

Enhancing Primary Care Connect clinical placements

Background and context

The 'Enhancing Primary Care Connect (PCC) clinical placements' project has enabled the purchase and use of up-to-date information communication technology (ICT) equipment in a 'hot-desk' environment (and for use in student seminar rooms) to enable students on placement to more effectively:

- Develop skills in regional and remote area diagnosis and treatment (including webcam and videoconferencing strategies);
- Undertake web-based research activities to support diagnosis and treatment options;
- Communicate/co-consult with metropolitan/other area-based health practitioners (including external supervisors); and
- Complete client records management and student placement project management tasks.

Project objectives and expected impacts

The primary objectives of the project include but are not limited to:

Capacity

- Enhanced capacity of PCC to facilitate optimal learning experiences for students on clinical placement;
- Boosted uptake of regional clinical placements by metropolitan and regional-based medical/allied health students;
- Greater likelihood of graduates adopting every-day integrated, cost-effective and more efficient approaches to client care;
- Enhanced likelihood of graduates promoting/replicating client friendly and cost-effective integrated practice approaches as agents of change; and
- Increased likelihood of both metropolitan and regional graduates undertaking work opportunities in regional Victoria.

Quality

- Enriched clinical placement experiences for students on placement in regional Victoria; and
- Enhanced regional and metropolitan workforce of regionally trained and supported medical and allied health professionals.

Impacts are anticipated to include but are not limited to the following:

- Appropriately qualified health professionals willingly participating in a regional and rural health workforce; addressing sustainability and succession planning objectives for the broader health sector.
- The regional health workforce, including PCC, better meets growing demand in an 'ageing' regional and rural context; and
- Better health outcomes for consumers result from more efficient and effective use of resources by health graduates – reducing the burden of disease.

Project activities

Purchase information technology and furniture to create a hot-desk hub for students (up to six at a time) centrally located within PCC's recently refurbished offices.

Project management

- Budget of \$17 000 for the project to be completed by November 2012.

Project performance against stated deliverables

Project activity	Project deliverable/target	Due date	Status
Purchase of four computer workstations	Purchase	30 March 2012	Complete
Purchase of two iPads and accessories	Purchase	30 March 2012	Complete
Purchase of three laptop computers	Purchase	30 March 2012	Complete
Purchase of webcams	Purchase	30 March 2012	Complete
Purchase of quoted furniture items	Purchase	30 November 2012	Complete
Conduct evaluation	Evaluation		Complete
Submit final report and acquittal	Submission	31 January 2013	Complete

The stated objectives have been achieved with the purchase of technological equipment for use by students and the set-up of a designated student area (hot-desk hub) within the building. All students on placement at PCC are required to complete a project on a specified issue and conduct a formal presentation at the conclusion of their placement. The coordination of student placements is now formal, with a designated staff member in charge of this process.

Project outcomes

The project has seen a more coordinated approach to student placements throughout the organisation and additional student numbers due to the ability to provide a dedicated IT equipment and desk space for up to six students at a time.

Evaluation

PCC was able to purchase equipment specifically for use by students and provide a space that was integrated with staff teams and 'ready at all times' to take placements. Development of project-based placement which enabled students to undertake specific research during their time at PCC and then present findings to staff, utilising the technology available, has been a positive investment. Increased numbers of student placements have already been documented.

The project has been slightly hampered due to a number of organisational and environmental factors. The most significant of which was a major building redevelopment project and more recently, uncertainty about the future of the organisation due to discussions around a possible merger. These factors hampered our ability to accept

students and situate them in a suitable environment. As merger talks are no longer an option and the building works are nearing completion, PCC is now in a stronger position to host students.

Some things have been done well – excellent equipment, project delivery by students – whilst other aspects need improvement. Evaluation can definitely be improved with further development of the student evaluation survey to ensure that all aspects of the placement are captured. This will enable a more accurate reflection on strengths and weaknesses and provide opportunities for improvement of the program.

Conclusion

Objectives have been met and the hot-desk hub is being used as it was designed. There are up to six students utilising the facility at any one time.