

## Collaborative Research Hub

May 2009

### Overview

Health care systems across the world are increasingly seeking ways of improving service quality, efficiency and effectiveness and are relying on partnerships with researchers.

New ways of supporting and facilitating good research practices and improved primary health care outcomes are required to not only support practitioners conducting research but also Divisions of General Practice.

Divisions of General Practice need research on-demand and relevant research to inform planning and organisational and health outcomes.

### **Collaborative Research Hub: A nexus between research and practice**

The establishment of the *Collaborative Research Hub* was a response to this need and has a key focus on increasing the relevance and use of health service research to inform decision-making by facilitating knowledge transfer and exchange.

The *Collaborative Research Hub* provides an important nexus in:

- maintaining a focus on collaborative projects that engage relevant sectors of the community in the pursuit of solutions; and
- knowledge transfer through "linkage and exchange" - the interaction, collaboration, and exchange of ideas.

### Partnership

In November 2007, General Practice Queensland and Griffith University formed a partnership to support the development of a research-practice health agenda.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed committing both organisations to the establishment of a Collaborative Research Hub focusing on the translation of evidence into practice.

Following the signing of a MoU, a skill based Collaborative Research Hub Steering Committee was established.

The Steering Committee is the overarching governing body within the model and supports the overall leadership, advocacy and implementation of the initiative.

Included on the Steering Committee are representatives from Griffith University, General Practice Queensland, Queensland Health Policy Unit, Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development (PHCRED) Strategy, University of Queensland and James Cook University.

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The partners of the *Collaborative Research Hub* support the development of a model and research platform, which focuses on a new way of operating by:

- linking networks;
- exchanging knowledge and ideas; and
- creating an interface to support innovation.

## Objectives

The following objectives were agreed by the partnership and supported under the Memorandum of Understanding. They include:

- To provide an environment that facilitates strong links between research expertise and practitioner relevance by exploring collaborative projects.
- To produce joint publications, apply for joint tenders and research grants and seek philanthropic or corporate funding opportunities.
- Identify and build the strengths of each party in relation to the translation of evidence into practice and policy.
- To develop, apply and support innovative and evidenced-based approaches to health service delivery and the management of health issues in the community.
- To build research capacity by supporting training, higher education and skill-development around evidence-based practice and expertise.
- To conduct and promote research that addresses gaps in knowledge in priority areas, builds the evidence-base and contributes to the primary health care sector.
- To examine and apply processes of knowledge transfer to practice and system reform.
- To develop resources, educational tools and conduct workshops that promote the implementation of evidence into practice, particularly at the local level.
- Provide a platform to build research strength, focus and collective knowledge that can be shared across all key stakeholders.



## Aims

The aim of the *Collaborative Research Hub* is to establish partnerships with long-term enduring relations, which creates networks and connections to build on the social capital within the primary health care sector.

The collaborative provides the opportunity to create 'an engine room' and platform to consolidate the vast amount of knowledge to provide focus and direction for the Queensland primary health care sector.

This collaboration aims to increase the dialogue between researchers, service providers, funding bodies and consumers at each of the critical stages of development in setting priorities, doing the research, sharing the findings and ensuring end-user application.

## Achievements

### Partnership Meetings

A series of meetings was held in 2007 and 2008 between GPQ and Griffith University to inform the development of the model, principles of the partnership and progressing a joint appointment. It was agreed in principle that a joint position would be funded following the production of a position description, proposal about respective contributions, supervision arrangements, performance indicators and deliverables.

### Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

The agreement was formalised in November 2007 when a MoU was signed by both parties following a meeting attended by GPQ management and Board members and Griffith University executive. The MoU contained an operational model that outlines the details of the appointment of the Joint Senior Research Fellow and how the partnership will operate. At this meeting, it was agreed that the series of research projects would continue until mid-2008 to ensure engagement of the Divisions network and demonstration of the value of joint projects.

### Joint Appointment

Kylie Armstrong commenced in the position of Senior Research Fellow (Primary Health Care) on July 1, 2008 for 1.5 years. The Joint Appointment agreement (contract) has been executed by both GPQ and Griffith University.

### Research Management Plan

An initial operational plan (Research Management Plan) has been developed to guide the framework for working jointly and to guide the Steering Committee in decision making processes.

Key areas included governance and management structures, membership, the objectives and research priority areas, the consultation process and the proposed strategies to enable informed policy development and primary health care reform through innovation and engagement with key stakeholders.

### Model Development

A draft paper titled 'Fostering Community - University Partnerships: Development of a Model to Support Integrated Networks and Links in Establishing a Collaborative Research Hub in Queensland. The paper highlights the need for strong collaboration between health sectors across all levels of government and non-government and identifies four areas for action including:

- resourcing and model development
- communication and sharing information
- creating a practice relevant research agenda and
- supporting leadership for change

The paper highlights a number of International models of effective research networks, which exist in the United Kingdom, Netherlands and Canada and provide strong evidence for integrating research networks and service delivery practice-based organizations. The draft model development has been informed by two of the leading organizations internationally including The Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (linkage and exchange process) and the Myelin Repair Foundation's Accelerated Research Collaboration (to guide research development).



### **Emerging Research Priorities**

The draft research streams have been informed by a combination of different knowledge sources. This includes the national and state reform agenda, the Queensland Strategy for Chronic Disease 2005-2015, the GPQ Chronic Disease Health Summit, practitioners experience and gaps in the knowledge. The draft Collaborative Research Hub has four broad draft research streams:

- Health promotion and prevention
- Person-Centred Care: Capable Consumers
- System development to support coordinated care across the Care Continuum
- Competent responsive workforce

Joint research projects and opportunities will be identified to progress research activity through the establishment of the Knowledge Networks (KN).

A series of workshops will be held in the second half of 2009 to further scope research ideas and build on Division capacity to ensure the research is timely, relevant and meets the demands of the general practice and primary health care environment.

### **Research Projects**

A series of literature reviews and projects have been completed in partnership under the auspice of the MoU between November 2007 and June 2008. These initial projects aimed to capture the latest evidence around each identified priority area including

- 1) Uptake of Clinical Guidelines,
- 2) Coordinated Care Concept Analysis,
- 3) A Review of Self Management
- 4) Predictors of Hospital Avoidance – Systematic Review.

Another project was conducted with the Gold Coast Division of General Practice to investigate: A Practice-Based Model of Care Coordination for Chronic Disease Management: The Role of Nurses in General Practice.

These reviews form the basis of an ongoing research agenda as well as informing the development of briefs for dissemination to stakeholders, development of evidenced based models of care, research papers and profiling activity across Queensland through the website, health forums and round table discussions.

### **Knowledge Networks**

Knowledge networks will support the rapid adoption of the reform agenda and consolidate expertise and knowledge to advance improvements in human service research and discovery. Knowledge networks will be established under each priority research stream and used as a platform to support an action research agenda incorporating the complex social determinants of health, which impact on health policy and planning. Knowledge networks will comprise of experts (from Divisions of General Practice, researchers, policy makers, consumers and both government and NGO representation) to support the translation of knowledge in practice in driving systematic and institutional change.

### **Key Contact**

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