

**DRAFT**

**General Practice  
Electronic Service Directory  
(ESD) Project**

**August 2003 to January 2004**

Project Partners:

Central East Primary Care Partnership  
Whitehorse Division of General Practice  
and the Greater South East Division of General Practice.

## **Project aim and training support to practices**

The aim of the project is to test the usefulness of the ESD and to gauge the usage of the ESD within the context of the busy environment of a GP practice.

**Eight practices** across the Central East PCP were chosen and invited to participate in this project. The nature of the project was explained and marketed by both Divisions. The project was perceived as a fairly easy one to market, as it was providing an additional resource that may be very useful in the GP context.

Criteria for practice involvement included:

- That the practice had at least one computer that had access to the internet.
- That the practice manager or practice nurse and a key GP from the practice be available for one to one training that would take 30 mins to 1 hour.
- That all members of the practice complete the Integration Index.
- That the practice manager and one GP report on the usefulness of the ESD after 6 weeks of receiving the training.

The makeup of the practices involved was:

- One practice that has a solo GP,
- Three practices that had 2-4 GPs,
- One practice that had 5-7 GPs
- and three practices that have 8-10 EFT GPs.

A total of 43 GPs in eight practices was the potential maximum reach.  
(Two practices have a dial up connection and six practices have broadband access).

GP practices were chosen based on the intimate knowledge of the Division and with the perception that these practices were already quite involved in the community, had participated in a number of projects previously, and had a readiness to take on new activities. A one off amount of \$300 was paid to the practice recognising the pilot nature of the project and the time that GPs were contributed in participating in the training and completing two questionnaires. Payment was made on completion of all questionnaires.

The **focus of the training** was initially on the practice manager (seven practice managers and one nurse) and was purposely done to achieve maximum interest from a staff member in the practice that had more time than the GPs in the practice. The Divisional staff responsible for the project received training in the use of the service directory from the CE PCP service coordination worker who had provided training to many allied health professionals previously. Each practice received the same level of training and a clear outline of ESD usage was used to ensure uniformity in the training. The computer skills of the participants varied considerably. After the practice managers had received the training, then the lead GP for the project was involved at a time convenient for them. This training occurred over a five week period in September and October 2003. See Appendix B for the outline on the training for Practice Managers and GPs.

Generally the response from the practice managers has been very encouraging. GPs have been slightly less so.

- “I have just spent two hours using the yellow pages and the ESD took 3 minutes to find what I was looking for.”
- “This cannot be free, what is the catch.”

- Some GPs want to know how this is linked to e-referral and if a centralised patient file will end up with this electronic format.

20 GPs completed **the GP Integration Index**. GPs were not very interested in completing the Index and found that it was lengthy and for some invasive. Several practices refused to complete the Index with a compromise being reached that at least the GP involved in the training should complete the questionnaire. It is unclear if it is going to be useful to have a post questionnaire completed as the intensity of the intervention is minimal. Comparison of the GPs involved to GPs generally is of interest.

**The evaluation** of the Electronic Service Directory was completed by the practice managers and the lead GP. The questionnaire was completed after 6 weeks of the training and provides brief window of usage for the period directly after the training. Follow up in the future will occur to identify ongoing use. One of the benefits of obtaining feedback soon after the training mean't that the training was still fresh in the minds of the participants. The evaluation focused on usage of the ESD, if the ESD was perceived as a good product, the usefulness of the training, the functionality of the ESD and how the ESD could be further incorporated into the practice and if other support is required.

### Results of the evaluation

All GPs and practice managers involved could easily access the computer, internet and email at work.

### Quality of the training

The GPs found the one on one training from the Division staff on the service directory.

POOR:  REASONABLE:  VERY GOOD:  EXCELLENT:

The practice managers found the one on one training from the Division staff on the service directory

POOR:  REASONABLE:  VERY GOOD:  EXCELLENT:

The comments from both GPs and Practice managers indicate that the training was of a high quality with the GPs slightly less satisfied.

The training was useful for GPs because it showed that the ESD was simple to access, could save time, was provided when they were available and it clarified the scope and potential use of the Directory.

The practice managers responded by saying that they were helped to use the system, that they were shown some shortcuts, that the training was customized to the features that the practice would use, and that all of this reduced time in becoming familiar with how the directory functioned. One practice staff manager commented that “extra tips were shown that I would not have thought about”.

### Directory usage by GPs and Practice Managers

## **Frequency**

Usage in the six weeks post training indicated that twelve of the participants were still using the ESD occasionally between 1 to 5 times a week, that one was using it frequently (between 6 to 10 times a week) and that three of the GPs were not using the directory at all.

Twelve of the participants said that they would continue to use the ESD in their practice.

At least one individual in seven of the eight practices will continue to use the ESD.

## **What do you use the service directory for**

GPs prioritised the use of the ESD as:

1. To assist with referral purposes
2. Direct information on services to patients
3. Increasing knowledge of services for myself

Practice managers identified the purposes for the usage of the ESD as:

1. Obtaining direct information on services
2. Increasing knowledge of services for myself
3. To assist with care planing services

## **Functionality of the ESD**

(Three GPs completed the training but did not use the ESD beyond the training).

Of the 16 respondents six said the ESD was easy to use five found it O.K and two found it difficult to use. (Three did not respond.)

Ten of the participants responded that the main search functions are easy to use. Three said that they were not and three did not respond. GP's said that the best features of the ESD was the information on allied health and that it provided quick access to the information. Some of the GP's who were very proficient in IT felt that it took to long to find the information that they were after. Four of the eight GP's took time to show other staff/GP's how to use the service directory. GP's searched the ESD primarily for specialists, then for agencies, and then for practitioners. Patients were provided with information on local physiotherapists and similar services, and hence benefited directly from the ESD.

Four of the eight GP's felt that it was practicable to expect GP's to be familiar with the Electronic Service directory. In responding to the question of "do GP's use any other online resources?" Seven of the eight responded yes, however only two accessed the better health channel in the six-week trial period. Three of the GP's felt that the practice nurses could become more involved with the ESD and four said no. Again, four of the GP's felt that improvements could be made to assist with the interface of the ESD and the practises medical software. In the six-week trial, three of the GP's had added new practitioners to the address book of Medical Director.

The practice managers found that the best features of the ESD were its speed, the search specific requests and its user friendliness. Some of the practice managers found it hard to use initially. Three of the practice managers showed other staff/ GP's how to use the ESD. Practice managers had a more even spread of who they had contacted across agencies, specialists and practitioners. The most identified information that was passed on to the patients from the directory has been the health sheets on illnesses. Practice managers felt that the service directory could be further incorporated into the work of the practice by linking it to Medical Director. Half of the practice managers felt that it was practicable to expect GP's in the practice to be familiar with the ESD, in contrast to the GP's the practice managers did not generally use other online resources. Four of the practice managers did find the better health channel a useful source of information.

## **Early analysis of the success, barriers and future directions of the ESD in General Practice.**

The project team from the Central East PCP, Whitehorse Division and the Greater South East Division felt from the outset that there were a number of excellent features to this project. They included:

- That we were promoting a generally good product that had received very positive reviews from the primary care sector.
- That it provided a solution to the constant problem of updating referral and community contacts.
- That it was free
- That the project was clearly described and manageable with eight piloting practices.
- That it was built on the wealth of experience from the Divisions in providing practice visits to the practices with staff that the GPs and Practice Managers trusted.

Hence it was felt that there were very few barriers to the actual roll out of the project.

The key achievements identified through the evaluation are:

- That seven of the eight practices continue to use the ESD.
- That half of the GPs involved took time to show other GPs and practice staff how to use it.
- That the main key functions are regarded as being generally easy to use
- That the listing of specialists in the Directory made the ESD attractive and that GPs found access to allied health as very useful.

The barriers to the further use of the ESD in the practice are observed to be:

- The ongoing culture of GPs to refer to only people that they know and the infrequency of referral that actually occurs for the average GP. (2 in 100 patients 'Beach study')
- The lack of an interface between the ESD and GP software. That if there was a link for GPs to transfer information to current address books, then the ESD would be more applicable for the GP setting.

### **Recommendations:**

A further roll out of the ESD should not be rushed into. That GPs and practices should be made aware of its benefits and use it as an additional tool to source information for referral options.

That Divisions could use the Statewide ESD for updating of their specialist registers rather than doing their own, potentially saving thousands of dollars across the State.

That the current development of the PCP Statewide Directory consider the interface with GP software and work towards a solution that enables ease of access for GPs.

That the ESD be promoted in the context of ongoing work that informs GPs of the many agencies that are available that can provide much needed support to common patients/clients.

## Appendix A

### Promoting the use of an Electronic Service Directory in General Practice

*Be up to date about specialists, services and waiting times so that you can refer your patients with confidence.*

#### Introduction

Ten projects across Victoria are being funded by the State Government to support General Practice in the ongoing integration of primary care. Whitehorse Division and the Greater South East Division of General Practice received a grant to provide support to a small number of GP practices in the use of Electronic Service Directories. (ESD) The directories provide up to date information on specialists, allied health practitioners, local health services and statewide services that can compliment the care for GP patients.

The Directories have been tried and tested in the primary care sector over the past 18 months and are being regarded highly as excellent sources of information. The Central East Primary Care Partnership Coordination Unit has also assisted local agencies to update service information, ensuring the latest information is available.

#### Project aim and training support to practices

**The aim of the project is to test the usefulness of the ESD and to gauge the usage of the ESD within the context of the busy environment of a GP practice.**

Both Divisions will provide training to the GP practice in the use of the directories. The training will occur at the practice and involve the practice manager, one key GP and the practice nurse. The Division staff will be available for two practice visits to assist with the training in the use of the directories and the establishment of any appropriate systems that enable efficient access to referral options for GPs.

#### Criteria for GP practice involvement.

- GP practices will require at least one computer that has reliable access to the World Wide Web.
- The practice will need to involve the Practice Manager and one GP in the practice who will take a lead role in product testing the ESD. Both the practice manager and the lead GP will be asked to provide formal and informal feedback about the useability of the ESD for their practice.
- All GPs in the practice are required to complete the GP Integration Index (Melbourne University) at the beginning and completion of the project.

This project is expected to be completed within a six-month timeframe and GP practices will receive \$300 for their participation. There is no cost to accessing the directories.

The directories can be found on the Central East Primary Care Partnerships website.

<http://www.centraleastpcp.infoxchange.net.au/service/directory.shtml>

The PCP directory provides access to specialists and practitioners

The Info change directory is excellent for a broad range of community and health services

The Better Health Channel is a great resource for health promotion information

#### ***Benefits to GP Practices:***

- ***Increased awareness of specialist services, practitioners and the primary care service system***

- *Up to date information about services and some waiting times.*
- *Improved integration with allied and community health services*

## Appendix B

### Training Content Electronic Service Directory Training with GP practices .

#### Session out-line

##### Context:

The GP electronic service directory training project is one part of a wider service coordination reform for primary care agencies. Primary Care Partnerships have been charged with the responsibility to voluntarily encourage agencies to align the collection of service information, the development of one referral form and process and to develop an electronic referral capacity for the municipalities of Manningham, Whitehorse and Monash. To date ten large agencies (includes Councils and community Health) are all using the electronic service directory, one referral form and trialling an e-messaging system that involves the Box Hill Care coordination program from the emergency department. GPs are being asked to consider adopting similar reforms beginning with the use of the Electronic Service Directory.

##### Training

One on one training is to be provided to 8 GP practices across the catchment. The one on one training will involve the key administrative person in the practice and one GP.

##### Pre-requisites for training

- General understanding of the difference between hardware and software
- Icons, menus and use of the mouse
- moving around the computer desktop
- file management – working with folders and files
- use of internet browser software
- using search engines and searching techniques
- use of shortcuts and bookmarking
- Navigating
- Emails – composing and sending, checking and reading

Each workers level of competency with computer use will be assessed at the beginning of the raining based on the above pre- requisites.

↑ Poor            ↑ Average        ↑ Good            ↑ Very good

##### On completion of the training individuals will demonstrate the following competencies .

- Understanding of how this training fits with the wider primary care reform.
- Understanding of the different search functions and their uses (in all resources).
- Understanding of the data management model (6 months central updates | individual agency updates)
- Ability to connect to the resources using their internet browser.
- Ability to use the different search functions (in the PCP resource) to get the results that they want.
- Ability to bookmark resources and search results.

- Ability to share information electronically with others – page by email | link by email | paste special command in MSWord.

### **One on one training content:**

1. Over-view of Service Coordination model + uses of Service Directories.
2. What is Initial Contact? What happens at IC?
3. The CE PCP web site as a 'portal' to each resource.
4. How to bookmark each resource and search results.
5. URLs for each resource.
6. The Service Directory Resources Available with a focus on the PCP resource.
7. The different uses / focus of each resource
8. The ISS and PCP directories –
  - a. Directory Architecture – Agency level | Service Level
    - i. PCP Directory
      - Understanding Agency Name Search and Service Name Search.
      - (Search for own agency) – review record.
      - How to up-date Agency and Service Records – process and timelines. (\*now called Service provider and Service)
      - Explanation of up-date protocol.
      - How to use the Service Focus Search
      - How to use the Keyword Search
      - How to book mark individual search results
      - Practitioner Search. (\*now also available in ISS)
    - ii. Better Health Channel
      - Over-view of what is contained. Range of results that can be returned.
      - Different sections – directory – articles – references – research.
      - Search function – search on specific conditions.
  - b. How to share information with a consumer.
    - i. Sharing information via a word document + using 'Paste Special' command in word.
    - ii. Sending page via email or link via email.
    - iii. Accessibility considerations for printed material.

## **Electronic Service Directory Evaluation**

The Central East Primary Care Partnership with the Whitehorse and Greater South East Divisions of General Practice have auspice the Electronic Service Directory project and are very interested in your response to the usefulness of the Electronic Service Directory in your General Practice. Your responses to this short survey will be much appreciated and will influence the ongoing rollout of training for the use of the Electronic Service Directory across the region.

Please take 10 minutes to fill in this questionnaire, and return it to:

The Division worker that has been responsible for the project.

**Please return the questionnaire by December 5<sup>th</sup> 2003**

# Your evaluation of the Electronic Service Directory

## Section A

1. Name of GP practice

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2. Name of person filling in questionnaire

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GP   
  Practice Nurse   
  Practice Manager

|  | YES | NO |
|--|-----|----|
| 3. Can you easily access a computer at work?   |     |    |
| 4. Do you have access to the internet at work? |     |    |
| 5. Do you have access to email at work?        |     |    |

6. I found the one on one training from the Division staff on the service directory

**POOR:**      
 **GOOD:**      
 **VERY GOOD:**      
 **EXCELLENT:**

7. The training was useful because:

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8. On average how often have you accessed the Electronic Service Directory each week?

**Not at all**                      **Occasionally**                      **Frequently**                      **All the time**  
                        (0-5 times a week)                      (6 to 10 times a week)                      (More than 10 times a week)

9. What do you use the Electronic Service Directory for mostly?  
 (List in priority order 1 to 6)

|                          |   |  |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Direct information on    | What other purposes have you used the Electronic Service Directory for? |  |
| Increasing knowledge     |   |  |
| Assisting other staff to |   |  |
| To assist with referral  |   |  |
| To assist with care pla  |   |  |
| Health Promotion Inf     |   |  |

|   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
|   | YES | NO |
| 8. Will you continue to use the Electronic Service Directory in the practice? |     |    |

**Section B**

This section asks you to provide specific information on the use of the Electronic Service Directory and its uptake in your practice.

1. Have you found the Electronic Service Directory? (Tick one)

**EASY TO**    **OKAY:** **DIFFICULT TO USE:**

2. The main search functions are easy to use.

**YES:**  **NO:**

3. The best features of the Electronic Service Directory are:

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4. The barriers to the use of the Electronic Service Directory in the practice are:

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|   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
|   | YES | NO |
| 5. Have you shown other staff/GPs in the practice how to use the service directory?<br>How many? <input type="checkbox"/> |     |    |

5a. If yes please comment how this was achieved?

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6. Who have been the key service providers that you have searched for using the Electronic Service Directory?

Please tick  List type. E.g Councils, paediatrician, podiatrists etc.

Agencies \_\_\_\_\_

Specialists \_\_\_\_\_

Practitioners \_\_\_\_\_

7. Providing patients with up to date information in a prompt manner is a key aim of the Electronic Service Directory. Do you have any examples of how patients have directly benefited from the use of the service directory in the practice over the past month?

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8. How could the service directory be further incorporated into the work of the practice over time?

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|   | YES | NO |
|---|-----|----|
| 9. Do you think further training or support is required to maximise the use of the Electronic Service Directory in the GP practice? |     |    |

If yes what sort of training and support would be useful?

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|   | YES | NO |
|---|-----|----|
| 10. Is it practicable to expect GPs in the practice to be familiar with the Electronic Service Directory? |     |    |

If not why not, if yes how can this be achieved?

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|---|-----|----|
|   | YES | NO |
| 11. Have you used the Better Health Channel as an information resource? |     |    |

If yes, what have you used it for?

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|---|-----|----|
|   | YES | NO |
| 12. Do you use any other on-line resources? |     |    |

If yes what resources do you find most helpful?

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|---|-----|----|
|   | YES | NO |
| 13. Could the practice nurse become more involved in the use of the Electronic Service Directory? |     |    |

Please identify how this could occur?

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|   | YES | NO |
| 14. Could improvements be made to assist with the interface of the Electronic Service Directory and the practices medical software? |     |    |

Any suggestions on how this could occur?

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|--|-----|----|
|  | YES | NO |
| 15. Has the practice added new practitioners, services to any GPs medical software database? |     |    |

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***Thankyou for completing your evaluation of the Electronic Service Directory.***