Manager, as well as the Department all have vital roles to play in ensuring that performance expectations are met and that services efficiently and effectively meet the needs of the population.
Responsiveness	Where performance issues are identified, NTRHS and the Department will work together collaboratively to promptly develop, implement and monitor strategies to address the issue.
Balanced	Performance assessments shall take into account reasonable mitigating circumstances and urgency of response required.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1. The Department of Health

The Department consists of four divisions, which all play a role in working collaboratively with NTRHS to support and assist them to meet their obligations under the Service Plan and the Act. At all levels through this Framework and the Service Plan, the primary focus of the Department is to support the NTRHS to maintain, improve or restore performance to agreed standards. This includes through partnering with the NTRHS to identify and address performance concerns early and providing support to ensure long term, sustained performance improvement.

2.2. NT Regional Health Services

NTRHS has its functions defined under the Act. NTRHS shall report to the Department any emerging or potential performance issue and/or performance risk including immediate actions taken and/or an early assessment of action that may be required to prevent the issue from deteriorating. NTRHS shall also work collaboratively with the Department to devise and implement sustainable long term performance improvement strategies.

The NTRHS Executive shall be responsible for ensuring that all NTRHS service delivery, financial and performance requirements are met, with appropriate support from relevant Department functions.

2.3. System Manager

The System Manager is the Chief Executive of NT Health. The System Manager oversees all divisions of NT Health including the NTRHS in the delivery of their service delivery and centralised support functions under the One NT Health hub and spoke model.

3. Performance Requirements

NTRHS is required to provide services as set out in the annual Service Plan. In particular, NTRHS must, with appropriate support from the Department:

- Deliver services within the allocated budget.
- Implement operational plans that address the NT Health strategic priorities.
- Achieve Frontline Deliverables within the agreed timeframe as depicted in the Service Plan.
- Performance trending in the positive against defined Priority Area Measures and Quality Health Outcomes.
- Ensure service delivery is shaped to local needs through robust stakeholder engagement and consumer feedback processes.

Additional detail on these elements is provided below.

3.1. Financial Management

In accordance with section 11 of the Act, NTRHS will provide the health services and health support services to the standard and within the budget as set out in the Service Plan. In accordance with the *Financial Management Act (NT) 1995*, NTRHS must not commit money for expenditure in a financial year if the expenditure would result in NTRHS exceeding its approved budget for the financial year.

3.2. Performance Monitoring

The Service Plan incorporates Frontline Deliverables (Deliverables), Priority Area Measures (Measures) and Quality Health Outcomes (Outcomes). All measurements will be consulted and agreed to by the NTRHS and Department prior to inclusion in the Service Plan. Performance of the NTRHS is assessed on the Deliverables. Performance against the Service Plan Deliverables will be reviewed by the Health Leadership Board (HLB) quarterly.

Deliverables are actions which have a due date that falls within the current financial year. Process indicators and milestones are held in the detailed operational plans developed by the NTRHS and the status determines if the deliverable is complete.

Measures provide context to deliverables. In most cases there is a many-to-many relationship between deliverables and measures. The success of deliverables is evaluated in terms of whether or not measures are meeting targets. Targets aim to be achievable within one year or at a minimum, a positive trend towards the target.

Outcomes offer longer term feedback on deliverables and measures. Outcomes are benchmarked from national indicators such as the Return on Government Services (ROGS), Closing the Gap or Australian Institute of Health & Welfare (AIHW). Trend movements will be formally monitored and discussed annually, more frequent monitoring will occur as and when required.

The extent to which the measures and outcomes of the Service Plan are being delivered will be graphically represented using the traffic light system of red, amber and green.

3.3. Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Feedback

NTRHS is required to implement a robust process to engage with clinicians, consumers, community members and local primary healthcare organisations to plan, develop and deliver health services that shapes local service delivery to local needs. NTRHS is also required to ensure there are culturally appropriate mechanisms in place to capture, monitor and respond to consumer and community feedback. The Service Plan provides additional details on requirements that must be met by NTRHS.

4. Operation of the Performance Framework

The Framework is designed to be a collaboration between the Department and the NTRHS to review and appropriately respond to performance concerns and ensure that the NTRHS is meeting its obligations under both the Service Plan and the Act. A consistently high performing health system is the key objective and the core elements of the performance review and monitoring process are as follows:

- Ongoing monitoring to review the performance of the NTRHS.
- Analysis to identify actual/emergent risks and/or mitigating circumstances to address deteriorating performance.
- Formally meet quarterly to discuss and escalate any performance concerns, with the aim of identifying immediate remedial actions that are implemented within agreed timeframes.
- Provide a quarterly update to the Minister for Health on NTRHS's performance status and progress against agreed action plans.

Further detail is provided below on the operation of the performance review process, including meetings, escalation responses, and financial adjustments that may apply.

4.1. Performance Review Meetings

Performance review meetings are a central component of the performance review process and provide a transparent, integrated and supportive forum to:

- Monitor and discuss progress against deliverables.
- Monitor the trends of Measures and Outcomes.
- Identify and discuss performance concerns.
- Agree on actions/strategies to resolve performance concerns.
- Escalate concerns where appropriate.
- Identify high performance to enable sharing across NT Health.

To ensure performance is monitored on a regular basis, the Corporate Strategy and Performance team will: meet quarterly with the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executives to present the Service Plan results and discuss any issues or areas for further analysis; inform the Health Leadership Board quarterly of performance results; and meet with NTRHS Executive quarterly to discuss any areas requiring attention and where required, develop action plans to address issues.

4.2. Performance Escalation Stages and Responses

NTRHS and the Department engage in open dialogue to discuss and collaboratively address performance concerns as they are identified. It is expected that identified issues are investigated by NTRHS in the first instance, and evidence of improvement is provided as part of routine performance review meetings. Where relevant and requested, input from respective program areas from within the Department will support NTRHS to develop and implement targeted improvement. Where performance improvement involves developing and implementing new models of care or service redesign, the Department will work with NTRHS to progress such strategies.

As shown in the table below, support from the Department and intervention by the System Manager will intensify according to the magnitude of underperformance, the capacity or demonstrated level of remediation as well as any significant issues relating to governance and culture, given their risk to achieving and supporting sustained improvement.

Monitoring Level	Monitoring, support and intervention strategies
Level 1	Standard monitoring
Performing	Routine performance assessment through monthly regional performance meetings and quarterly performance review meetings with the Department and System Manager
Level 2	Performance Support
Performance concern	NTRHS to develop local recovery plans. NTRHS and Department to discuss potential support and assistance which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared project resources, diagnostic/analytical support • Support to develop and execute recovery plans
Level 3	Supported Accountability
Serious / Sustained Performance Concern	NTRHS shall:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake an in-depth assessment of the problem and identify options to address the problem. • Provide a detailed performance recovery plan and a timetable for resolution. The plan, including timeframe for recovery, is agreed to and signed off by the System Manager. <p>The Department will provide ongoing support and assistance in relation to the identification and monitoring of performance issues and corrective action taken. As part of this, the Department shall work collaboratively with the Health Service to develop and implement performance recovery plans.</p>
Level 4	Accountability
Challenged and Failing	<p>The NTRHS is required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a detailed in-depth assessment of the performance issue and identify options to address the problem. • Provide a detailed performance recovery plan and a timetable for resolution. The plan, including timeframe for recovery, is agreed to and signed off by the System Manager. • Meet with the Department and System Manager to formally monitor the performance improvement plan. <p>While responsibility for performance rests with NTRHS, the Department will provide ongoing assistance and support in relation to all performance issues and corrective action taken as a result of any identified issues. The Department may assign dedicated resourcing to work with the NTRHS to develop and implement performance recovery plans.</p> <p>The System Manager may also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission an independent review or audit of NTRHS governance. • Give consideration to reduction or suspension of certain health services dependent on the level of clinical safety and quality risk.

4.3. Financial Adjustments

Where NTRHS underperformance against funded activities, the System Manager may withdraw allocated funding proportional to the level of under delivery. Where NTRHS activity exceed specified allocations, NTRHS may be eligible for additional Commonwealth NHRA funding up to the national 6.5% funding cap, but may not receive additional NTG funding. However, weighted activity delivery in excess of specified allocations must not result in NTRHS exceeding its approved budget.