



Enhanced Primary Care Discharge Project

Project Summary

The project commenced in November 2001 with 12 months funding from the Victorian DHS and the DH&A. The GPDV coordinates the 4 Victorian projects. Staffing includes a 0.8 project worker and 0.15 GPLO.

The project seeks to use the EPC hospital discharge item numbers to increase and encourage the formal liaison between the hospital and the referring GPs

Critical Issues

- Executive support in terms of steering committee involvement and clinical direction, and the cooperation of the 2 GP divisional partners
- Ascertaining the current discharge practices within the medical centre and the current level and point of GP involvement. Unit specific discharge procedures were in place. Discharge planning was felt to be at its best in the units where patients had longer lengths of stay (eg subacute areas)
- Realistic goal setting in terms of the number of units developing sustainable EPC process in the 12 months and in terms of a broader cultural change process regarding primary care integration issues
- Comprehensive education programmes for both the hospital staff and the GPs and regular reporting back to those involved
- Information sharing between project teams in different hospitals and the support of the GPDV

Success Factors

- Flexibility to tailor the process to specifically suit individual units
- Regular and frequent contact with participants and a hands on approach in the initial stages
- Senior medical staff support in individual units
- Identification of “champions” within each unit to drive the project locally

Challenges

- Different discharge processes between units
- Workload pressures of unit and ward staff
- Working with and not against concurrent medical centre projects and initiatives
- 12 month timeline to implement a sustainable process in a large medical centre
- Interpretation of the EPC item number descriptors
- The EPC consent process adds another juncture for obtaining consent. The Medical Centre has recently implemented a comprehensive privacy policy to comply with the new laws and guidelines and the separate need for consent to the EPC process is a cumbersome step in the process.

Contact Details

Lee Stamford, EPC Project Officer, A&RMC: lee@nevdgp.org.au

Dr Jenny Bocquet, EPC GPLO, A&RMC: jennyb@nevdgp.org.au