

Clinical Systems newsletter

December 2004–Issue one

This is the first newsletter from the Clinical Systems Portfolio. It is intended to provide readers an introduction to:

- HealthSMART, Victoria's Whole of Health Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Strategy 2003-2007
- the role of the Office of Health Information Systems (OHIS) and Clinical Systems Portfolio
- current Clinical Systems activities being undertaken.

What is HealthSMART?

HealthSMART has been developed to provide clear direction and guidance for ICT across the Victorian public health sector over the coming four years.

The strategy aligns to and supports the strategic objectives of the Victorian public health system to deliver improved services and health outcomes for Victorians. The strategy puts the Victorian public health system in an excellent position to harness the power of ICT to deliver high quality health care services and respond effectively to future advances in technology.

The Board of Health Information Systems has oversight responsibility for all HealthSMART activity.

A full copy of the strategy can be downloaded at:

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/healthsmart/documents/healthsmart-strategy.pdf>

What is the Office of Health Information Systems?

The Office of Health Information Systems (OHIS), a branch of Metropolitan Health and Aged Care Services, was established in July 2003 to develop and implement the HealthSMART ICT Strategy and to provide policy and strategy relating to health ICT in general.

More information on OHIS can be found online at:

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/healthsmart/ohis.htm>

Who is Clinical Systems?

Clinical Systems is a business unit of OHIS and one of three application-based portfolios covered by the HealthSMART program, the other two being Patient and Client Management Systems and Resource Management Systems (comprising Financial Management Information System (FMIS) & Human Resources). A recent OHIS organisational chart can be found online at: <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/healthsmart/documents/org1104.pdf>

Who are Clinical Systems staff?

Clinical Systems currently has four staff members, primarily with qualifications and experience in a health profession (medicine or nursing), as well as experience undertaking major projects and in managing and implementing healthcare IT applications in the Australian public health system. Additional project officers will be recruited over the coming months. The unit is located at Level 14, 589 Collins St, Melbourne.

Clinical Systems Portfolio

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HealthSMART

Victoria's whole-of-health ICT strategy

What does Clinical Systems encompass?

A wide variety of systems are considered 'clinical systems' depending on the criteria applied. These systems may possess broad functionality or have a very specific focus or use.

HealthSMART, and as such, the Clinical Systems Portfolio, focuses on a specific subset of core enterprise clinical systems, providing them where absent or replacing obsolete and unsupported systems where they exist today. The Clinical Systems Portfolio encompasses enterprise systems designed to support the day-to-day delivery of clinical care. The principle users of clinical systems are members of the health care team being medical staff, nursing, investigative services providers and allied health professionals. These systems will be deployed to locations where direct patient care or services are provided.

The functionality that these systems will deliver includes:

- electronic medication management including prescribing, dispensing and administration
- electronic ordering of investigative (lab, radiology etc) and therapeutic (allied health) services with viewing of results, demographic information and patient encounters
- clinical decision support and knowledge base access at all appropriate points of the clinical activity cycle.

What are the objectives of the Clinical Systems Portfolio?

The main objectives are to enable improved quality, safety and efficiency of clinical care in hospitals through:

- improved medication management in hospitals
- improved ordering and processing of investigations
- more appropriate and safe health care
- supporting efficiencies in the patient treatment process
- increased clinical IT capacity within hospitals
- improved use of staff time and skills
- improved cost control of drugs in hospitals.

What governance structures are in place for the Clinical Systems Portfolio?

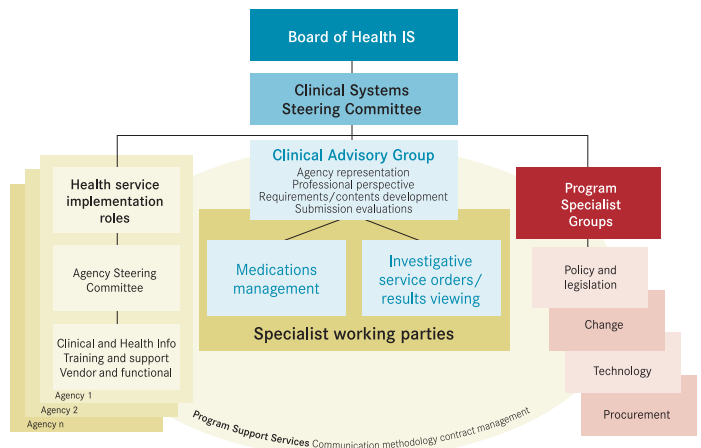
Lead agency approach

The HealthSMART Strategy emphasises that delivery of initiatives and outcomes will be in partnership with healthcare agencies. As a significant level of effort is required to progress activities across the HealthSMART program, a lead agency approach has been adopted to ensure that all projects have adequate input and participation from agencies, and that agencies have a clear focus on a single project at a time.

The lead agencies for the Clinical Systems Portfolio are:

- Austin Health
- Barwon Health
- Bayside Health
- Hume Alliance of Regional Hospitals
- Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre
- Royal Victorian Eye & Ear Hospital
- Royal Children's Hospital
- St Vincent's Hospital.

The governance structure in place to oversight and support Clinical Systems activities is shown below.



Clinical Systems Steering Committee

The work of the Clinical Systems Portfolio is overseen by the Clinical Systems Steering Committee. This committee comprises representatives of the Clinical Systems lead agencies – membership includes medical practitioners, nurses, pharmacists, laboratory staff, health service executives and chief information officers. The committee meets on a monthly basis or more frequently if required.

Current and past committee members are listed online at:

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/healthsmart/clinsystem.htm>

Clinical advisory groups/specialist working parties

Clinical staff from various agencies have and will continue to be engaged in Clinical Systems activities through three supporting groups. To date, these groups have been actively involved in defining functional requirements for the clinical systems solution, and some members will participate in the evaluation of tender response functional content.

A listing of members can be found online at:

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/healthsmart/advgrp.htm>

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/healthsmart/swkparty.htm>

Clinical Systems Technical Advisory Group

The Clinical Systems Portfolio is also supported by a group comprising agency representatives with technical and IT knowledge. This group has been involved in defining the technical requirements for the clinical systems solution and will be involved in evaluation of the technical components in the current tender activity.

A listing of members can be found online at:

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/healthsmart/advgrp.htm>

Current activities

The Clinical Systems Portfolio has two concurrent streams of activity at present:

- clinical systems request for tender (RFT)
- pre-implementation projects.

Clinical Systems RFT

A panel of accredited clinical systems solutions will be established through a public RFT process. The RFT for provision of clinical systems was released on 13 October 2004 and closed on 25 November 2004. A well-attended vendor briefing session was held at the ASX Theatre on 25 October 2004. Based on the complex nature of the tender requirements and the detailed evaluation required to assess submissions, it is expected that a selection outcome will be finalised around mid 2005.

Any queries relating to the RFT must be directed to Patrick Burnett, Manager, Clinical Systems.

Pre-implementation projects

It is recognised that many agencies will need to undertake a significant amount of work prior to implementation of clinical systems. This work will include preparing the organisation for the change, establishing governance structures to oversight system implementation, assessing current practice and developing the fundamental computing skills of clinical staff. The HealthSMART program has funded each clinical systems lead agency to undertake pre-implementation projects that support HealthSMART objectives.

The overall aims of pre-implementation project activity are to:

- progress agencies down a project path
- enable initial agency resource allocation
- build agency clinical staff IT skills
- assist planning and preparation for implementation
- ready the organisation for change
- develop tools which can then be utilised by other agencies
- foster linkages between agencies and the HealthSMART program.

Each agency has appointed a project manager to lead pre-implementation project activities. The agency project managers are also meeting regularly with OHIS. A listing of lead agency project managers can be found online at:

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/healthsmart/lagpromgr.htm>

Participation in pre-implementation activity will see agencies undertake two mandatory projects and one or more elective projects. Mandatory projects are:

Prototype clinical area development

This comprises identification and development of a prototype location within an agency. This project will include selection of an appropriate clinical area to host pre-implementation activity and ultimately to implement HealthSMART systems when delivered. Specific activities are:

- Selection, deployment and evaluation of access point devices (fixed and mobile) and enabling IT infrastructure.
- Building of core IT skills of clinical staff.
- Delivery of existing IT functionality in the prototype ward, via the newly-deployed access point devices.

Governance model implementation

Establishment of an agency model of project governance to administer, manage and control Clinical Systems projects. This will include:

- adoption of governance structure
- formation of a steering committee
- identification of supporting project groups
- development of processes for managing projects.

Elective project topics are currently being finalised in consultation with OHIS.

Next issue...

- An update on progress in the tender process
- An update on pre-implementation projects