

23 November, 2012

MEDIA RELEASE

2012 ACHS Medal Award Winner Announced

The Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) last night awarded its prestigious 2012 ACHS Medal to Professor Robert ‘Bob’ Gibberd, a distinguished mathematical physicist and biostatistician, recognised internationally for his work in measuring health processes and outcomes and the use of data to monitor trends in quality over time. Professor Gibberd is a Conjoint Professor of the University of Newcastle, and Director of the Health Services Research Group, University of Newcastle.

ACHS President, Adjunct Associate Professor Karen Linegar said “We are delighted to present this award to Professor Gibberd for his significant work in statistical modelling that, through a range of specialist projects at both Commonwealth and State level, has resulted in improvements in both patient safety as well as quality in health care.”

“Professor Gibberd has been a forthright pioneer who promoted the value of measurement to drive safety and quality, a focus that is only now being universally accepted and implemented,” she said.

“Professor Gibberd’s career started in 1974 as the Director of the Hunter Health Statistics Unit, and in 1989 he became Director of the Health Services Research Group (HSRG) where he considerably improved systems for collecting, analysing and communicating indicator data. In both roles he has contributed extensively to delivering data reports for States on quality, admission rates, re-admission rates and evaluation of health services, as well as supervising health researchers and statistical and programming staff.”

“Through his key role in developing and designing statistical methodology to assess practice he was one of the principle investigators of the ground breaking study **Quality in Australian Health Care** published in the *Medical Journal of Australia (MJA)* in 1995, establishing a baseline for the incidence of adverse events in health care resulting in many improvements in the Australian health care system.”

“This seminal study for clinical professions was a strong catalyst for both policy revision and changing attitudes to patient safety. Listed in the top ten papers published in the *MJA*, it is recognised by the *British Medical Journal* as being in the 10 most cited papers in quality in health care across *all* academic journals.

“Professor Gibberd’s initial and ongoing contributions to the development of the ACHS Clinical Indicator program has ensured national acceptance of the need to collect data, putting rigour and practicality into quantitative, clinical, quality improvement. From a report with one single clinical indicator set published by HSRG and ACHS in 1993, the 13th edition of the *Australasian Clinical Indicator Report* was published this year, reporting data on 353 Clinical Indicators across 22 data sets,” Adjunct Assoc. Prof Linegar said. Professor Gibberd, the medal’s 20th recipient, was awarded the gold medal at ACHS’s Annual Dinner, in Sydney.

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