**Abstract submitted for the 4th Rural Health and Research Congress**

**Armidale 4 – 6 November 2015**

**Congress stream:** No 5:Rural health research in practice –connecting for change

**Alternate stream:** No 4: Partnerships and integrated care – connecting rural people and services

**Abstract Title:** Creating rural allied health leadership structures using district advisors

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**Background**

Allied Health leadership structures have evolved as a result of workplace needs, historical structures and funding constraints. In 2013 Southern NSW LHD introduced Allied Health district advisors in dietetics, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, social work and speech pathology. These roles were instituted to provide strategic leadership within the district.

This research explores the processes and outcomes of implementing an allied health leadership model from a strategic and operational perspective.

**Approach**

This research in progress explores the process of implementing this leadership structure and uses action research and program logic to reveal the inputs, outputs, barriers and outcomes to date and preferred future outcomes of this leadership structure.

Advisor focus groups along with allied health clinician, allied health manager and health service manager surveys will guide the research team in completing a program logic template to describe the leadership model.

**Outcomes/Results**

Final results will be presented including the completed program logic model and advisor, clinician and manager perceptions on the value of district advisor activities.

**Take home messages**

* Examining this leadership model will inform allied health leadership activities in the present and future.
* This research has potential to inform rural allied health leadership structures.