

Collaborative Research Hub

Alliance – May 2009

A nexus between research and practice

Background

Health care systems across the world are increasingly seeking ways of improving service quality, efficiency and effectiveness, and are relying on partnerships with researchers. However, the methods for translating such complex innovation into practical and workable solutions within healthcare settings and systems are less available. Research findings must be translated into practical and policy solutions, but research agendas must also reflect the real-world concerns of eventual end-users of research. To achieve this outcome, research must be based on good reciprocal relationships with practitioners and systems, and must fully engage end-users in the research process. Most importantly, it must provide workable solutions that can be integrated into health systems and/or professional practice models, eventually becoming embedded into everyday processes.

A New Approach

New ways of supporting and facilitating good research practices and improved primary health care outcomes are required to not only support practitioners conducting research (in programs such as Primary Health Care Research Evaluation and Development PHCRED strategy), but also Divisions of General Practice who need on-demand, relevant research to inform planning and organizational and health outcomes. Evidence exists which supports the development of a 'platform', which acts as a coordination centre for this interaction to occur.

The establishment of the Collaborative Research Hub is a response to this demand 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 - bridging the gap between research and practice. The Collaborative Research Hub provides an important nexus between the university and division concerns, maintaining a focus on collaborative projects that engage relevant sectors of the community in the pursuit of solutions. Knowledge transfer and exchange occurs through "linkage and exchange" - the interaction, collaboration, and exchange of ideas. The aim is to support effective links, remove duplication of effort and to work together with Divisions of General Practice, government and non-government agencies, primary health care organizations, consumers and research networks to identify and prioritize key research initiatives to inform policy development. This also includes working closely with other Universities and the PCHRED program, which already operates using a collaborative network model.

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Aim

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 Research Hub 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. This also includes as a first milestone, the establishment of a Senior Research Fellowship (Primary Health Care) as a joint appointment to support knowledge translation. This supports the co-production of knowledge, provides a communication link and is a corner-stone position, which promotes mutual exchange and linkages.

Partnership Approach

The partners of the Collaborative Research Hub (CRH) 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. Whilst the CRH is governed by the two original partners General Practice Queensland and Griffith University together with the Queensland Divisions Network, the Steering Committee recognise the importance of expanding the partners to include an alliance of organisations who support improved health outcomes for Queenslanders. 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.

The Steering Committee is the overarching governing body within the model and supports the overall leadership, advocacy and implementation of the initiative. Supporting this model will be the future development of the Knowledge Networks (KN). The partners will work with the Divisions of general practice network and expand partner membership to include State and Commonwealth bodies, other health agencies, academia, policy makers, consumers and industry partners.

National and International Advisory Group

An advisory alliance of national and international experts will be established to support the model and the research focus and direction. This will support the rapid adoption of the reform agenda and help to establish linkages with key organisations and expertise globally.

