A new direction for health services across the State has been launched today by Premier Campbell Newman and Health Minister Lawrence Springborg.

Mr Newman said the 48-page Blueprint for better healthcare in Queensland describes the Government’s plan to rebuild Queensland Health and re-establish the state’s healthcare system as a national pace-setter.

"After eleven months of delivering basic repairs to the system, the Government is now moving to a new phase of investment and redesign in health," Mr Newman said.

The Premier and Health Minister delivered the blueprint in an address which was broadcast to staff via the Queensland Health intranet.

Mr Springborg thanked staff for their hard work as problem areas, such as the billion dollar inherited health payroll system, were addressed.

“The overall goal is to build health services and community confidence in partnerships across all health sectors and levels of Government,” Mr Springborg said.

Key features of the Blueprint for better healthcare in Queensland are:

• Placing the patient at the centre of the health system.
• Empowering Community-based Hospital and Health Boards to manage and make local decisions.
• Health policy direction changes from public sector inputs (eg: staff and bed numbers) to refocus on system-wide outcomes.
• A greater range and number of health services will be provided through public, private and not-for-profit health providers and partnerships including:
  - Royal Children’s Hospital site: market soundings for private sector involvement to create a planned surgical procedures centre will be taken in May. Expressions of Interest are expected to be sought in October, with tenders requested in January.
  - Sunshine Coast University Hospital: A review of value for money offered by partnership models and commissioned from the accounting firm, KPMG, will commence on March 4.
  - Gold Coast University Hospital: Expressions of Interest for the use of latent space at the facility and tenders for the provision of radiation oncology services will be sought this week.
• Government strategy and investment in mental health facilities and services will be guided by a newly created independent Mental Health Commission from 2013.
• A Rural Telehealth Service will provide bush communities with first-time access to new services as part of a new strategy in remote area healthcare.
  - ‘Ambulance bypass’ banned and recommendations to improve ambulance access to hospital emergency departments will be implemented in full.
• The restructure of Queensland Health’s corporate office will make it 43% smaller, with resources redirected to service delivery.
• Queensland Health is back within budget for the first time in a decade. State Budget increases to Hospital and Health Services are accompanied by new standards of financial discipline.
• Awards and entitlements will be streamlined and simplified from the existing nine awards, six agreements and 189 human resources policies which cover more than 80,000 staff.
• Senior officers will transfer from outdated awards to competitive contracts in line with international best practice.
• Health staff will lead system reform in their workplace and help improve service delivery - through clinical redesign and empowerment to identify and report waste and system improvements.
• The value of health staff is recognised through recent pay increases (over three years) of:
  o 3% increase for nurses and midwives—an extra $592m
  o 2.5% increase for medical officers—an extra $300m
  o 3% increase for employees under the Public Health Sector Agreement—an extra $466m
• The Commission of Inquiry to investigate and report upon the health payroll debacle has begun.
• Payroll underpayments are resolved and systems repairs initiated including:
  o End of moratorium on overpayments
  o Changed pay date providing time for payroll processing
  o 3 month limit on historic claims for pay and entitlements
• Lessons from the “Fake Tahitian Prince” scandal are learnt: Service agreements replace ‘grants’ to non-Government agencies. Outcomes are linked to health goals.
• A new Ministerial Health Infrastructure Council will serve as a portal for private investment in health services and infrastructure.
• Business units will be subject to competitive testing through a newly created Contestability Branch, designed to maximise health service outcomes.
• Indigenous owned and led healthcare enterprises will be promoted and partnered to drive economic development, employment and training opportunities.
• In pursuit of a more open and transparent IT policy, the Health Services Information Agency will be reviewed.
• Queensland Health will improve its performance against national benchmarks. Its goal is to meet the national average price for health care delivery by mid-2014 – and to continue to improve in subsequent years.
• The range of online performance data published by the Government has been extended to include:
  o Specialists’ waiting times
  o Detailed dental waiting lists
  o Trend data over 15 months.
• 24 additional hospitals will publicly report their performance data by the end of 2013, bringing the total of facilities reporting online to 57. Five new hospitals will commence reporting by the end of this week.
• Local newspapers will publish quarterly comparative performance data on six criteria: emergency department, surgical and outpatients’ waiting times, rates of hospital acquired infections, support for families with newborns and value for money.
• Data, including from hospital emergency departments and surgical waiting lists, will drive competition, with savings redirected to provide better local service.
• Clinicians including a doctor and a nurse will be included in the make-up of each Hospital and health Service Board. The board of the Children’s Health Services HHS will also include regional representation.
• Hospital in the Home – enabling patients to receive acute care at their place of residence as a substitute for inpatient care – will be prioritised as part of a widened range of treatment options.
• The ‘Mums and Bubs’ policy is implemented and the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme revised to make it the most generous in Australia.
• Emergency maintenance in 12 regional hospitals has begun at a cost of $52 million.

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