

# Better Skills, Best Care

DHS Workforce Design strategy

September 2005

This edition is the third in a series of updates about the Better Skills, Best Care strategy.

## **Pilot projects commenced**

The 38 pilot projects funded in health services across Victoria to trial and evaluate new or amended professional and support roles are underway. For a list of pilots go to <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/pdpd/workforce/workforcedesign.htm>.

Since June, pilot leads have been working with DHS to get their projects up and running. To kick-start the process, DHS held two sessions for pilot leads to familiarise them with the Better Skills, Best Care ('BSBC') strategy, methodology and deliverables, and allow pilot leads to meet each other and the DHS staff involved in workforce design initiatives.

## **Role development**

The first step in exploring opportunities for new or amended roles is to ask "What are our patients' needs and how can we better match staff skills to meet those needs?" Pilots put this principle into practice in the role development process when they map one or more typical patient journeys at a pilot site, then analyse tasks and who performs these. Process maps are the basis for generating ideas about innovative ways to deliver outcomes including possible amended roles. Once the amended role is agreed, further steps include the identification of required competencies, education and training to ensure competence and implementation of the new way of working, considering supervision, indemnity and other issues.

Five pilots are evaluating already existing amended roles. Rather than role development, these pilots will focus on role review and refinement.

## **Facilitation of role development**

Each pilot has engaged an external consultant to:

- Map and document typical patient journey(s) at the site.
- Identify and analyse all tasks required to meet patient needs.
- Brainstorm opportunities to amend work roles & practices for better service delivery.
- Identify competencies required for amended roles.
- Document barriers to change.
- Validate with staff of the work unit/service stream.
- Report on the agreed amended role and critique the role mapping process and tools.

At time of writing, some pilots are well on the way towards completion of the role development phase. Some of these include:

- Caulfield Community Health Service, trialling a podiatry support role in a community setting.
- La Trobe Regional Hospital, developing a dietetic support role.
- Lorne Community Hospital, trialling a community support worker role.
- PANCH Health Service, trialling a paediatric allied health assistant role in a community setting.

Pilots leads have reported that the role development process is working well, with leads and facilitators finding that staff are enthusiastic and keen to brainstorm and develop innovative ways of working in their health service.

### **Skilled support workers - how vocational training can deliver**

An essential aspect of changing any role is ensuring that workers are competent and safe. On 26 August 2005, DHS hosted an information session for interested individuals covering:

- The Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector and the Health Training Package.
- The existing Certificate III in Allied Health Assistance and relevant competencies from other Training Packages.
- How other health services have applied VET workplace training to their workforce.
- The Review of the Health Training Package and how to influence future VET training and qualifications frameworks.

The session featured speakers from registered training organisations as well as clinicians with practical experience in commissioning and delivering training for support staff. The session was informative, with many attendees raising important questions and issues for consideration.

### **Evaluation**

The BSBC evaluation framework measures role change impacts on patients, staff and services, as well as the process and tools used in workforce design. Tools to collect evaluation data include:

- A patient survey of perceptions of care, compatible with the Victorian Patient Satisfaction Monitor.
- A staff satisfaction questionnaire, being developed from the 'People Matter state-wide survey'<sup>1</sup> with input from the quality managers of the pilot sites.
- Regular data collected by services such as adverse incidents, length of stay and waiting periods.

In addition, each pilot has come up with measures that best capture the expected impact of their particular role change. Pilot-specific measures are separate to the other elements of evaluation, should assess the anticipated short-term impact of the role change, and (ideally) be data that is easy to access and collect.

### **Skills mix analysis and redesign tools**

The UK NHS Modernisation Agency's tools for health workforce role design can be accessed on the Better Skills, Best Care workforce design website (address above).

### **Upcoming events**

1. Information on the Better Skills, Best Care Strategy and the progress of pilot projects will be presented at the Australian Resource Centre for Health Information conference. The *Skill Mix and Workforce Development: Right Person, Right Time, Right Place* conference will be held on 7 & 8 November 2005 at Eden on the Park, Melbourne. Further information can found at: <http://www.archi.net.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/170787>. The list of speakers for the Better Skills, Best Care sessions will be available soon.
2. Invitations have recently been issued to the second session about training support staff. *Skilled support workers – getting to know your Registered Training Organisation* will bring together health services-experienced RTOs with support staff pilot leads and other interested staff on 22 September 2005.
3. For health services trialling amended professional roles, an information session focusing on development and training for professional staff will be coming soon.

### **Questions? Want to attend?**

Any questions about the Better Skills, Best Care strategy and upcoming events contact [workforcedesign@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:workforcedesign@dhs.vic.gov.au).

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<sup>1</sup> The 'People Matter' survey is an annual survey of the confidence of Victoria's public sector staff in the application of Victoria's Conduct and Employment Principles in their workplace. Information on the survey may be accessed at [http://www.ope.vic.gov.au/domino/web\\_notes/ope/rwp553.nsf/AllDocs/RWP2298CF9293E40E7DCA256DDD0013BF9C?OpenDocument](http://www.ope.vic.gov.au/domino/web_notes/ope/rwp553.nsf/AllDocs/RWP2298CF9293E40E7DCA256DDD0013BF9C?OpenDocument).