

Technical Services news

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

Issue 1 April 2005

Introduction

HealthSMART – Victoria's Whole-of-Health Information and Communication Technology (ICT) strategy – aims, over the four years 2003 to 2007, to introduce technologies that will actively assist the delivery of care and improve health outcomes for all Victorians.

The technology requirements of all three major HealthSMART application project groups – Patient & Client Management Systems, Clinical Systems and Resource Management Systems – will operate through a shared services environment. Technical Services will plan, design and implement this shared service infrastructure.

For more on the HealthSMART program, including background, objectives and the strategy document, refer to <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/healthsmart>.

Purpose of this communication

This newsletter is intended to provide a broad overview of the Technical Services projects, their place within the overall HealthSMART program, goals and general accomplishments to date. Matters that are more technical in nature will be addressed and directed to the technical community as required.

Technical Services

The HealthSMART program will deliver a number of new technology systems using a shared services environment. This environment will offer better infrastructure and more specialised technical skills. It is also expected to minimise costs for Victorian health services. A shared service is simply infrastructure and technical support that is shared among many users.

The Technical Services team is:

- Designing and implementing the technical infrastructure for shared services
- Enabling health services to connect to the shared infrastructure
- Developing and managing services, storage and other equipment
- Providing hosting and applications support for the three major HealthSMART application project groups.

The team

Members of the Technical Services team specialise in specific areas of ICT that will ensure the shared services framework is implemented successfully. Staff have been seconded from within the health technical community to provide valuable insight and direction. The Technical Services team has had many years experience in project management, implementation, integration and overall ICT management.

Technical Services

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Shared services framework

The proposed shared services model was independently analysed to ensure that it would be able to support desired business outcomes, return economies of scale and ensure timely and efficient support of the applications and proposed infrastructure. The analysis supported the Technical Services delivery model and endorsed the potential benefits.

Some of the identified benefits include:

- Increases in the level of services available
- Reduction in duplication
- Opportunities for cost savings as a result of economies of scale and increasing purchasing power
- Increased use of specialist resources.

The shared service centre

Technical Services will establish two central shared service centres which will operate and support the core HealthSMART applications through a shared services model. One data centre will initially act as the primary operating production site. The second data centre will act as a disaster recovery site and the infrastructure will also be used for the non-production environment. HealthNET, Victoria's health wide area network, will connect the data centres to each health service and integration will allow the applications to inter-operate.

Health services will continue to operate their own networks, agency-specific applications, service desk and local support structures. The local service desk and application experts will also provide the first line of shared services centre support to users. Any incidents that cannot be solved will be escalated to the shared services help desk. The processes and infrastructure required to support the incident, problem and change management functions will be provided by the shared services centre.

Health services' IT services will provide:

- Email/MS Office
- Internet and remote access
- Local applications, including support
- Desktop SOE (standard operating environments)
- IT security and authentication (managed uniquely in each agency)
- Level 1 service desk

Technical Services will provide:

- Operations of common business systems
- Disaster recovery for hosted applications
- Level 2 service desk, problem management and coordination
- IT service management based on the industry standard, Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL), framework which covers change management, release management, capacity planning and vendor management
- Applications support
- HealthSMART infrastructure procurement.

Achievements and current activities

• Integration Services

SeeBeyond Pty Ltd is the successful vendor for HealthSMART's Enterprise Application Integration (EAI) contract. The five-year contract, with two optional five-year extensions, aligns with HealthSMART's long-term objectives.

EAI has a range of benefits for health services including:

- Improved patient identification
- Secure communications between health services
- Reduced need for patients to re-present at each health service as data can be shared across sites.

The EAI contract also allows for health services to use the tool for other systems integration not directly related to HealthSMART.

It is expected that EAI data centre implementation will be completed mid-2005 and healthcare agency implementation towards the latter half of the year. Implementation will support existing systems and new applications.

• HealthNET

Interim connectivity for financial and supply management information systems (FMIS) at lead health services is being established through HealthNET.

HealthNET will soon be available to all five rural alliances, (Gippsland, Grampians, Hume, Loddon Mallee and South Western), and the HealthSMART shared services centre. It is envisaged that the entire HealthNET will be operating state-wide by December 2005.

• **Shared Services Support Centre**

Negotiations are underway to secure HealthSMART shared services support centre accommodation. Network infrastructure is being designed, recruitment of experienced support staff is underway and service management processes will soon be reviewed and finalised.

The aim is to have the shared services support centre operational prior to FMIS go-live in May 2005. Additional infrastructure will be added as more applications are included.

• **Technical/Security Architecture**

The development of HealthSMART technical architecture is near completion. This architecture will describe the technical infrastructure required to support the implementation of HealthSMART applications.

Work has also begun on HealthSMART security architecture. The architecture is designed to describe security policies, processes, infrastructure and standards to protect the integrity, availability and confidentiality of information held by HealthSMART applications.

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