



Whitehorse General Practice Support Services Structural Efficiency

9/6/05

One Division's Approach

Background

Limitations on DoHA funding has meant that ability to grow and meet GP/Practice needs had to be achieved another way. Consideration of other funding sources to enable expansion led to the Alternative to Corporatisation Project, which created the learning environment which in turn led to the creation of **GPSS** – General Practice Support Services (VIC)

Capacity Building

Why - What the Division can't do:

- Provide long term specialised services within practices – we have too many to help.
- Provide the breadth of specialist skills across minimum number of staff.
- Attract more DoHA funds for intense practice support –research has proven this to be the most effective approach for practice change management, however DoHA will not fund this level of activity.

Case example – recently achieved accreditation for 2 practices which had no internal support, barriers to change included culture (OTD), non GP ownership, only employee doctors, bulkbilling style practices.

GPSS offers an ability to:

- Provide tailored services for GPs/Practices.
- Have flexibility to respond in different ways: long/short term, task specific, diverse & complex services offered.
- Highly valued hands on support which GPs will pay for (fee for service).
- Attract highly skilled specialist staff with general practice experience (eg practice management, IT, asthma/diabetes educators in practices, WHAT nurses, complex care clinics).

What does it cost?

- Following 3-4 years of activity GPSS is financially independent and returning a surplus.
- Specialist staff are engaged as required so there is no unused time.
- Staff costs are comparable to Division costs.
- Overheads are less, GPSS pays for infrastructure & bookkeeping services from WDGP.

Case example – short term WDGP staff replacement required – filled through GPSS on purchaser/provider agreement. Fast solution for specialised position – no learning curve.

GP acceptance

- Perhaps minor disgruntlement at the outset, however this has been overcome by clear separation of services – GPSS is offering something different.
- WDGP purchases/subsidises some services to assist achievement of its own outcomes and reduces cost for GPs (purchased as required).
- GP satisfaction (cost and outcome) is extremely high for all services due to tailoring to exact GP/practice needs, and at timelines/intensity that GPs can afford. There is also attention to income generation at the practice to help offset costs.

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