

Nursing in General Practice
Demonstration Divisions
workshop

ADGP Forum

Adelaide, September 23rd 2004

Division involvement in supporting practice nursing

- Most Divisions support practice nursing
- Some Division programs still in early stage of development, many still developing
- Considerable variety in investment, staffing, strategies across Divisions
- Considerable variation in GP/Board response
- Significant differences between urban and rural/remote, latter less well understood

Extent of Division involvement

- Issue #1: how high a priority is practice nursing?
- Generally lower involvement if:
 - large number of solo practices in Division
 - few practices eligible for PN incentive payments
 - few practices employing a PN
- Barriers include
 - Division focus on GPs only
 - lack of understanding of PN role (esp on Board)

Extent of Division involvement

- Strategies
 - Fostering cultural change in the Division
 - peer influence
 - extending membership
 - including nurses in working groups
 - Promoting the benefits of practice nursing
 - Gaining CEO and (esp.) Board support

Extent of Division involvement

- Issue #2: Division capacity
- Barriers
 - lack of resources
 - lack of workforce
 - working in isolation (Division itself and staff within the Division)
 - lack of appreciation of complexities of general practice

Extent of Division involvement

- Strategies
 - integrating practice nursing into other program areas / working across program areas
 - innovative source/use of funding
 - collaboration with other Divisions
 - partnerships with other organisations
 - knowledge management

Division roles

- General acceptance of range of roles identified by Demonstration Divisions
 - change ‘EPC’ to ‘Business development’
- Roles most frequently referred to:
 - networking and communication
 - promoting the role of practice nursing
 - recruitment and retention
 - professional development

Promoting the role of PN

- Barriers
 - lack of a generally understood, generic role for PNs
 - lack of agreed minimum competencies for PNs
 - timely access to resources - eg business models
- Strategies
 - developing local promotional strategies
 - developing/accessing resources to promote PN
 - matching the role of the nurse to practice needs
 - low risk opportunities to trial PN services

Recruitment and retention

- Barriers
 - difficulty recruiting suitably qualified & experienced nurses
 - poor pay, employment conditions in some practices
 - lack of HR skills in practices
 - nurses not familiar with applying for jobs, negotiating conditions
- Strategies
 - Divisions assessing practice needs
 - assisting practices with recruitment/resources
 - providing HR information
 - providing orientation education to new nurses

Professional development

- Issues
 - quality of education program
 - role of Division in professional standards
 - access to and uptake of education programs
 - funding & quality presenters for education sessions
- Strategies
 - ensuring that education is accessible and appropriate
 - finding alternative sources of funding
 - accessing providers of education/using local expertise

Networking and communication

- Barriers
 - lack of designated funds/shortage of Division staff
 - no access to email or teleconference facilities
 - difficulties getting information to PNs within practices
 - distance
- Strategies
 - encouraging networking between PNs, practices and Division staff, including peer networks
 - developing broad reach communication strategies
 - using existing networks (eg CDM)

Issues outside scope of Division

- Providing advice on professional standards and industrial issues (scope of practice, pay, supervision...)
 - refer to authoritative sources

Incorporating PN in general practice

- Issues
 - Practice culture (especially where practice nurses take an extended role)
 - Acclimitisation to general practice
 - Organisational capacity/integration and teamwork within the practice
 - defining the nurse's role, responsibilities and professional needs.

Implications: nurses

- Need to establish PN as a live career option
- Adapting to general practice a challenge
- Need to take an active role in developing the profession, individually and through professional groups
- Need to take active role in determining and protecting professional role/ development

Implications: practices

- Potential for improving care and productivity within the practice
- Practice capacity and teamwork essential
- Ensuring a match between practice needs and nurse's interests
- Practices share responsibility for scope of practice and professional issues
- Need to be prepared to pay realistic salaries

Implications: Divisions

- Division support is needed
- This requires support from GPs and Boards and building practice nursing into plans/budgets
- Collaboration across Divisions/with external organisations builds capacity and sustainability

Implications: Divisions

- Need to make practice nurse support sustainable
 - integration into other Division programs
 - emerging focus on practice support and capacity building
- Practice nursing support can be a step towards a broader primary health care role and ‘advanced Division’ status

Implications: SBOs/ADGP

- Divisions need support and coordination at state and national level
- Some issues need to be addressed at state level
- Scope for integrating practice nursing into other SBO and ADGP programs

Implications: AGDHA

- Practice nursing can support govt priorities:
 - extended role of GP in chronic disease care
 - extended role for Divisions in PHC
 - developing more integrated PHC
 - addressing workforce shortages

BUT

- Don't forget the variety in general practice

Implications: AGHDA

- Divisions can play an important role in supporting practice nursing, but highlight:
 - need for adequate funding and flexibility within reporting requirements
 - appropriate national and state leadership
- Need to integrate results from various practice nursing initiatives and disseminate widely

Summary

- Confirmed role of Divisions in supporting innovation in general practice
- Confirmed value of Divisions learning from each other
- Methods used by Demo Divs have wider application
- Supported move to whole of practice approach
- Highlighted potential of nurses as change agents within practices

Discussion

- What do you think the role of practice nurses should be in five years' time?
- What impact does this have on Divisions and how they operate:
 - now
 - into the future

Consider...

- “Practice nursing will only flourish when it develops as a branch of nursing rather than as an addition to general practice

Consider...

- “Chronic disease management is best served by practice nurses supported by GPs rather than by GPs supported by practice nurses”

Outstanding issues for strengthening practice nursing

- Developing and securing PN role
 - communication bet. professional bodies and Divisions
 - professional and medico-legal issues
 - PN education and training
- National and state leadership/coordination
 - access to resources, advocacy, support
- Needs of remote Divisions
- Funding and reporting requirements