

Critical Care Service Capability Framework

Frequently asked questions

OFFICIAL

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About this factsheet

This factsheet provides information about the Critical Care Service Capability Framework including its purpose, scope and application.

What is the Critical Care Service Capability Framework and what does it cover?

The Critical Care Service Capability Framework defines the minimum standards and capability levels for adult and paediatric critical care services delivered by Victorian public health services.

It supports sustainable delivery of safe, timely and appropriate care for critically ill patients and patients at risk of deterioration. It also promotes consistent service delivery across different settings and supports collaboration between health services.

It supports care aligned with the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards for recognising and responding to acute deterioration.

This framework does not cover:

- temporary deterioration management prior to transfer

- statewide designated critical care clinical services, such as organ transplant units, major trauma, and surgical and procedural burns services.

Does the framework align with legislation, standards, or accreditation?

Yes, the framework aligns with and does not amend or override any current legislation, mandatory standards or accreditation requirements.

Does the framework affect funding to health service ICUs?

No, the critical care service capability levels are not designed to directly inform State or National funding arrangements. Current ICU pricing is determined nationally by the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority.

Does the framework affect access to critical care services?

No. The framework sets expectations for what health services need to have in place to provide care safely and appropriately at different levels of clinical complexity. The release of the framework does not impact what services get delivered across the state.

Does the framework impact nursing workforce requirements, including nurse-patient ratios?

No, the framework assumes that health services provide nursing staff in accordance with the Safe Patient Care Act.

Why are the framework levels different to the College of Intensive Care Medicine?

While similar, the Victorian Department of Health Critical Care Service Capability Framework and the College of Intensive Care Medicine (CICM) levels serve different purposes and are intended to differ in some areas.

The framework levels were determined through consultation with Victorian clinicians, consumers and health services, and through analysis of data from Victorian health services. The framework supports service planning and delivery within each Victorian health service.

CICM levels are determined at a national level and reflect workforce professional accreditation and medical training standards.

How was the framework developed?

The framework was developed through:

- a detailed review of interstate clinical service capability and role delineation frameworks
- analysis of Victorian hospital data, including Victorian Admitted Episode Data and Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Society (ANZICS) Registry data
- consultation with an expert advisory group of clinicians and consumers.

Sector feedback was incorporated following an online survey conducted in November 2025. The final iteration was reviewed by the expert advisory group and approved through departmental governance processes.

How does the framework apply to health services with multiple sites?

For the purpose of assessment against the critical care capability framework, each health service site is considered individually as different sites may have varying levels of capability based on, for example, local

access to necessary workforce or support services. In some cases, health services that provide critical care services operate across more than one site, but also share clinical and support services across these sites. This can be considered where appropriate in determining capability levels.

How do the Local Health Service Networks and capability frameworks interact?

The Victorian Role Delineation Framework identifies capability frameworks, Local Health Service Networks and work on low-volume, highly complex care as key components of the same architecture that supports safe, sustainable and consistent care delivery across the system.

As these initiatives continue to be implemented and refined, service capability may shift or develop in alignment with Local Health Service Networks Clinical Service Planning. Service partnerships and shared clinical supports including virtual care and workforce flexibility are expected to continue to progress as capability frameworks are implemented.

Further information

More information about the Critical Care Service Capability Framework, including detailed requirements for each capability level, is available on the Department of Health website <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/health-system-design-planning/critical-care-capability-framework>.

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