

Improving Care Together

Quality Account

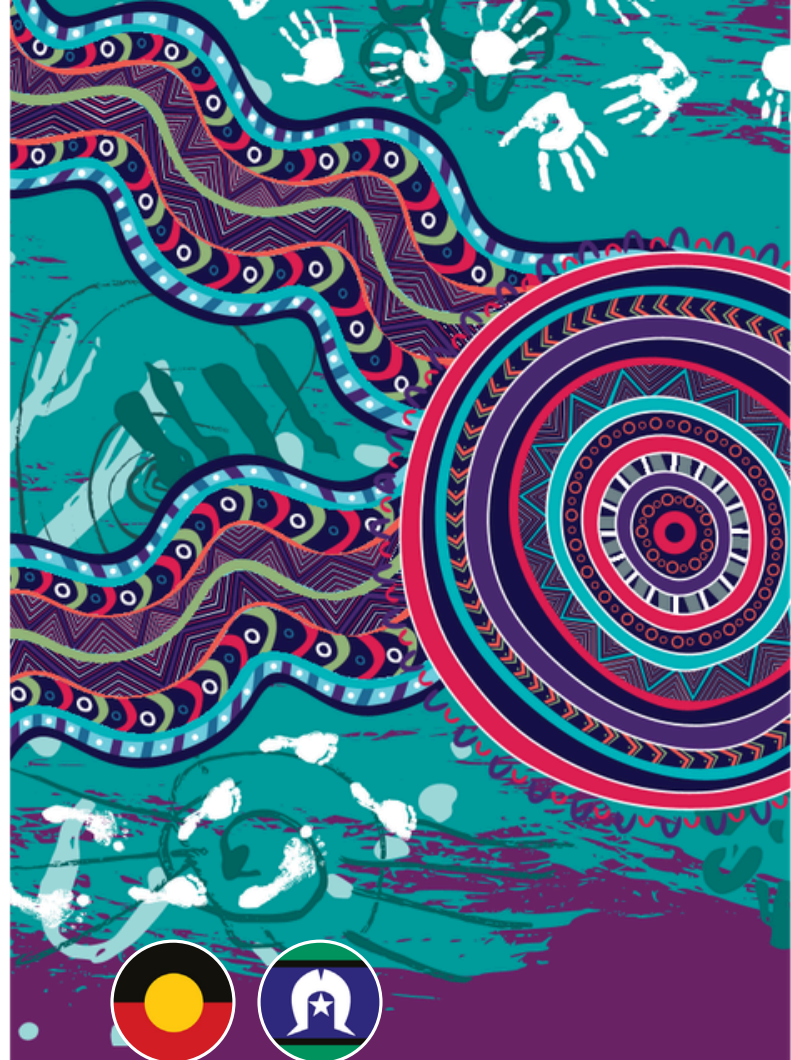
2026



Austin
HEALTH

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Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Austin Health is on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Worrung People of the Kulin Nations. We acknowledge the Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander People and all Indigenous nations of the world, who continue to uplift communities and champion rights to land, water, language and traditions. We support the important role Indigenous People continuously hold in our society.

We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and acknowledge the ongoing connections to land, skies, waterways, culture and lore of the oldest living culture in the world.



Inclusion

Austin Health celebrates, values, and includes people of all backgrounds, genders, sexualities, cultures, bodies and abilities.

Message from CEO and CMO

We are pleased to present the Austin Health Quality Account for 2025-26.

This year's report reflects our commitment to improving care together by working in partnership with patients, families, carers, consumer partners, staff and our broader community to deliver safe, high-quality and person-centred care. It highlights the many ways we listen, learn and improve, ensuring the care we provide continues to meet the needs and expectations of the people we serve.

A strong theme throughout this report is the important role consumer voices play in shaping healthcare. From the work of our Community Advisory Committee and Consumer Partners to the launch of our new Consumer Collaborative, people with lived experience have helped influence decisions, improve services and guide projects across Austin Health. This report itself has been developed in partnership with consumer partners, helping ensure it is meaningful, accessible and relevant to our community.

We have also continued to strengthen safety, quality and patient experience across our health service. More than 27,000 patients shared feedback through our Patient Experience Survey this year, providing valuable insights into what matters most to the people we care for. That feedback has helped us identify opportunities for improvement and informed the initiatives highlighted throughout this report.

Over the past year, we have introduced a range of improvements to make our services safer, more inclusive and easier to navigate. These include strengthening the involvement of patients and families in safety reviews, expanding disability awareness training, improving access through a new Changing Places facility, continuing our commitment to First Nations health and cultural safety, and improving how patients access information and services.

Thank you to our dedicated staff, volunteers, consumer partners and community members for their ongoing commitment to improving care. Through your expertise, compassion and partnership, we continue to build a health service that values safety, quality, inclusion and continuous improvement.

Together, we are improving care today while helping shape a healthier future for our community.



Jodie Geissler
Chief Executive Officer



Heidi Gregory
Chief Medical Officer

Introducing the Community Advisory Committee

Bringing community voices to decision-making

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) helps make sure the voices of patients, carers and community members are heard at Austin Health. The committee provides advice and feedback to Austin Health's Board and executive leaders, helping to improve services and patient care.

The committee includes 11 consumers from a range of backgrounds and experiences. They help Austin Health understand what matters most to patients, carers and the community.

Influencing change

During 2025-26, CAC members provided feedback on a range of initiatives, including:

- Virtual care and telehealth
- The patient portal and digital services
- Disability access and inclusion
- Mental health services
- Specialist outpatient clinics
- Future health service planning
- Veterans health

Their feedback helped identify ways to improve communication, accessibility and the overall patient experience.

Making a difference

The committee helps Austin Health understand the issues that are important to patients, families and the community. By sharing their experiences, ideas and perspectives, members help improve services and make sure care is centred on the needs of the people and community we care for.



Meet the members of our Community Advisory Committee

Learn how they help shape healthcare at Austin Health



Scan to learn more
austin.org.au/community-advisory-committee



Rachel Woodlock
Consumer Co-Chair
Community Advisory Committee

This report has been made in partnership with our highly valued consumer partners. Their insights, ideas, and suggestions have helped shape a report that is both meaningful and inclusive. We are grateful for their contributions and proud to reflect their voices throughout.

Have an idea for what we should include next time? We'd love to hear from you! Please contact us via email at consumerpartners@austin.org.au



01.

Patient Experience

Listening to our patients and community

At Austin Health, we welcome feedback from patients, families, carers and visitors. Feedback helps us understand what we're doing well and where we can improve. Every compliment, suggestion and complaint provides an opportunity to learn and make our services better.

There are many ways to share your experience with us, including:

- Completing a feedback form at one of our sites
- Calling, emailing or writing to the Patient Experience Team
- Completing the online feedback form on our website

Complaints are reviewed by senior staff and are used to drive improvements. Compliments are shared with our teams to acknowledge excellent care and recognise staff who have made a positive impact on patients and families.

What you told us in 2025/26:



1,000
compliments
7% more than
last year



1,437
complaints
13% more than
last year

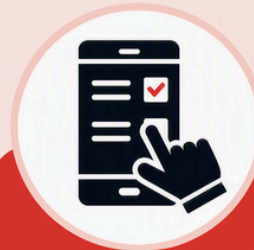
Every piece of feedback helps us better understand the experiences of patients, families and carers and identify opportunities for improvement.

Patient Experience Survey

Austin Health's Patient Experience Survey gathers feedback directly from patients about their care and experience of our services.

In 2025-26, more than 27,700 patients shared their feedback through the survey, with an average satisfaction score of 88 per cent. This was an increase from 87 per cent in 2024-25, and survey participation increased by almost 3,800 responses.

Patient feedback helps us understand what matters most to patients and families and identify and drive opportunities to improve care and services.



27,710
survey responses
received



88%
patient
satisfaction

Measuring patient experience

We regularly ask patients about their healthcare experiences through surveys. This feedback helps us understand what matters most to patients, identify opportunities for improvement, and monitor how well we are meeting patients' needs and expectations.

One of these surveys is the Victorian Healthcare Experience Survey (VHES), a statewide survey conducted by the Victorian Department of Health. The survey asks adult inpatients about different aspects of their hospital experience, including communication, involvement in care, respect and overall satisfaction.

The Department of Health's target is for 95% of patients to report a positive experience. Austin Health's Adult Inpatient VHES results for 2025-26 are shown below:

Financial year	Time period	Austin Health result
Q1	Jul-Sep 2025	94.8%
Q2	Oct-Dec 2025	93.5%
Q3	Jan-Mar 2026	95.5%
Q4	Apr-Jun 2026	92.2%

Patient experience small grants improving care

As part of Patient Experience Week 2026, Austin Health awarded four Patient Experience Small Grants to support practical initiatives that improve the experience of patients and families. The funded projects focus on reducing anxiety before surgery through calming music therapy, enhancing therapeutic engagement for long-stay mental health patients, improving access to equitable eye care through inclusive vision testing equipment, and providing sensory and communication resources for patients with disability and additional support needs.

This initiative was made possible through a collaboration with the Austin Health Foundation and thanks to the generosity of a philanthropic donation from The Harold and Cora Brennan Austin Hospital Patient Treatment Equipment Fund. These projects demonstrate Austin Health's commitment to improving the quality, accessibility and inclusiveness of care and responding to the diverse needs of our patients and community.



Patient Experience Grant recipients - Alannah and Cynthia from the Ophthalmology Department

02.

Working together with consumers

Consumer partner program

Our Consumer Partner Program helps ensure the community's voice is heard across Austin Health.

In 2025, around 50 Consumer Partners shared their experiences and perspectives across 20 committees and working groups. Consumer Partners work alongside staff to improve services, review patient information, contribute to safety and quality discussions, and help guide decisions about healthcare design and delivery.

Consumer led walkarounds

Consumer led walkarounds give patients an opportunity to share feedback about their care directly with our Consumer Partners.

In 2025, Consumer Partners visited 21 inpatient and outpatient areas across Austin Hospital and Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital.

They completed 159 patient surveys, gathering feedback about patients' experiences and identifying opportunities for improvement. The feedback was shared with clinical teams and safety and quality committees to support local improvements and help staff focus on what matters most to patients and families.

Improving patient information together

Clear information helps people understand their health and make informed decisions about their care.

Austin Health's Consumer Review Group is made up of Consumer Partners trained in plain language and health literacy. They review information written for patients and families and provide feedback to make it easier to understand and use.

This work helps ensure our patient information is clear, accessible and focused on the needs of patients, carers and families.



50
Consumer partners

Helping improve care
across Austin Health



20+
Committees and
working groups

Supporting safety, quality
and governance



230+
Patient information
resources reviewed



21
Clinical areas visited

During consumer-led
walkarounds

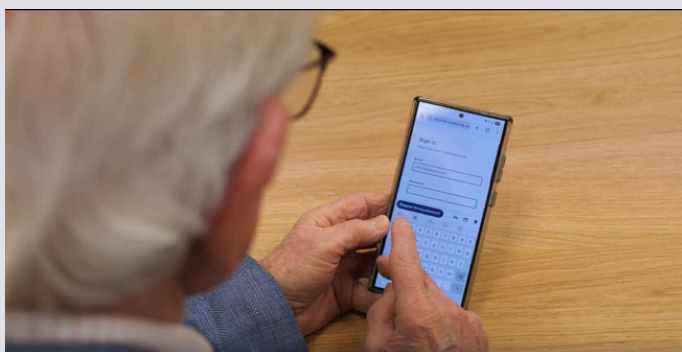
Consumer collaborative

In August 2025, Austin Health launched the Consumer Collaborative, a group that brings consumers and staff together to help improve our services. By involving consumers from the beginning of projects, we make sure the experiences and perspectives of patients, carers and families help shape decisions about care.

The Consumer Collaborative includes around 15 trained consumer partners who reflect the diversity of our community. Members include First Nations peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTIQ+ community members, people with disability, carers, and current and past patients. Consumer partners receive training and work alongside staff to improve services, communication and patient experiences.

In its first nine months, the Consumer Collaborative contributed to important projects across Austin Health, including the Annual Quality Account, Clinical Governance Framework, digital meal ordering, endoscopy service planning, discharge communication and reducing specialist clinics missed appointments.

By working in partnership with consumers, we are creating healthcare that is more responsive, inclusive and focused on what matters most to patients and their families.



Celebrating consumer partnerships

The Austin Health Consumer Partnership Awards celebrate projects that demonstrate meaningful collaboration between consumers and staff.

In 2025, 11 projects were nominated. Consumer Partners assessed and voted on the submissions, recognising projects that promoted person-centred care, inclusion and consumer-led improvement.

Consumer Partnership award winner

Patient Portal – Best Thing Since Penicillin

Consumers helped design, test and implement the Patient Portal. Their feedback improved accessibility, navigation and the use of plain language, making it easier for patients and families to access and manage their health information.



Consumer Partnership Award 2025 Winners - Patient Portal – Best thing since penicillin



Scan to learn more

austin.org.au/patient-portal



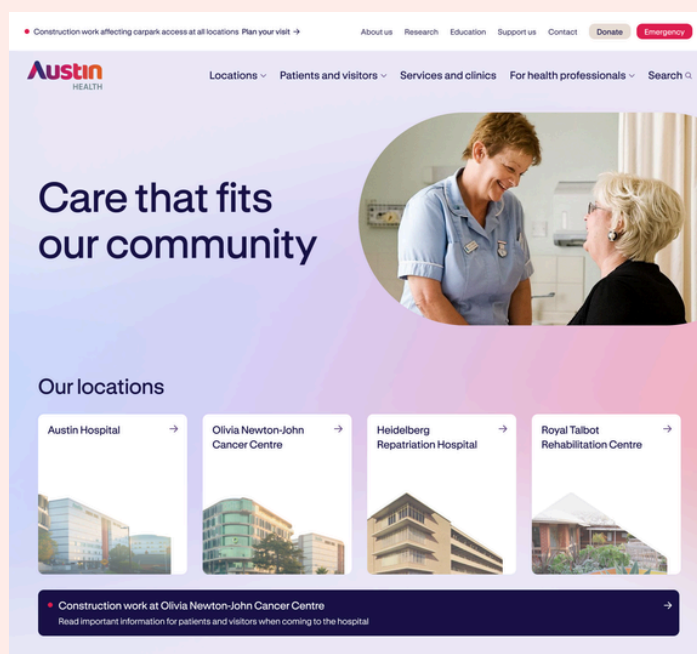
Improving our website

Making it easier to find information and plan your care with confidence

We have been working to improve the Austin Health website so it's easier for patients, carers and the community to find and use information. Feedback from consumers and usability testing showed that people can find it hard to know where to go, understand some terms, and locate key information about services and clinics.

That's why we've redesigned the website, with clearer navigation, simpler language and a more consistent look and feel. We worked closely with patients, carers and health professionals through workshops, usability testing and ongoing project input to shape these changes.

The new website has been built and is now moving into content development and migration, with go-live planned for later this year.



Sample picture of the new Austin Health website, with go-live planned later this year.

HIPPO

Handover involving patients provides opportunities

The HIPPO Handover Initiative was developed through the Mental Health Improvement Program (MHIP) in response to the drive to eliminate restrictive practices by strengthening communication and consumer involvement in their care.

Consumer participation in handover within acute mental health settings can be challenging due to factors such as a person's mental state, degree of illness, or environmental influences. Recognising these barriers, the HIPPO initiative was designed to promote meaningful engagement in the handover process and ensure that consumers remain at the centre of care planning and decision-making.

By supporting respectful communication and information sharing, HIPPO fosters connection between consumers and clinicians, while reinforcing dignity, autonomy, and partnership in care. The initiative provides a structured approach that enables consumers to contribute to discussions about their care whenever possible, helping to build trust, improve understanding, and strengthen therapeutic relationships.

Importantly, the initiative aligns with the Safewards framework, which emphasises human connection and collaborative care. By enhancing communication and engagement, HIPPO contributes to a safer and more supportive care environment, reducing the potential for conflict and supporting the delivery of recovery-oriented, person-focussed mental health care.

Disability Action Plan

Changing places facility - improving access and equity

In 2025–26, Austin Health opened a Changing Places facility at Austin Hospital to improve access for people with disability, their families and carers.

Changing Places facilities are specially designed bathrooms for people with high support needs who cannot use standard accessible toilets. They provide the space and equipment needed for people to use bathroom facilities safely, comfortably and with dignity.

The facility includes an adult change table, ceiling hoist and accessible toilet, giving patients and visitors with high support needs greater confidence when attending appointments or spending time at the hospital.

This initiative helps remove barriers to care and supports our commitment to creating a more inclusive and accessible healthcare environment for everyone.



The new Changing Places facility located at the Austin Hospital Campus, Harold Stokes Building, Level 4.

Disability awareness training- building capability for inclusive care

In December 2025, Austin Health launched Disability Awareness Training for all staff through our online learning platform.

The training helps staff better understand and respond to the needs of people with disability, supporting more accessible, inclusive and person-centred care.

Developed through the SPEAK project in partnership with Alfred Health and community organisations, the training builds staff knowledge and confidence in providing safe, respectful and equitable care.

In the first six months, 1,541 staff members completed the training, demonstrating a strong commitment to improving healthcare experiences for people with disability. By building staff skills and awareness, we are helping create a more inclusive healthcare environment for patients, families and carers.



2025 Disability Champion award recipients - recognised for their contribution to safe and inclusive care.

04.

Supporting First Nations patients, families and staff

Building a culturally safe, welcoming and inclusive health service

At Austin Health, we are committed to creating a culturally safe, welcoming and inclusive environment for First Nations patients, families, carers and staff.

We know better health outcomes are achieved when care is delivered in partnership with First Nations people and communities. This year, we continued to strengthen our approach by growing our First Nations workforce, increasing First Nations representation and building stronger connections with community.



Strengthening First Nations leadership and representation

Key achievements

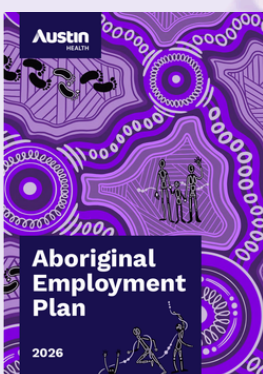
- ✓ Established Austin Health's dedicated First Nations Unit, led by the Director of First Nations Health, Sarah Joyce.
- ✓ Welcomed Brett West to the Austin Health Board, bringing valuable First Nations leadership and perspectives to decision-making.
- ✓ Increased First Nations representation on the Community Advisory Committee, helping ensure community voices shape our services.



Growing our First Nations workforce

Key achievements

- ✓ Expanded our First Nations workforce through the appointment of a First Nations Workforce Lead.
- ✓ Continued to strengthen our Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer (AHLO) team, providing support for patients and families seven days a week.
- ✓ Launched Austin Health's Aboriginal Employment Plan to support recruitment, development and career pathways for First Nations staff.



Read our Aboriginal Employment plan and more



Scan to learn more
austin.org.au/aboriginal-careers





Improving care and cultural safety

Key achievements

- ✓ Established a First Nations Emergency Department Improvement Working Group to improve the experience of First Nations patients and families.
- ✓ Expanded cultural immersion opportunities for staff to strengthen understanding of First Nations culture, history and healthcare experiences.
- ✓ Launched Austin Health's **Anti-Racism Statement**, reaffirming our commitment to a healthcare environment free from racism and discrimination.



Working in partnership

Key achievements

- ✓ Published findings from Austin Health's first First Nations Staff Experience Survey to better understand and respond to staff experiences.
- ✓ Continued building relationships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and First Nations partners.
- ✓ Celebrated NAIDOC Week across Austin Health, bringing staff, patients and community members together to celebrate First Nations culture and achievements.

Looking ahead

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We are proud of the progress made this year and remain committed to working alongside First Nations communities to improve healthcare experiences and outcomes.

Together, we are building a health service where First Nations people feel safe, respected, supported and heard.



Safe



Respected



Supported



Heard



Aboriginal Employment Plan Launch - 2026. Pictured left to right: Elise Tuffey (People & Culture), Jodie Geissler (CEO), Sarah Joyce (Director of First Nations), Brett West (Austin Health board member)

05.

Rainbow Health

Supporting inclusive care for LGBTIQ+ communities

Building knowledge and confidence

In December 2025, Austin Health launched a new LGBTIQ+ awareness training program to help staff provide respectful, inclusive and culturally safe care.

The training was developed in response to feedback from staff and the work of the Rainbow Health Working Group. While it was initially designed for nursing staff, strong interest has led to participation from teams across Austin Health, including Allied Health, Patient Experience Unit, and Librarians.

The training helps staff better understand the experiences of LGBTIQ+ people and build confidence in providing inclusive care in a busy healthcare setting. It is delivered by a facilitator with lived experience, creating meaningful opportunities for staff to learn directly from the community.

Since the program launched, over 250 staff have completed the training. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with 93% of participants reporting the training will change the way they practise.

This work supports Austin Health's commitment to creating a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment for all patients, families and carers.



Mel (they/them)
LGBTIQ+ Rainbow Education lead

Improving information for patients

Austin Health also developed a new patient information brochure explaining why we ask about sex assigned at birth and gender identity. The brochure helps patients understand how this information supports safe and appropriate care, while recognising that these conversations can be sensitive for some people, particularly trans and gender diverse patients. Providing clear information helps people feel informed, respected and supported throughout their healthcare journey.



Why we ask about sex and gender identity brochure



Scan to learn more
austin.org.au/why-we-ask-about-sex-and-gender



DOWNLOAD

06.

Language Services

Helping everyone understand their care

At Austin Health, we know that good communication is key to safe, high-quality care. That's why we offer professional interpreter services to help patients who speak languages other than English.

In the past year, 17% of our outpatients came from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. To support them, our Language Services team provided 20,520 interpreter appointments, including:

- Face-to-face interpreting
- Phone interpreting
- Video interpreting

We also helped Auslan users, with 85% of requests successfully filled. When interpreters were not available, we found other ways to make sure patients could still understand and be involved in their care.

The most requested languages included:

- Mandarin
- Greek
- Arabic
- Vietnamese
- and Italian.

We also translated 61 written resources into the top languages used by our patients.

These services help patients:

- understand their health and treatment
- ask questions and make informed decisions
- feel safe, respected, and included.

Austin Health is committed to making sure language is never a barrier to care. We will keep improving how we support all patients, no matter what language they speak.

Language skills badge program

Supporting better communication

In October 2025, Austin Health introduced the Language Skills Badge Program to help patients and families identify staff who speak their preferred language. Staff and volunteers can choose to wear a badge showing the languages they speak, making it easier for patients to connect with someone who may be able to communicate with them directly.

Since launching, **283 staff and volunteers** have joined the program, representing **61 different languages**. Many participants speak more than one language, reflecting the diversity of both our workforce and community.

The program has helped create positive connections between staff and patients. For some patients, seeing a staff member who speaks their language can help reduce anxiety, build trust and make them feel more welcome. This simple initiative supports culturally responsive care and helps improve communication and patient experience across Austin Health.



Staff member proudly showing their language skills badge

07.

Building a culture of improvement

We are always looking for ways to improve care

At Austin Health, improving care is part of everything we do.

We regularly review patient feedback, clinical outcomes and staff experiences to identify opportunities to make our services safer, more effective and easier for patients and families to navigate.

This work happens every day across our hospitals and services. From small changes that improve patient experience to larger organisation-wide projects, our staff are supported to find better ways of delivering care and improving outcomes for our community.

Supporting staff to improve care

Our staff play an important role in identifying opportunities for improvement and leading change.

Throughout 2025-26, more than 340 staff members completed improvement training to build practical skills in testing new ideas, solving problems and improving patient care. By investing in these skills, we are creating a workforce that is confident in leading improvements and responding to the changing needs of our patients and community.

Sharing ideas and learning together

Improvement happens best when people learn from each other.

The Austin Improvement Network brings staff together to share ideas, learn from successful projects and explore ways to improve care across the organisation.

Through regular events, workshops and online resources, staff can connect with colleagues, learn new skills and collaborate on solutions to common challenges.

By sharing what works, we can spread successful ideas more quickly and deliver better outcomes for patients and families.



Staff attending an Austin Improvement Network forum



341

Staff trained in quality improvement

2025-2026

Our Clinical Governance Framework

Strong foundations for safe and high-quality care

Providing safe, high-quality care is a responsibility shared by everyone at Austin Health.

In 2025-26, we updated our Clinical Governance Framework, which outlines how we monitor, improve and sustain the quality and safety of the care we provide.

The framework guides how we:

- Lead and support safe care
- Partner with patients, families and carers
- Support and develop our workforce
- Identify and manage risks
- Deliver high-quality clinical care

The updated framework aligns with Safer Care Victoria's latest Clinical Governance Framework and helps ensure we continue to provide safe, effective and person-centred care across all our services.

By having clear systems, responsibilities and oversight in place, we can identify opportunities for improvement, learn from feedback and experience, and continually strengthen the care we provide to our community.



Leadership and Culture

Supporting a culture of safety and improvement



Partnering with Consumers

Working with patients, families and carers



Workforce

Supporting skilled and capable staff



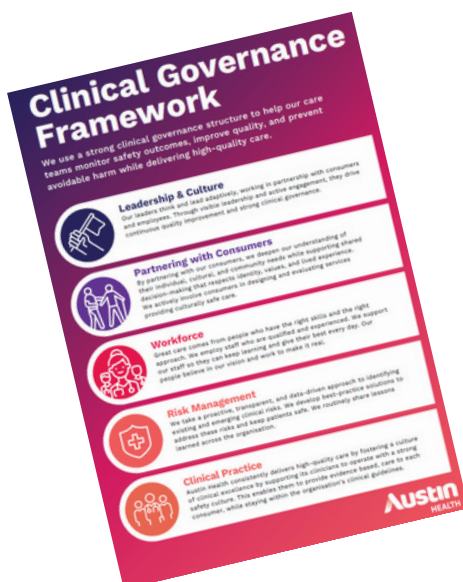
Risk Management

Identifying and responding to risks



Clinical Practice

Providing safe and effective care



Patient safety at Austin Health

Keeping you safe at Austin Health

At Austin Health, patient safety is our highest priority. Every day, our staff work to provide care that is safe, effective and compassionate. We continually review how we deliver care, learn from feedback and experiences, and make improvements to help keep patients, families and carers safe.

We work to keep patients safe by:

- Listening to feedback from patients, families and carers
- Making sure our staff have the training and tools they need to provide safe care
- Maintaining consistent processes overseen by our senior leaders to check you are receiving the right care at the right place, at the right time
- Involving you and your support people in planning and delivering your care
- Identifying risks early and responding quickly
- Learning from incidents and near misses

When things don't go as expected

Serious Adverse Patient Safety Events (SAPSE) are rare, but when they happen, they can have a significant impact on patients and families.

When an incident occurs, we carefully review what happened so we can learn and improve. Patients and families are invited to share their experiences and perspectives as part of this process.

If a patient has been harmed, we are committed to being open and honest. We will apologise for the harm caused, explain what happened, answer questions, and discuss the steps we are taking to help prevent a similar event happening again.

We are committed to listening, learning and continuously improving the care we provide.

Working together to improve safety

Patients, families and carers play an important role in helping us improve care.

Our Patient Safety team works alongside clinical staff, leaders and consumer partners to review incidents, understand what happened and identify opportunities for improvement.

Consumer partners help ensure that the experiences and perspectives of patients and families remain central to the review process. Their involvement helps us develop improvements that are meaningful, practical and focused on what matters most to the people we care for.

In 2025-26, Austin Health, together with consumer partners, developed a new guide to strengthen patient and family involvement in safety reviews. This process supports open communication after a serious incident and ensures patients and families are informed, involved and supported.

How we are improving care

This year's improvement actions focused on five key areas:

Supporting mental health and patient safety

We are currently reviewing our safety assessment processes to help identify people at risk earlier and ensure they receive the support and care they need to stay safe. A particular focus has been placed on maintaining safety during transitions between care settings.

Partnering with patients, families and carers

We improved processes to ensure carers and families are involved in care, safety and discharge planning, where the patient chooses this. We also increased awareness of interpreter services to support effective communication for patients and families who need language assistance.

Safer medicines and treatments

We enhanced pharmacist involvement in Venous Thromboembolism (VTE) prevention processes to:

- improve risk assessment,
- optimise preventative therapies,
- and support safer patient outcomes.

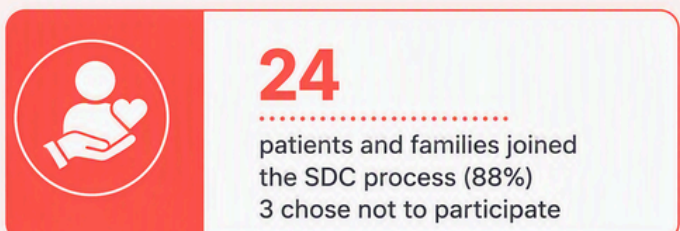
We also improved patient information and scheduling processes for non-urgent iron infusions to reduce the risk of skin staining.

Strengthening clinical systems and communication

We improved referral pathways for selected conditions presenting to the Emergency Department, strengthened follow-up of clinical results, enhanced escalation processes when a patient's condition deteriorates, and reviewed specialist clinic wait list processes.

Learning from incidents

In the 2025-2026 financial year:



Preventing Falls and Physical Harm

We have strengthened falls prevention processes in the Emergency Department to reduce the risk of falls and injury through enhanced mobility assessments, safer patient movement practices, and appropriate use of low beds and including patient family and carer education regarding falls risks and prevention strategies.

10.

Falls

Preventing falls

Falls are one of the most common safety risks for patients in hospital, particularly for older people.

At Austin Health, we are working to reduce falls by helping patients understand their risks and encouraging them to ask for help when they need it.

Following the successful introduction of the 'Eyes On' program in our subacute wards, the initiative is now being expanded across additional clinical areas.

The program encourages staff to check in with patients more regularly and maintain a visible presence on the ward. It is built around three simple messages.

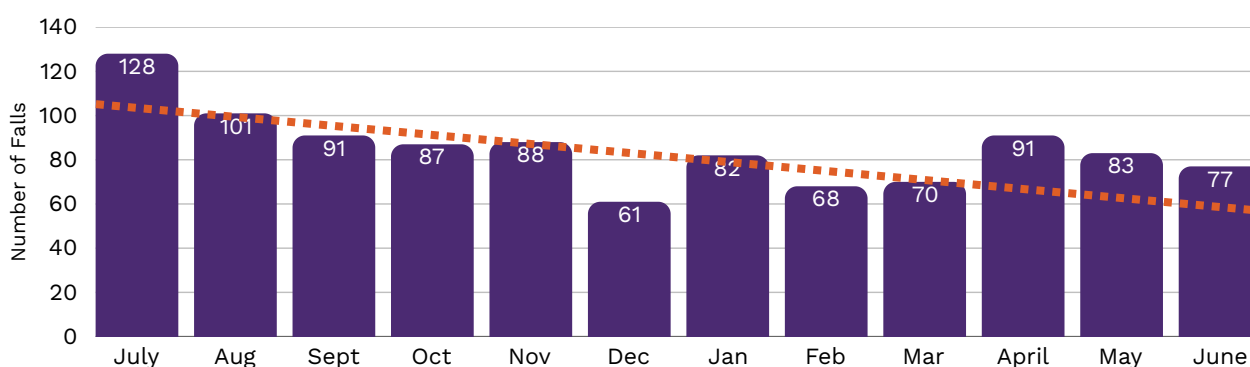
Key messages from our staff

- 1 We are not too busy to help. If you need help, ask.
- 2 Your balance and strength may be different in hospital.
- 3 Calling is better than falling.

The chart below shows the number of falls across Austin Health from July 2025 to June 2026. The trendline demonstrates an overall reduction in falls across the year, decreasing from approximately 110 falls per month at the beginning of the reporting period to around 61 falls per month by June 2026.

Fall incidents by month

July 2025– June 2026



Our focus for 2026/27

- Helping patients and families understand falls risks
- Reviewing the use of bed and chair alarms
- Supporting patients with falls prevention strategies when they return home



Pressure injuries

Preventing pressure injuries

Pressure injuries, sometimes called bed sores or pressure sores, can affect patients who spend long periods in bed or have reduced mobility. Many pressure injuries can be prevented through early assessment and timely care.

At Austin Health, we focus on identifying patients at risk and taking action early to protect their skin and comfort.

This year, we introduced new tools to support more comprehensive skin assessments and are updating staff training to strengthen prevention, assessment and treatment practices. The updated training also highlights the important role patients, carers and healthcare teams play in preventing pressure injuries.

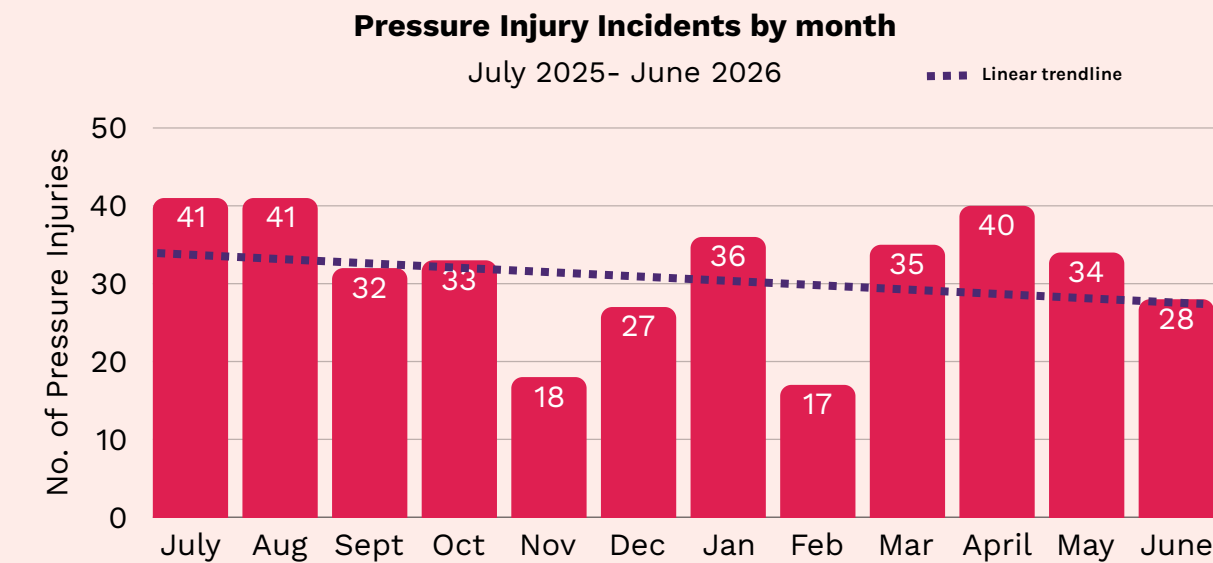
11%

reduction

In pressure injuries compared with the previous year

This improvement reflects our ongoing focus on prevention and delivering safe, high-quality care.

The chart below shows the number of pressure injury incidents across Austin Health from July 2025 to June 2026. While there was month to month variation, the trendline shows an overall reduction from approximately 34 pressure injuries at the start of the reporting period to around 29 by June 2026.



Escalation of care

Supporting patients and families to raise concerns

Patients, families and carers know when something doesn't feel right.

At Austin Health, we encourage people to speak up if they are worried about their own health or the health of a loved one. Our Patient and Carer Escalation (PACE) process provides a simple way for patients and families to raise urgent concerns if a patient's condition appears to be getting worse.

When a concern is raised, staff listen and respond. If needed, an independent clinician will review the situation and help identify the next steps to ensure the patient receives the care they need.

In 2025-26, 56 PACE calls were made by patients and families, an increase from the previous year.

This increase suggests more patients and carers are aware of the process and feel confident speaking up when they have concerns. Information displayed throughout our wards and patient communication tools continue to promote awareness of the service.



Austin HEALTH

Do you have concerns about your condition?

- !** Do you think you need urgent medical help?
- 1** Talk to a nurse about your concerns
- 2** Are you still worried?
Please speak to the Nurse in Charge
- 3** Still worried?
Phone **90** (internal) or **9496 5000** (external) and ask for a "PACE Call"

Patient and Carer Escalation:
Patient and Carer Escalation (PACE) Call enables You to act on concerns for urgent medical review.

Partnering with families to keep children safe

In December 2025, Austin Health introduced a new Family and Carer Concern measure across paediatric inpatient services.

Families know their children best and are often the first to notice subtle changes in their condition. This initiative gives families and carers a simple way to tell staff when they are concerned.

By routinely asking about family concerns and recording them as part of care, we can identify potential problems earlier, respond more quickly and work together to keep children safe.

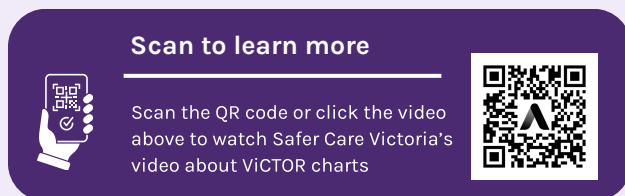
This initiative strengthens our commitment to partnering with patients and families and recognising the important role they play in safe, high-quality care.



SCV
Safer Care Victoria

Refined ViCTOR Charts

For parents, families and carers



Scan to learn more

Scan the QR code or click the video above to watch Safer Care Victoria's video about ViCTOR charts

Preventing infections

At Austin Health, preventing infections is an important part of providing safe, high-quality care. Our staff work every day to reduce the risk of infections by following strict hygiene practices, using safe procedures and monitoring patients closely. These efforts help protect patients, visitors and staff.

Keeping bloodstream infections low

Staphylococcus aureus bacteraemia (SAB) is a serious bloodstream infection that can happen during hospital care. At Austin Health, our healthcare-associated SAB rate is 0.8 infections per 10,000 occupied bed days – slightly above the Victorian average of 0.7 and staying below the national benchmark of 1.0.

Although SAB can occur due to intravenous line and surgical wound infections, our goal is to prevent these healthcare-acquired infections. To get there, we focus on safe and consistent care when inserting and managing intravenous lines, and careful aseptic technique when performing procedures and managing surgical wounds.

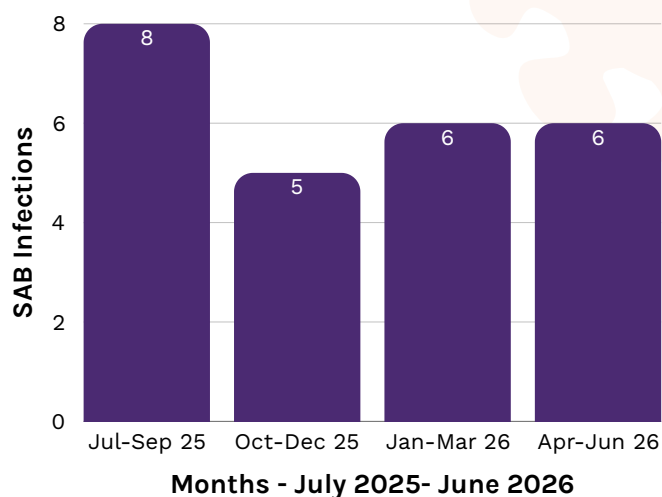
How we are improving safety

To help prevent infections, we have:

- Reviewed every serious bloodstream infection to identify opportunities for improvement
- Continued strong hand hygiene practices across all campuses
- Introduced enhanced infection prevention training for staff
- Regularly reviewed the need for medical lines and devices
- Strengthened safe procedures for managing lines and wounds
- Continued infection prevention initiatives in high-risk clinical areas

These actions help us reduce risk and improve patient safety across our services.

Staphylococcus aurea bacteraemia (SAB) infections



Reducing bloodstream infections from central lines

Central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI) in ICU were 1.3 per 1,000 line days this year. Austin Health is above the Victorian Hospital Acquired Infection Surveillance System (VICNISS) five-year aggregate rate average of 0.5. Our aim is to minimise these infections through the same principles of aseptic technique.

Protecting patients from the flu

Each year, Austin Health provides free flu vaccinations to staff to help reduce the spread of influenza and protect vulnerable patients.



91%

In 2025-2026, 90% of staff were vaccinated against influenza.

This includes:

92%

Category A/B staff

those staff who work closely with patients

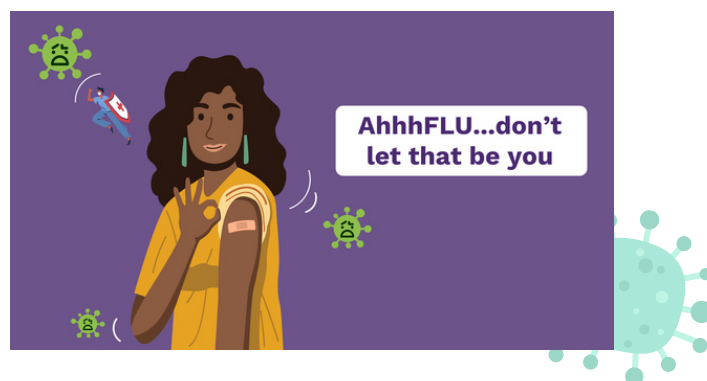
84%

Category C staff

staff in non-clinical roles

While vaccination rates have been encouraging, they remain below the Department of Health targets of 100% for Category A/B staff and 94% overall.

The influenza vaccination campaign concluded on 31st of July. We will continue to encourage staff vaccination to improve coverage, helping to protect our workforce, patients, and the wider community.



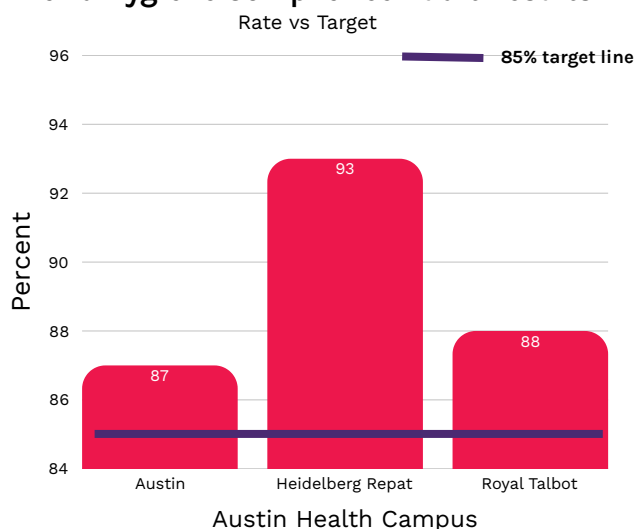
Clean hands save lives

Hand hygiene is one of the simplest and most effective ways to prevent the spread of infection. Austin Health regularly audits hand hygiene practices across all campuses. Over the past year, every campus consistently achieved the national hand hygiene compliance target of 85%.

This reflects the commitment of our staff to keeping patients safe and reducing the spread of infection.



Hand Hygiene Compliance Audit Results



14.

Blood products

Using blood products safely and responsibly

Blood products can be lifesaving for patients who need emergency treatment, surgery or ongoing medical care.

At Austin Health, we carefully manage our blood supplies to make sure blood products are available when patients need them, while also reducing unnecessary waste.

Our specialist pathology teams monitor blood supplies every day and provide expert advice to support the safe and appropriate use of blood products, particularly in emergency situations.

We work closely with Lifeblood to manage stock levels throughout the year, ensuring blood products are available during periods of high demand and reducing excess stock when demand is lower.

We have also adopted updated practices for some blood products, helping reduce wastage while continuing to provide safe, high-quality care for patients.

By using blood products wisely, we can help ensure this valuable resource remains available for the patients who need it most.



15.

Patients and carers can help keep care safe

Patients, families and carers are important partners in safe care. There are simple things you can do to help keep yourself or your loved one safe while in hospital and after going home.

Prevent falls

Many people are less steady on their feet when they are unwell or in hospital.

- Use the call bell if you need help getting out of bed or moving around.
- Ask for assistance rather than trying to do things on your own.

**Remember: Calling is better than falling.
Our staff are never too busy to help.**

Understand your care

Being informed helps you make decisions and participate in your care.

- Read the information we provide or ask a staff member to explain it.
- If you're having a test, treatment or procedure, be ready to tell staff what you're having and ask questions if anything is unclear.

Learn about other ways you can help keep care safe



Scan to learn more
austin.org.au/keeping-you-safe



Stay involved

- Keep track of your appointments and contact us if you haven't heard from us within the expected timeframe.
- Talk with your GP about your appointments and ongoing care.

Speak up

You know yourself or your loved one best.

- Tell a staff member if you are worried about a change in condition or have concerns about care.
- You can also use our PACE (Patient and Carer Escalation) process if you feel further review is needed.

Let us know what you need

- Tell us if you or your loved one needs an interpreter. Interpreter services are available, including after hours by phone.



16.

Environmental sustainability

At Austin Health, we're working to reduce waste, increase recycling and use resources more sustainably. These efforts help reduce our environmental impact while supporting the long-term health of our community.



We are leaders
in environmentally
sustainable healthcare

Our sustainability highlights in 2025-26



50%

increase in soft
plastics recycling



2.7
Tonne

Food waste diverted
from landfill



5,811

medical devices
reprocessed instead
of discarded



72kg

staff uniforms
recycled and
reprocessed

Recycling more, sending less to landfill

We continued to improve recycling across our sites, with:

- 24% increase in paper and cardboard recycling
- 50% increase in soft plastics recycling

These results reflect the commitment of our staff to reducing waste and improving resource recovery.

Turning food waste into a resource

In April 2026, Austin Health introduced organic waste recycling in partnership with Food Services and Café Adamo.

Since launching, the program has diverted more than 2.7 tonnes of food waste from landfill, helping reduce environmental impacts and recover valuable resources.

Giving medical equipment a second life

Through our partnership with Medsalv, selected medical devices are safely reprocessed and reused rather than sent to landfill.

Since 2023, this program has diverted:

- 5,811 medical devices from landfill
- Around 2 tonnes of medical equipment for reprocessing and reuse

Supporting communities beyond Austin Health

We continue to donate surplus medical equipment to organisations supporting communities in need around the world.

Equipment including dialysis machines, patient transfer mattresses and defibrillators has been donated to support healthcare services in countries including Pakistan, Palestine and Ukraine.

17.

Building strong leaders

Great health depends on great people

At Austin Health, we support staff to develop the skills, confidence and leadership qualities needed to deliver safe, high-quality care and support their teams.

Through leadership programs, education and professional development opportunities, staff build practical skills in communication, teamwork, decision-making and leading change.

National recognition for leadership development

Austin Health's Frontline Leadership Development Program was recognised as a national finalist in the 2026 Australian Institute of Training and Development Excellence Awards.

In 2025, 96 staff completed the program, strengthening their leadership skills through workshops, coaching and practical improvement projects.

Participants reported increased confidence in communication, feedback, delegation and decision-making, helping them better support both their teams and patients.



Austin Health staff accepting the 2026 Australian Institute of training development excellence awards

"The program helped me step into leadership with more confidence and gave me practical strategies to better support my team while maintaining excellent patient care."

Luke McDonald, Senior Physiotherapist,
Intensive Care Unit

Building skills across the organisation

Alongside leadership development, Austin Health continues to invest in education and training that helps staff provide safe, high-quality care.

In 2025-26:

- Nearly 100 staff completed Austin Health's specialised Medical Emergency Team (MET) course, helping clinicians recognise and respond rapidly when a patient's condition deteriorates.
- Staff accessed leadership, teaching and professional development programs through partnerships with Victorian universities.
- Scholarships supported staff to further develop their skills in education, supervision and clinical leadership.

Strong leaders help create supportive workplaces, stronger teams and better experiences for patients and families. By investing in our people, we are building a workforce capable of meeting future healthcare challenges and continuing to deliver high-quality care for our community.

18.

Staff wellbeing

Workforce wellbeing program

The workforce wellbeing program at Austin Health provides support for staff in a variety of ways, including opportunities for them to learn, rest and play. We do this through our regular wellbeing events, which include everything from massages to health checks, rest and recovery sessions, and even financial wellbeing education.

The program also supports our people leaders to look after themselves, and in turn the people they lead and manage. We have several teams across the organisation focused on improving wellbeing through the use of the Joy in Work Framework and early results show that talking about what matters and doing things that create more joy, do reduce symptoms of burnout and stress.



Staff attending a wellbeing festival flower arranging event



Staff attending a clinical education session

Austin Health

Austin Hospital

Wurundjeri Country
145 Studley Road
Heidelberg Victoria 3084
P: 03 9496 5000
F: 03 9458 4779

Olivia Newton-John

Cancer & Wellness Centre

Wurundjeri Country
145 Studley Road
Heidelberg Victoria 3084
P: 03 9496 5000
F: 03 9458 4779

Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital

Wurundjeri Country
300 Waterdale Road
Ivanhoe Victoria 3079
P: 03 9496 5000
F: 03 9496 2541

Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre

Wurundjeri Country
1 Yarra Boulevard
Kew Victoria 3101
P: 03 9490 7500
F: 03 9490 7501

Stay in touch



**Austin
Health**



**Olivia
Newton-
John Cancer
& Wellness
Centre**



Austinhealth_



**ONJ
Cancer
Centre**



**Austin
Health**



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Health**