



# TASMANIA'S HEALTH PLAN

## Primary Health Services Plan

### Implementation Newsletter Issue 1, September 2007

#### Welcome

Welcome to the first implementation newsletter for the Primary Health Services Plan.

These monthly newsletters are a way to keep you informed about the progress we are making in putting the Plan into action.



It has only been a matter of months since the Plan was released but already there is real progress being made, across a range of projects. This early work is forming the basis for a strengthened primary health and community care system.

The changes in Primary Health, through the *fit* program and implementation of the Primary Health Services Plan, have brought a number of new staff into this area. These will be featured in the next edition of this newsletter!

#### **Mary Bent**

Deputy Secretary, Community Health Services

More information about the Primary Health Services Plan and Program Implementation as it is updated can be found at

<http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/futurehealth/phsp.php>

#### Why do we need a plan?

Our health care system is facing a number of challenges that we cannot afford to ignore:

- Our population is ageing faster than any other state in Australia. By 2021 there will be 28 000 more Tasmanians over 70 than there are today. Older people depend more on health care services and are more likely to suffer with chronic diseases such as diabetes.
- Tasmanians smoke more, eat poorly and have higher rates of obesity than the Australian average.
- We have an epidemic of chronic disease such as diabetes and asthma, made worse by the choices that we make.
- Our health outcomes are amongst the poorest in Australia resulting in a lower life expectancy.
- We have the second highest death rate from cancer in Australia.
- We have a high number of people living on pensions who rely on public hospital services and cannot afford private insurance cover or non-bulk-billing GPs.
- Health care costs are increasing at more than twice the rate of general inflation.

Our health care system has to respond to these challenges and a failure to act now will worsen the current situation.

We can't afford to put Tasmanians at risk. We need a plan to ensure that Tasmanians have access to the care they need, when they need it.

We need to ensure we maximise our opportunities to keep Tasmanians healthy.

We need to plan for the growing demand for health services over the next 15 years.



## Primary Health Projects

### Promoting the Primary Health Approach

Projects implemented from within the Primary Health Services section of the Department of Health and Human Services will promote the 'primary health approach' to service provision. Key elements of the primary health care approach include:

- a focus on health and wellbeing, not just illness;
- a population perspective on health, not only for individuals;
- a multi-disciplinary team approach to care;
- a partnership approach in which a range of groups and organisations need to work together on improving health;
- a focus on actual health needs, such as chronic disease, rather than service needs; and
- fostering individuals' control over their health and participation in health decision making.

A Primary Health Development Program for staff at Ouse and Rosebery has been created to assist staff making the transition from mainly inpatient roles to the provision of primary health and community care services (health promotion programs, nurse clinics, chronic disease management programs, community care).

It is envisaged that the Primary Health Development Program will be used in the development of community health centres across the state.

### Rural Hospital Redevelopment Update

From 28 September 2007 health services at Rosebery will change. The Rosebery Community Hospital will become the Rosebery Community Health Centre.

The Community Health Centre will open Monday to Friday from 8am – 6pm and from 9am – 5pm on weekends and will offer a wide range of primary health care services, including:

- General Practice (incl. pharmacy dispensing)
- After hours emergency support
- Clinic and Community Nursing & Midwifery
- Home-based palliative care
- Frail, aged community care, including Day Centre respite

- Regional health services, including mental health, youth health social work and health promotion
- Visiting allied health services
- Visiting health support services
- Community based social respite care including overnight social respite care by arrangement
- Meals on Wheels
- Health promotion
- Chronic Disease Self-Management Programs

To contact the Community Health Centre during opening hours telephone 6473 5700.

The Centre will be closed on Christmas Day and Good Friday, except for emergencies. The telephone number for an emergency outside opening hours is 000. If required, arrangements will be made for the on-call doctor to meet patients at the Community Health Centre.

GP Assist can be contacted on 1300 78 0011 for non-urgent after hours medical assistance. If required, GP Assist will contact the on-call doctor who will see patients at the Community Health Centre.

## Tasmania's Health Plan Activities

### Consultative forum on employee issues

Some new activities cover both the Primary Health Services Plan and the Clinical Services Plan. One of these is the consultative forum on employee issues.

Health sector unions have been invited to take part in consultative meetings starting in early October to discuss any employee-related issues that may arise from the implementation of Tasmania's Health Plan. These complement the site-specific meetings already being held in some areas.

The meetings, to be chaired by DHHS Secretary Peter Hoult, will provide opportunities to discuss issues that may affect more than one site under the Plan. Site-specific industrial consultative committees will be formed separately.

The organisations invited to take part are the Australian Medical Association, Australian Nursing Federation, Community and Public Sector Union and Health and Community Services Union.