



Canberra Health Services Consultation Paper

26 June 2023

Proposed changes to the Fetal Medicine Unit (FMU) Sonographer reporting structure.

Women, Youth & Children

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1. Introduction

The CHS Fetal Medicine Unit (FMU) within Women, Youth and Children (WYC) provides care for women with complex or high-risk pregnancies who require specialised care for either them or their baby. The interdisciplinary team, which includes medical specialists, sonographers, midwives and administrative staff, work collaboratively to deliver exceptional care to clients in the ACT and surrounding region. The Sonography service currently operates 5 days a week (Monday to Friday).

Working in partnership with Maternal Fetal Medicine (MFM) specialists and midwives, sonographers are an integral and critical workforce. It is essential that sonography services are supported to deliver obstetric and gynaecological scans.

In response to the FMU workforce challenges, there has been a commitment to increase the resources within the team to strengthen the leadership, clinical governance, medical reporting, professional development and reduce the risk to patient care and staff safety.

The FMU Independent Review undertaken in October 2022 recommended establishing a Medical Imaging 5 (MI5) position to provide leadership for the sonography team. We are pleased to confirm that two Sonographer Manager positions have been permanently recruited through a recent merit process. These roles will work together closely, with one providing operational leadership and the other being responsible for professional governance.

The increase in leadership has facilitated the need for WYC and Medical Imaging to consider changing the reporting line to the Director, Allied Health, Medical Imaging to optimise the specialist capabilities and strengthen the safety and quality of services for patients and staff.

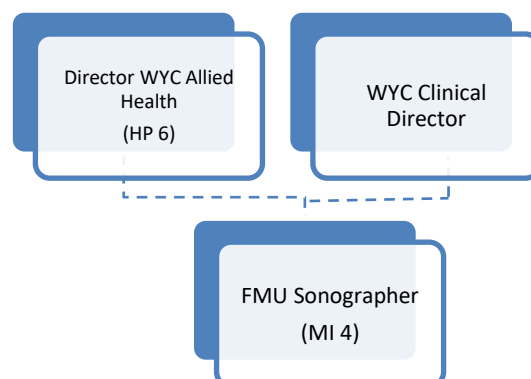
2. Purpose

The purpose of this consultation paper is to propose the change of operational and professional reporting lines for sonography staff in the FMU WYC to the Medical Imaging Department. It is proposed that the FMU sonographers will report directly to the MI5 sonography managers. The two MI5 sonography managers will report to the Director of Allied Health Services (MI6), Medical Imaging.

3. Rationale for change

The sonographers who work in the FMU do not have clear line management or professional oversight. Currently, the sonographers report operationally to the WYC Director of Allied Health and clinically to the Clinical Director, WYC Division. There is no direct manager within the FMU for the sonographers, that increases the clinical risk to patient care and staff safety.

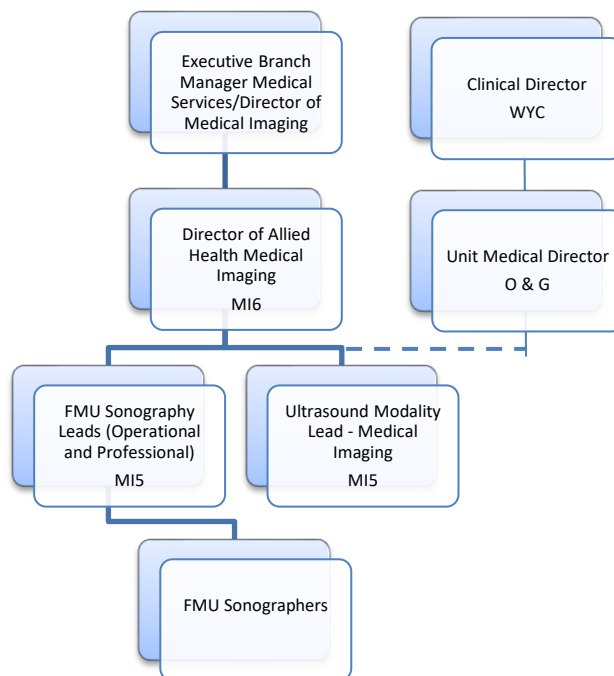
This proposal is part of broader work that is being undertaken to strengthen and rebuild the FMU following significant staff turnover which has led to a decline in service provision and unclear leadership and direction within the unit.



4. Proposed implementation

In May 2023, WYC Division recruited two MI5 Sonography Manager FMU positions. These two positions will undertake duties as outlined within the position description (Attachment 1), with one sonography lead focusing on the leadership and operational management of the team and the other focusing on standards of practice, professional development, clinical supervision, training and research. It is proposed that CHS sonographers currently working within the FMU will report directly to the two MI5 Sonography Managers through to the MI6 Director of Allied Health – Medical Imaging. There will continue to be reporting for operational purposes to the Unit Medical Director for Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

The proposed structure is represented below.



There will be no change to the duties performed by FMU Sonographers. Sonographers will continue to provide services within the FMU as well as other obstetrics and gynaecology clinics, including the Early Pregnancy Unit (EPU) and Maternity Assessment Unit (MAU).

5. Effects of the change

The establishment of two MI5 sonography leadership positions together with the realignment of operational and professional reporting lines to the Medical Imaging Department will:

- Strengthen accountability of the sonography service through streamlined and integrated operational and professional reporting lines.
- Enhance staff performance and effectiveness through embedded orientation processes, access to regular professional development, clinical supervision and training and clear guidance on scope of practice.
- Improve workforce sustainability through creation of stronger career pathways and talent attraction strategies for students and early career Sonography/Medical Imaging staff.
- Enable a coordinated response to the national skills shortages in Sonography and Medical Imaging.
- Support a positive and safe workplace culture for the team.
- Ensure a viable service for women and their babies who are at risk.

Note: The escalation pathways that are currently contained in the FMU Interim Business Rules will not change with the introduction of these positions. The Escalation pathway is detailed below.

Green

- Full operation FMU services
- Use allocated relief staff to cover personal leave
- Recall staff from education & training or study leave
- when **GREEN** action plan fully implemented progress to **AMBER**

Amber

- Normal clinic operation is compromised
- Notify FMU MI 5, clinical nurse manager and administration team leader.
- Identify mitigation actions to resolve

RED ALERT

- Mitigation actions ineffective
- notify O & G Medical Unit Director, ADON and operations manager
- implement additional mitigation actions

Red

- **Additional mitigation actions ineffective**
- **Cancellation & Rescheduling of Services**

6. Mitigation measures

- CHS sonography staff will continue to be supported in their roles.
- Recruitment of suitably qualified staff for the FMU will continue.
- An evaluation will be undertaken within 6-12 months of implementation to assess the functions of the roles and make recommendations for improvement.

7. Consultation methodology

- Consultation will be for a period of two (2) weeks. Consultation will be from 26/06/23 – 10/07/23.
- Feedback can be emailed to chs.wyexecutiveoffice@act.gov.au

We are seeking responses to the following questions:

1. What, if any, concerns do you have about the proposal?
2. What other feedback you would like to be considered in relation to the provision of Fetal Medicine Services at CHS?