

Clinical Systems newsletter

An integral part of HealthSMART, Victoria's Whole-of-Health ICT Strategy

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Clinical Systems Portfolio

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Staff update

There have been a number of changes within the Clinical Systems project team in recent months.

Heather Maddern – Heather joins the Clinical Systems team from the Royal Children's Hospital. Heather is the Clinical Systems Application Manager, responsible for managing application design activities, including results reporting functionality.

Vicki Moritz – Vicki is Statewide Catalogues Manager for the Clinical Systems team. Prior to this she held joint roles of IT Project Manager/HealthSMART Lead Agency Project Manager at Austin Health. Vicki will lead agency reference groups in developing common data catalogues used for results reporting, ordering of clinical services and recording clinical information.

Mark Harrington – Mark is the Clinical Systems Information Analyst and is working with Vicki Moritz and agencies on the development of statewide catalogues.

Francisco Lopez – Francisco is a postgraduate student with the Australian College of Health Service Executives. He is a business analyst working on statewide catalogues and benefits realisation.

Arona Offenberger – We welcome back Arona Offenberger from maternity leave. Arona will initially work on statewide catalogues with Vicki.

Contract negotiations

Contract negotiations continue with the preferred tenderer/s. All parties are working diligently to conclude negotiations. It is expected that the contract/s will be finalised during the first quarter of 2006.

Statewide Catalogue Development

As part of the HealthSMART Clinical Systems project, work is underway to develop and maintain statewide catalogues of clinical data. Recognising the importance of clinical governance in such an undertaking, the Clinical Systems team has sought representatives from across the health services of Victoria to form specialist working parties and reference groups to provide expert advice and support to this process. The products of this activity will underpin the ordering, results reporting and clinical documentation functionality of the Clinical Systems implementation late this year.

Currently the vast majority of clinical information is recorded manually. This allows significant flexibility but also creates a situation where there is a lack of consistency in the code sets and terminology individuals use to document clinical care. While the current method is effective, its variability can impact upon achieving best practice across clinical groups and hinder data analysis and research activities. This issue is recognised by healthcare providers and there have been numerous initiatives aimed at encouraging the adoption of common terminologies and code sets. The Clinical Systems initiative of the HealthSMART program seeks to continue these efforts and is looking at standardising the way data sets are used within, and across, Victorian health services.

At present Clinical Systems project groups are working on catalogues for pathology results, imaging results, alerts, allergies, problem lists and procedures, all of which are needed for the results reporting implementation stage. Further catalogues and code sets will be developed for the subsequent clinical service ordering and medications management stages of the Clinical Systems project.

To facilitate the process of catalogue and code set development, existing local, national and international standards are being used where available and applicable. This approach has the advantage of streamlining the work effort and optimising alignment with other health information technology initiatives. This, it is envisaged, will create synergy between Victoria's HealthSMART program and national health objectives, including the National e-Health Transition Authority's recent call for interoperability and connectivity across state and national health systems.

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