

Commission
on Excellence
and Innovation
in Health.

A Culture of Innovation Guide 2023

LET'S PUT IMAGINATION TO WORK



Government
of South Australia

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Document Purpose

This *Culture of Innovation: Guide* is a partner document to the *CEIH Culture of Innovation: Discussion Paper*.

The *Culture of Innovation: Discussion Paper* delivers the context and rationale for why and how the health system will benefit from investment in innovation.

The *Culture of Innovation: Guide* is an overview of how boundaries of contemporary thinking can be pushed to harness the enormous potential innovation has to offer the health sector.

Research studies, practice wisdom and real-life testimonies demonstrate the critical significance of innovation in improving healthcare. Information presented in both this *Discussion Paper* and the *Guide* has been drawn from multiple sources to describe the function of innovation, the features of it, and the benefits it delivers.

Introduction

Healthcare systems around the world are facing unprecedented challenges as more people experience increasingly more complex health conditions. At the same time, expectations around the quality of healthcare continue to rise.

In South Australia, our healthcare system has been shouldering increasing demand for services across many domains over the past decade. Heightened pressure on the system and staff along with an aging population has led to unprecedented system stress and pressure points such as ambulance ramping have become evident.

Contemporary, complex challenges are not able to be solved purely with traditional approaches and processes. Instead, as a sector, we must embrace innovation, creative thinking and collaboration.

While *innovation* is widely accepted as an approach in principle, there is currently no standardised or system-wide definition of what “innovation” actually means in the South Australian healthcare context. Further, there are no consistent models or methodologies that unite the sector in the ambition to truly embrace and optimise a culture of innovation.

To begin the conversation around innovation across the South Australian healthcare sector, this Guide and the associated *A Culture of Innovation Discussion Paper* presents the evidence, theory, strategic recommendations and practical concepts associated with innovation.

The vision of innovation being presented through this guide is one where policy makers, clinicians, innovators, academics, administrators, investors and consumers work together collaboratively in an environment that fosters the ideation, development and implementation of new healthcare solutions.

With sector-wide commitment, we can rapidly advance the sophistication of our problem solving, healthcare practices, and ultimately, patient outcomes.

What is “innovation”?

Currently, there is no standardised or universal consensus on the definition of “innovation”. Different definitions emerge depending on the industry, the expert, the evidence or the opinion. Acknowledging that, at its simplest, “innovation” can be conceptualised as:

*“turning an idea into a solution that adds value”ⁱ, or
“the application of ideas that are novel and useful”ⁱⁱ.*

Across the evidence and literature, some consistent elements emerge as underpinning the notion of innovation. Specifically, an activity must:

- be novel or new and involve an idea or creative genesis
- respond to or address a well-defined issue, problem or challenge
- have relevance to and resonate with the customer, client or consumer
- add value and make a difference to an individual, an agency, an industry or a system
- involve viewing a topic from a non-traditional perspective, using ‘outside the square’ thinking
- ultimately and fundamentally change something for the better

For more information and different perspectives of innovation, please see *A Culture of Innovation Discussion Paper*.

A model of innovation

The CEIH has developed a model for innovation (figure 1, following page) for the South Australian healthcare context based on literature, industry experience and input from the across the local innovation landscape. The model provides a four phased process to mobilise innovation in all its forms.

The CEIH Innovation Model draws upon innovation processes, design thinking and human centred design methodology to ensure effective facilitation of ideas through an optimised pathway to implementation. The incorporation of design thinking encourages refined solutions in less time than traditional methods of problem solving.ⁱⁱⁱ

As this model is flexible and scalable, it is applicable for local adaptation to specific issues right through to navigating system-wide challenges. While this four-phase model appears linear, it is important to understand the process of innovation itself is non-linear. There will be varying peaks and troughs of activity as focus changes, tensions arise and barriers are overcome. The *Culture of Innovation Discussion Paper* provides a richer and more in-depth analysis of this point.

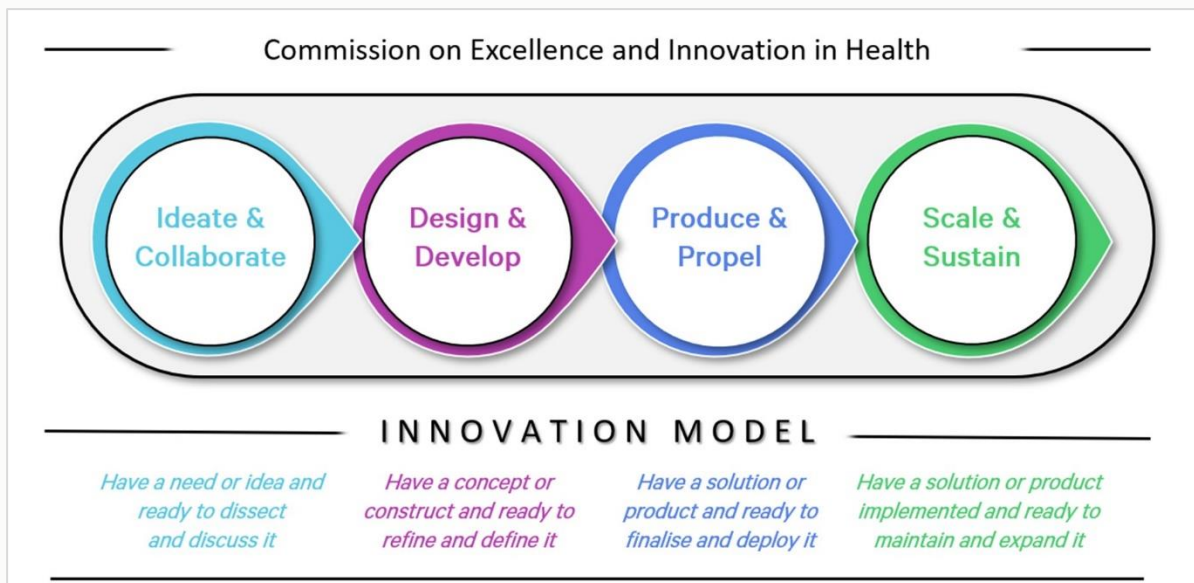


Figure 1. CEIH Innovation Model

Enabling innovation

Why form “a culture of innovation”?

At the highest level, deliberately and methodically adopting an innovation-led culture can change the way societies integrate and operate. It can drive collaboration between sectors and enhance economic growth. It facilitates impactful and sustainable solutions that come from thinking critically and creatively as well as from different perspectives.

Within our healthcare system, exploring, enabling, and adopting innovative practices can be the key to unlocking solutions that will deliver more efficient and effective care. Infiltrating existing practices and protocols with innovation in all its forms is arguably the most rational and sustainable response to lifting the quality of healthcare provision.

While the landscape of healthcare-needs is constantly evolving, our current systems are unable to manage known predicted demand. Innovative solutions embrace the breadth of contemporary opportunities and technologies available, and can provide increased efficiencies and more powerful economies of scale.

For example, artificial intelligence and machine learning can change the face of how we track patient symptoms in real time. Virtual and augmented reality can bring clinical expertise into living rooms in remote communities, and nano-fabrication can create millimeter-perfect equipment that can revolutionise surgeries.

Innovation does not often exist naturally in large organisations, systems, or industries, and can be limited to ad-hoc moments in isolated incidents. For innovation to flourish and influence at scale, a culture of innovation must exist to ensure decision makers at all levels of the system are promoting, enabling, and adopting innovative approaches to health care.

It is critical that, in South Australia, we keep pace with these advances and remain positioned to maximise the benefits for all. Only a system-wide agenda of innovation that spans executive, managerial and operational levels of the public health system can accelerate the improvement agenda at a pace and scale required to achieve world-class standards.

Key Components of A Culture of Innovation

- A permissive risk-taking environment that enables creativity
- Expected and shared values and principles around driving innovation
- Ongoing advocacy from leadership to activate, nurture and promote innovation
- Focused investment including sufficient capability, capacity, tools and methodology

Result:

Innovation emerges in a range of forms and contexts, offering diverse benefits in system and service improvements, and ultimately, better patient experiences and outcomes.

Guiding principles

Guiding principles are critical to ground innovations in theory and encourage development in practice. Principles should be fluid, evolving between the sector, the agency and the individual as the circumstances require.

All organisations should develop their own principles in line with their strategic goals and then ensure they are widely embraced and used to drive activity. Below are the guiding principles adopted by the CEIH and aligned to its innovation agenda, noting that these include internal organisational as well as statewide and sector-wide ambitions.

CEIH Guiding Principles on Innovation

At the CEIH, we will:

	Support creativity	<i>Creativity among staff is encouraged and supported where innovations clearly align to the organisation's vision, mission, objectives and goals</i>
	Encourage resourcefulness	<i>Collaborative networks and expertise within and without the organisation are optimally leveraged</i>
	Deliver measurable impact	<i>Data and resources are fully utilised to understand the magnitude of a problem, the opportunity, and to monitor and measure a solution's success</i>
	Promote a learning health system	<i>Everything is a learning opportunity to be shared and celebrated; nothing is viewed as a failure</i>
	Provide safeguards	<i>Boundaries around what is permissible, legal, ethical and contractual are made clear to all staff, including 'risk appetite' statements</i>
	Incentivise innovation	<i>Incentives are carefully designed to drive innovation activities, rewarding success as well as learning opportunities</i>
	Be inclusive and collaborative	<i>We collaborate and connect with others through relationships and partnerships, and benefit from diverse perspectives, experiences and abilities</i>
	Propel and accelerate innovation	<i>Any policy, procedural or cultural barriers identified are systematically assessed and purposefully navigated to ensure innovation opportunities are nurtured to success</i>
	Use innovation in everything	<i>We understand innovation isn't just about technology or new clinical tools and processes; innovation is lived and breathed in all aspects of the organisation</i>
	Benefit South Australians	<i>All innovation activities are undertaken with the intent to benefit all South Australians</i>

Strategies to achieve a Culture of Innovation

To create a culture of innovation at any scale, a number of strategies need to be deployed in unison to achieve maximum impact. Each strategy has its independent value but using them in conjunction with others offers greater likelihood of success. These strategies are foundational to the work of the CEIH and are also applicable to the South Australian healthcare sector more broadly. They are scalable and transferrable, meaning they can be used at an individual, team, organisation or system level; whatever the context, whatever the sphere of control, these strategies can be applied.

These following statements of intent can be adopted by any decision maker or agency and will act as a tangible and achievable road map for how to achieve systematic change towards a culture of innovation.

Establish an architecture that provides guidance and direction around how innovation is governed and managed

For innovation to be impactful across any jurisdiction, an appropriate authorising and governing environment that is consistent across situations, contexts and networks is required. By creating working-groups, decision making processes, standards, guidelines, policies, templates and protocols, a unified approach to governance will result in economies of scale and efficiencies that will influence efficacy.

Forge and foster relationships between and across key public and private stakeholders associated with innovation

Collaboration is at the heart of innovation, where collective effort in problem solving, resource allocating, upskilling and decision making will accelerate progress across a range of domains. By creating systems and opportunities for relationships to emerge, innovation will flourish exponentially across the state. This can be achieved by proactively engaging creatively across the South Australian public health system, innovators, investors, researchers, manufacturers, designers, academics, students, and policy makers.

Identify and invest resources in identifying, developing and deploying innovations

The rate of impact of innovation is underpinned by the level of investment in its promotion, facilitation and deployment. Commitment of staff, allocation of grants, attraction of private-sector investment, provision of sponsorships and offering of scholarships will create an innovation economy that will provide the engine room for progression. Innovation provides opportunities to develop ideas and implement solutions that could potentially increase financial savings and return profitability through higher productivity and efficiency.

Establish systems that support and enable opportunities for innovation

Mobilising innovation across any domain requires streamlined, reliable, and meaningful systems that ensure all protocols, processes and operations are utilised to support innovation. Technologically advanced systems – for example in data management, training, communication, regulation, and evaluation – will provide an improved operating environment for innovation to thrive.

Create digital and real-world environments that support and inspire innovation

Innovation requires a place and a space to emerge and grow, in both real and digital contexts. Creating opportunities for ideas and solutions to ferment and flourish is critical to ongoing sustainability. Creating digital workspaces via ideation and collaboration platforms, making available physical innovation hubs, and deploying a suite of web-tools delivers multiple modes and nodes where innovation can exist.

Deliver information and training to grow individual and collective capability in innovation

Specific and tailored skills and abilities are required to mobilise innovation at scale. Professional innovation requires a base-level capability, underpinned by the evidence and science that generated it. A skilled and knowledgeable workforce will deliver the best return on investment in innovation. Workshops, webinars, online modules, training videos, guides, tools and templates will build the collective capability and confidence required to deliver state-wide value.

Deploy a range of communication mechanisms that engage and inspire around innovation

Growing support and advocacy for innovation across the state health system requires an ongoing commitment to messaging and advocacy, to ensure staff can identify it, define it, mobilise it and sustain it. Contemporary health providers who deploy sophisticated communication systems using multiple channels to inform the industry and sector of the importance of innovation, the latest evidence, and opportunities to collaborate.

Generate, monitor and distribute information that shares content, insight and expertise relevant to innovation

Science and innovation are long-time partners, where new knowledge, understandings and insights are the key to unlocking the creativity required for innovation. Having a dedicated agenda that includes engaging in research, undertaking trials, delivering localised pilots, surveilling literature, and evaluating case studies ensures an agency remains an innovation pioneer on a global scale. This, in turn improves the competitive advantage, attracts talent, and grows the economy.

Publish a plan that provides direction to those involved in, and adopting, innovation

To ensure the ongoing progression of innovation, dedicated plans are required to demonstrate commitment, articulate intent, and organise investment. A synchronised suite of master and project plans offer sensible and reliable guidance to ensure innovation is sustained into the future.

Final thoughts

The CEIH is excited about the opportunity in South Australia to create an environment that truly advocates for innovation in the healthcare system

For this to be realised, the sector must commit to a cultural shift. Systems, processes and practices need to be designed in ways that authorise and facilitate the growth of innovation. A combination of physical, social and intellectual components will be required to provide the necessary space, permission and time.

Fully embracing and supporting innovation will help up deliver a world-class healthcare system that offers the best possible outcomes and experiences for the South Australians who rely on it.

ⁱ Skillicorn N. Build your innovation capabilities and creativity [Internet]. Nick Skillicorn: Innovation and Creativity. [cited 2023Feb1]. Available from: <https://www.improvides.com/>

ⁱⁱ Staff profile: Dr Gaia Grant [Internet]. The University of Sydney. [cited 2023Jan7]. Available from: <https://www.sydney.edu.au/business/about/our-people/academic-staff/gaia-grant.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ Lister C, Payne H, Hanson CL, Barnes MD, Davis SF, Manwaring T. The Public Health Innovation Model: Merging Private Sector Processes with public health strengths. *Frontiers in Public Health*. 2017Aug7;5.