



TASMANIA'S HEALTH PLAN

Implementation Newsletter Issue 4, July 2008

Clinical Services Plan update

An update to the Clinical Services Plan component of Tasmania's Health Plan was released on 22 May.

The update, brought together by consultant Dr Heather Wellington, takes into account changes to ownership of the Mersey Community Hospital, as well as the latest data on regional population and hospital use.

The Clinical Services Plan update makes clear the Tasmanian Government's preference for service arrangements at the Mersey Community Hospital to be in line with the principles of the 2007 Clinical Services Plan.

It outlines the State Government's preferred model for service delivery at the Mersey, which includes a specialist elective day surgery unit and a regional rehabilitation unit, as well as a high dependency unit, low risk inpatient paediatrics, low complexity inpatient acute medical services and 24-hour emergency care.

There may soon be an opportunity to put this model into action.

On 6 June, the Australian Government requested that Tasmania resume operation of the Mersey Community Hospital. The State Government is negotiating on the basis that its preferred model for the hospital be put in place.

The Clinical Services Plan update also contains a number of updates specific to the North and South, and of statewide significance.

It contains 26 'implementation commitments' against which progress can be tracked, including clear timeframes for some key projects. They include:

- completion of the Launceston General Hospital's new emergency department by June 2010
- a workforce strategy, linking health care education and workforce needs, by December 2009 (in partnership with stakeholders)
- a statewide GP strategy, in part addressing shortages in the North West and North, by December 2009 (in partnership with stakeholders)
- a Clinical Advisory Council convened by August 2008
- a rehabilitation and aged care clinical network up and running by August 2008
- a chronic disease clinical network by December 2008

- a statewide strategy for the management of clinically severe obesity by December 2009
- strategies for improved patient transport and accommodation services by June 2008.

The Clinical Services Plan update also:

- outlines the significant progress made since the Plan was published in May 2007
- predicts community need for health services to 2016
- addresses the impact of a number of Australian and State Government initiatives, including Commonwealth funding commitments
- commits the Department of Health and Human Services to monitoring and regularly reporting statistics relating to hospital use
- confirms the roles of the three major state-owned hospitals, and endorses and clarifies the principles for regional referral and statewide services that are outlined in the 2007 Clinical Services Plan
- endorses the principles of access, quality, safety and sustainability that underpin the 2007 Clinical Services Plan.

The Clinical Services Plan update is available online at www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/futurehealth (select 'Clinical Services Plan' on the left-hand menu). Copies can be ordered through future.health@dhhs.tas.gov.au or 6233 3964.

Implementation timelines now online

Project descriptions and implementation timelines for the 100+ projects within Tasmania's Health Plan are now available online at www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/futurehealth.

The progress chart, which will be updated monthly, includes colour codes indicating project status. Around 75 of the projects are well underway.

Project updates

Implementation of Tasmania's Health Plan involves more than 100 projects, many of which will be put in place during the next two years, and others within the next five years. Status updates on some key projects follow (see over).

Support for general practice

General practice in Tasmania will receive a boost following the signing of a three-year agreement between the Department and General Practice Workforce Tasmania.

The agreement for DHHS funding of \$100,000 per year is a result of a recommendation from Tasmania's Health Plan which identifies the need for increased medical workforce planning capacity in the State.

The Clinical Services Plan update released on 22 May (see over) also commits to development of a statewide strategy for general practice, in recognition of the link between GP availability and pressure on hospital emergency departments.

The new funding will be used to work with the general practice community to develop strategies to manage increasing patient demand and to recruit doctors to rural and regional areas of Tasmania.

An annual work plan will be developed which will identify areas of greatest need.

General Practice Workforce Tasmania is funded by the Australian Government to improve access to general practitioner services, to encourage better links between general practice and the rest of the health system and to enhance the quality of general practice. This is done through recruitment, retention and workforce planning activities on a statewide basis.

This is the first time a State Government has made a funding commitment to the retention and recruitment of general practitioners in Tasmania, which reflects the growing importance it attaches to the sector and to a stronger primary health care system.

A number of other projects involving the Department and general practice are in advanced stages of planning, and will be detailed in future issues of this newsletter.

They include funding general practice to provide allied health/chronic disease services, and development of a DHHS policy for a consistent approach to support arrangements for GPs in rural areas of Tasmania.

A General Practice Support Unit has been established within the Primary Health directorate to implement these projects and to foster a closer working relationship with general practice.

For more information contact Ian Bell (Service Innovation Manager – General Practice) on 6336 5505, or ian.j.bell@dhhs.tas.gov.au.

Strengthening health promotion

A statewide Health Promotion Framework is under development.

Tasmania's Health Plan commits to greater emphasis on health promotion to help Tasmanians improve – and increase control over – their health.

The Health Promotion Framework outlines what the DHHS will do to achieve these goals.

Initial meetings have been held with key stakeholders to discuss the Framework, and a working draft will be circulated for comment this month.

The final Framework and supporting documentation is expected to be available on the DHHS website by the end of August.

A Health Promotion Framework Reference Group has been convened to oversee the development of materials that will support the Framework's implementation and its use in health service planning.

These tools, including evidence-informed health promotion action guides, will arm more DHHS staff with the information and skills they need to take their health promotion work into the community.

The Swinburne University of Technology has been contracted to deliver its Certificate 4 course in Workplace Training and Assessment, which has been customised for the health promotion sector. This training will start next month for a range of DHHS staff working in health promotion roles across the State.

Tasmania's Health Plan also commits to the recruitment of extra health promotion coordinators. As a result of this commitment, one additional coordinator has been appointed in the North and one in the South, with two positions currently being recruited in the North West.

For more information contact Rod Meldrum (Manager, Planning Policy and Performance, Primary Health) on 6336 5505 or rod.meldrum@dhhs.tas.gov.au, or Sue Frendin (Manager, Health Priorities) on 6222 7774 or sue.frendin@dhhs.tas.gov.au (re Framework consultation and Certificate 4 training).

Services at Rosebery

A new agreement between the Tasmanian Government, the Rosebery community and mining company Zinifex will improve the delivery of health services in the area.

The partnership struck last month delivers on the commitment by the State Government and Zinifex to each invest \$500,000 over two years in enhanced health services at Rosebery.

It includes on-duty after-hours nursing cover at the Rosebery Community Health Centre, as well as observation and disaster response capacity.

The State Government will aim to recruit an additional paramedic for the West Coast, and will work with Zinifex to support the local ambulance service.

The Rosebery Community Hospital became the Rosebery Community Health Centre late last year in line with recommendations in Tasmania's Health Plan. However, local residents raised concerns with the after-hours model and the Government has worked with the community and the mining company to address these concerns.

The new arrangements will increase the security of the community and improve the West Coast's health services.

More information

- visit www.health.tas.gov.au/futurehealth
- email future.health@dhhs.tas.gov.au
- call 6233 3964