

Mission Statement

GPDV works at the state level to support Victorian divisions of general practice. Divisions build capacity in general practice, working at the local level towards a skilled, viable and effective general practice sector to improve the health and well-being of Victorian communities.

GPDV is part of the
Divisions Network which
is funded by the
Department of Health
and Ageing

Building Healthy Communities through Partnerships

We take our theme for this newsletter from the title of this year's Divisions Network Forum, *Building healthy communities through partnerships*, which focuses on strengthening the primary health care system to improve the health and wellbeing of all Australians.

The choice of theme is a reminder that one of the most important roles of the Divisions Network is to support the better integration of general practice into the wider health system. Whether we are in a division working to achieve this at the local and regional level, a State-based organisation at the state level or ADGP working nationally, the only effective approach is to develop working partnerships with others in the health system and the wider community services sector.

In this newsletter we showcase work by Victorian divisions ranging from partnership with large hospitals through links with indigenous and refugee agencies and a rural after-hours partnership between GPs, hospitals and the community, to a partnership of four divisions in eastern Melbourne. All these show that, as the West Vic Division puts it, divisions are trusted organisations and well placed to bring partners together.

At GPDV we play our part in the development of effective partnerships by offering our *Introducing Divisions* workshops. These are designed to give potential partners, including government departments which have been very appreciative participants, a clear understanding of what divisions are, what they are funded to do and how they can contribute to the improvement of health services at all levels. We suggest ways to approach divisions and strategies that will be effective in working with general practice.

GPDV also works with the Victorian Primary & Community Health Network to include divisions in a strong partnership of primary care sector agencies that can work together to improve the health system. Our aim is a united primary care sector that will carry more weight in negotiations with health departments and governments and will be able to agree on operational collaboration and system changes that will benefit the consumers for whom we are all working. It will also be able to mount a better argument to demonstrate, as the item on working with Primary Care Partnerships on page 4 proposes, that the provision of adequate resources is the key to an effective primary care sector.

But partnerships with the primary care sector, or with organisations with a similar approach to community services, are just the start. To be effective, primary care must have strong partnerships with the acute sector to help secure the necessary resources for work at the primary level to deliver more appropriate services that will also help take the pressure off acute services. The work of the Dandenong Division (page 7) and the Western Melbourne Division (page 10) are good examples of working successfully with a large hospital as well as with primary care services.

The other vital partnership in our efforts to enable general practice to influence the direction of the health system at the state level is with the Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS). As well as the work with the Primary Care partnerships through the Primary Health Branch of DHS set out at page 4, GPDV has worked in partnership with other branches of DHS to deliver, through divisions, programs in Clinical Risk Management in small rural hospitals, Hepatitis C education for GPs, a palliative care project under the PEPA 2 Program and, with the Lymphoedema Association of Victoria and the National Breast Cancer Centre, a program of GP education in Lymphoedema.

We hope that this issue of the newsletter will encourage readers to contact divisions to make use of their potential as partners in the development or improvement of services.

- Bill Newton, CEO

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Promoting effective partnerships in Victoria

“There are loads of opportunities to work with divisions- this workshop has given me more knowledge about divisions and therefore increased confidence to approach the local division”

This was one of the main conclusions expressed by a participant in GPDV's Introducing Divisions workshop in March 2006. This workshop is offered several times annually and over the last two years has reached 188 people from 52 separate organisations in the health sector in Victoria. The workshop has appealed to a broad range of organisations which are keen to learn more about partnership opportunities with general practice including:

- Aboriginal community controlled health organisations
- Community health services
- Primary Care Partnership member agencies
- Carer organisations
- Hospital networks
- Family Planning services
- Drug & Alcohol services
- Local government
- Womens' health services
- Non government organisations with specific health interests eg. arthritis, cancer, diabetes

Staff from Commonwealth and state health departments have also valued the workshop as a way of learning more about the industry of general practice, what divisions actually do and how divisions can be involved in government policy and program development and implementation.

The **Introducing Divisions** workshop aims to provide an orientation to the purpose of divisions and their relationship to General Practice and explores strategies and protocols for working collaboratively with divisions.

One of the questions put to participants in the evaluation of these workshops is “ what attribute of general practice is the most important in providing impetus for you to work with general practice?” This provides a window into some of the key reasons for partnering

- GPs clinical knowledge base is critical
- GPs know about allied health service needs and gaps in the region
- General practice is the accessible first point of entry to the health system
- Patient trust in GPs enables GPs to offer prevention and early intervention advice
- General practice has regular contact with a large percentage of the Australian population
- Patients look to GPs to refer them to appropriate local services

GPDV **Privacy** **Statement**

GPDV is committed to a Privacy Policy which outlines existing legal and ethical obligations consistent with current State and Federal Privacy legislation and addresses the National Privacy Principles determined by the Privacy Commissioner.

The policy sets out how GPDV collects, uses, keeps secure and discloses information. It also acknowledges that individuals have the right to know what information is held about them, and to correct that information should that be necessary.

Further details are available on the GPDV website: www.gpdv.com.au

If you do not wish to continue receiving this newsletter please contact Linda McKenzie on 9341 5200 or l.mckenzie@gpdv.com.au

The annual national survey of divisions provides a picture of the reasons why divisions seek and initiate collaborative partnerships.

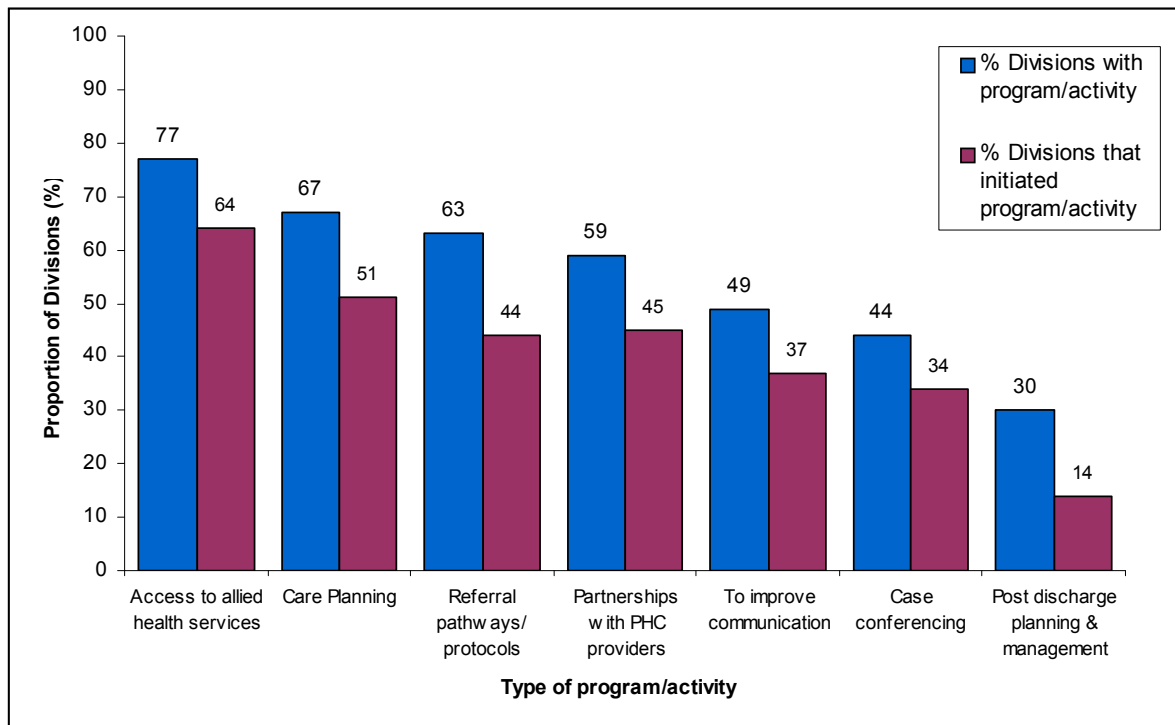
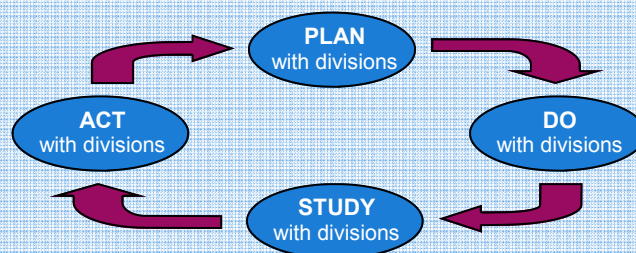


Figure 8.5: Proportion of Divisions initiating programs or activities to improve GP collaboration with other primary care providers, 2004-05

Source: Hordacre, AL., Keane, M., Kalucy, E., Moretti, C. (2006). *Making the connections. Report of the 2004-2005 Annual Survey of Divisions of General Practice.* Adelaide: Primary Health Care Research & Information Service, Department of General Practice, Flinders University, and Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

Protocols for collaborating with general practice through divisions



1. Work together at each step of a PDSA approach in creating change
 2. Clarify common objectives, roles and responsibilities and record these in written statements
 3. Plan together to build the evidence base and business case which will encourage GP engagement
 4. Work with the divisions' network to identify and include GP "champions"
 5. Acknowledge the expertise of divisions in GP engagement
 6. Share data and findings and work with divisions to interpret their meaning
 7. Support GP champions to disseminate the findings through divisions to other GPs
 8. Develop a final report, a policy recommendation, a new funding proposal together with the division
 9. Approach divisions through the CEO or the Chair of the Board
- Refer to the DHS "Guide to General Practice Engagement in Primary Care Partnerships" as a useful resource

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