

PRIMARY CARE PARTNERSHIPS

Service Coordination Implementation PCP Statewide Service Directory

September 2002

Primary Care Partnerships

More than 800 services have come together in 32 Primary Care Partnerships across all parts of Victoria to develop and implement Community Health Plans. The plans describe how service providers, communities and governments will work together to plan, coordinate and deliver services to contribute to the health and wellbeing of all Victorians and help alleviate the burden of disease.

Service Coordination

The Service Coordination element of the Primary Care Partnership Strategy provides a platform for developing and implementing **common practices, processes, protocols and systems** to integrate the way in which consumers come into contact with the service system, how needs are identified and assessed and the way in which care is planned and managed. Enhancing the flow of information between service agencies (within and between PCPs), and between service providers and consumers is fundamental to developing functional integration.

Local Services Information Strategies and Statewide Service Directory Development

As part of their service coordination work, PCPs have been funded to develop strategies to inform the use of services information within their catchments. A core goal of this work was the development of practice, processes and protocols for how service information would be used at the local level to support service coordination, including:

- access to and navigation of the service system by consumers;
- use of services information by practitioners to provide advice to consumers and to exchange information with other providers (particularly to support effective referrals); and
- to identify service gaps and priorities and plan for coordinated service delivery.

To support the development of a statewide approach to the use of service information, DHS consulted with agencies and consumers on the development of a logical data model for service information. At the same time, DHS canvassed a range of options for maintaining a comprehensive and up-to-date statewide service directory to support local service information strategies¹ (Information Management Strategic Directions: Service Directory Discussion Paper and Draft Data Fields, January 2001).

As a result of these consultations, a logical data model and data dictionary for service information was released in December 2001, and a statewide forum held on 5 December 2001 to advise PCPs of the planned approach to the provision of a statewide service directory. This approach proposed a central database of service information, part of which could be directly managed by PCPs, with the majority of the data being maintained by a statewide content manager. This central database would provide the source of data for the consumer local services directory provided by the Department through the healthy information website of the Better health Channel (www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au). It was proposed that PCPs set up systems arrangements at the local level to interact directly with the central database, in order to run searches and obtain results.

¹ *Information Management Strategic Directions: Service Directory Discussion Paper and Draft Data Fields*, January 2001. Available on-line at <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/phkb> (Primary Health Knowledge Base).

Delivery of PCP Statewide Health Services Directory

In November 2001, DHS released a request for quotation for the development of a database system that would support the service directory requirements of PCPs and the Better Health Channel. In April 2002, InfoXchange Australia was contracted to undertake this work on the basis of a quotation that proposed the modification of the existing Service Seeker system to meet the DHS requirements.

The approach agreed by Infoxchange Australia and DHS differs in the following ways from the approach outlined in the statewide service directory forum in December 2001:

- A standard search interface has been developed in the first instance, rather than leaving PCPs to develop individual search interfaces at the local level;
- All data is centrally maintained and updated on the central database by Infoxchange Australia as the BHC content manager, with the exception of facilities information. All agencies can submit other change requests on line;
- Facilities information about particular sites (such as the availability of a public phone, parking, disabled toilet, and the like) can be updated directly by agencies, once they are registered as an Agency Administrator.

This approach is broadly consistent with the systems and business environment outlined in the Service Directory Information Resource released in January 2002². The system modification work has been completed on this basis, and a license agreement has been concluded for Infoxchange Australia to provide access to statewide health and care service information through the PCP Statewide Health Services Directory. This agreement is an extension of the existing arrangements through which Infoxchange Australia provides content management services for the Better Health Channel local services directory.

The PCP Statewide Health Services Directory is now available over the web at: <http://pcpdirectory.health.vic.gov.au> and through the Primary Health Knowledge Base (PHKB)³. The search interface has also been designed so that it can be incorporated into existing websites.

Five copies of the PCP Statewide Health Services Directory will be provided to each PCP on a CDROM, to allow agencies to run the service directory stand-alone, without linking to the Internet. The data on this CDROM, unlike the live database on the Internet, will not be updated regularly. DHS will review usage of the CDROM version of the service directory towards the end of 2002, and consider ongoing arrangements for provision of additional and/or updated copies.

A comprehensive user manual has been developed and 15 copies will be sent to each PCP, for distribution as appropriate. The user manual will also be available for download from the Primary Health Knowledge Base and from Infoxchange Australia's PCPNet Library at <http://www.pcpnet.infoxchange.net.au/>

Future Development of DHS Service Directory Resource

The delivery of the PCP Statewide Health Services Directory is part of a broader approach to the provision of a service information resource to meet the needs of the Department of Human Services, agencies and practitioners, and consumers.

The current arrangements for the provision of health services data to the Better Health Channel Local Services Directory conclude at the end of November 2002. This provides DHS with the opportunity to specify a whole of Department approach to the development of a service directory resource which, in the first instance, will meet the needs of PCPs, the Better Health Channel and DisAbility Division, while providing for broader use of service information data to support other applications, including client information management systems, electronic referral systems, and service planning.

This approach will also incorporate modifications to the DHS data model and data dictionary for service information (originally released in December 2001). The modifications to the data model and data dictionary will provide better support to referral practice and a better way of describing services than was specified in the original data dictionary.

For agencies within PCPs, the approach will include a shared responsibility between agencies and a statewide content manager for directly maintaining up-to-date records about the services that agencies deliver and (where appropriate) the practitioners involved in the delivery of those services.

A tender for this next stage of development is now underway. The final scope and timing of development is yet to be determined. In the interim, DHS intends to continue to support both the current Better Health Channel local services directory arrangements, and the provision of the PCP Statewide Health Services Directory.

² Service Directory Information Resource, January 2002. Available on-line at <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/phkb> (Primary Health Knowledge Base)

³ <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/phkb>