

# Brief overview of the Demonstration Division projects

Following is an outline of the major activities undertaken by each of the Demonstration Divisions projects. More comprehensive information about the projects is included in Appendix One: Overview of the Models. The key elements addressed by the Demonstration Division projects are:

- Recruitment and retention
- Professional development
- Mentoring and support
- Partnerships and collaboration
- Teamwork and integration
- Promotion of practice nurse roles
- Professional standards
- Activities for EPC/PIP/SIPS.

Although there are common themes and similarities across the models, each project has taken its own individual approach to addressing these key elements.

## Adelaide North Eastern Divisions of General Practice Group (ANEDGP)

**Adelaide North East DGP** currently supports practice nurses under the Chronic Diseases banner by providing education and training programs and supporting the practice nurse network group.

Monthly meetings for practice nurses are held at the division and this has been a successful component of the model. A variety of topics are presented for upskilling and increasing the knowledge base of the nurse. Time is also allocated, during the meetings, for information sharing and networking. Feedback via an evaluation form highlights that it is a very important and much valued component of the program.

The Model purports the success of the various workshops that are run for nurses throughout the year. A two-day Asthma management workshop was well attended, as was a workshop on Professional and Legal Issues in general practice. Evaluation forms indicated new learning and upskilling for the nurses that attended.

**The Adelaide Northern Division (ANDGP)** model sought to provide a fee for service nursing service by employing nurses to be contracted to practices within the division. It was envisaged that different doctors would utilise the nurses with differing frequencies depending on their needs while those general practitioners already employing a practice nurse would utilise the service for holiday or

sickness relief. The stated objectives of the model were to utilise practice nurses to enhance the outcomes of the Enhanced Primary Care (EPC) programs, provide a system for general practice to employ the services of a practice nurse according to demand, and to increase the number of practice nurses supporting general practice particularly solo practitioners.

One of the keys to the success of the program was the recruitment of suitably trained nurses with experience in working in general practice.

**The Yorke Peninsula DGP** through the More Allied Health Service (MAHS) funding developed the role of the Practice Based EPC Nurse to address current health issues in the community in relation to asthma and diabetes. Through a range of consultative mechanisms diabetes and asthma were identified as two of the regions highest health priorities. In response to this, the Practice Based EPC nurse and asthma educator services were implemented to provide comprehensive care for those people with a diagnosis of diabetes and /or asthma.

**Mid North DGP** developed a similar model to Yorke Peninsula DGP. The key to the success of the model, again, is largely due to funding received by the division through the MAHS program.

## Canning Division of General Practice Group

Across the three divisions in this group, recruitment and retention of nurses is a major challenge to the progression of practice nursing as a unique area of practice, with low rates of pay identified as a key impediment to recruitment and retention.

A number of issues have been identified that have the potential to address and improve retention and recruitment of nurses in general practice. Each division has employed strategies to tackle the issue, with Canning Division establishing a “register, recruit and relief” database of nurses who are seeking employment in general practice and are matching this information to practices looking to employ nurses.

The Perth and Hills Division has established a personnel database and has actively promoted, through literature and education, the career opportunities offered by practice nursing.

The Eastern Goldfields Division faced the challenges of small numbers of practice nurses, spread over a large geographical area. The division established a Combined Health Support Network with invitations extended to practice nurses, practice managers and aboriginal health workers.

Canning Division’s greatest area of activity undertaken in the process of supporting nursing in general practice was accomplished through professional education and training. Practice nurses identified the areas where they felt they had a knowledge deficit and a program was built around their need. In addition to professional education, a program of information management and computer training was implemented in the Canning Division. The Perth and Hills Division offered collaborative education programs with topics including the management of diabetes and asthma, spirometry and events offered by the National Prescribing Service Program.

The Perth and Hills Division invested considerable time and effort in building a broad consultative network of key stakeholders to inform the development of a Practice Nurse Modeling Tool. The tool can

be used by practices for forecasting, budgeting and strategic planning and demonstrates the financial implications of employing a nurse. This project has also fostered strategic relationships with local, state and national professional organisations; education providers; and government agencies.

The three divisions have introduced a Practice Nurse Support Officer position. This position has proven very successful and has been instrumental in raising the profile of practice nurses across the divisions.

## Fremantle Regional Division of General Practice (FRDGP)

The Practice Nursing Program 'model' utilised by Fremantle Regional Division of General Practice comprises a series of activities and program elements have been developed as a result of experiences gained since 1997. Importantly, the approach taken by the division is one of meeting the needs of each individual practice. It is FRDGP's experience that no 'one model fits all', as practices are at different stages of change in terms of embracing the role of the practice nurse.

The various aspects of the 'model' include the following:

- **Practice Nurse Network** provides a structured support system for nurses in the general practice setting, in order to encourage and facilitate networking, peer support and discussion on evidence-based practice.
- **Practice Nurse Mentoring** provides support to all practice nurses working in the division in areas of identified need.
- **Cost Modelling** to demonstrate the financial benefits of employing a practice nurse the division has developed basic cost modelling worksheets identifying the role of the nurse in aspects of Enhanced Primary Care and the Practice Incentive Payment Program.
- **Alliance with Notre Dame University** placement of student nurses within the general practice environment enabling students to gain insight and experience in the speciality of practice nursing whilst working with experienced practice nurses.
- **General Practice Development Team** a team of three part-time project officers work closely to encourage practices to integrate clinical and practice management procedures and to work together as a team.
- **Practice Nurse Recruitment** the Practice Nurse Support Project Officer works closely with practices requiring assistance with the employment of a Practice Nurse.
- **Professional Development** FRDGP actively promotes a 'whole of practice' approach to professional development. General practitioners and practice nurses are invited to attend relevant joint educational events. In addition, comprehensive professional development is also provided specifically for practice nurses.
- **Multidisciplinary Teams and Integration** collaboration is an integral part of FRDGP's ethos. Practice nurses are an essential part of the many collaborative ventures with various aspects of the community, primary and acute health sectors.

## Hunter Urban Division of General Practice (HUDGP)

This model focused on the facilitation of, or support for, the employment of nurses in general practice on a permanent basis. This service involved a full recruitment and training program, which included:

- advertising, recruitment and selection of practice nurses for placement within general practice
- a three (3) day induction training including orientation and procedural manuals
- a one day mentoring program conducted by an experienced Hunter Urban Division nurse within the employing practice
- liaison visits by the Hunter Urban Division program manager as required.

The second key strategy of the Hunter model is the provision of ongoing education, training and resourcing for those nurses working within general practice that involves:

- Monthly half, one or two day workshops usually, but not always, focusing on the EPC Items and the 2001 PIP Budget Incentives. This program was expanded, in 2003, to weekly workshops focusing on five core learning areas: Health Promotion, Infection Control, Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation, Cultural Diversity Attitudes & Values and Child Protection.
- a five day a week hotline based at the division and manned by senior nurses
- ongoing current, relevant information and resources included in the Hunter Urban Division weekly fax and the Practice Nurse Employment Package.

The third strategy of the model focused on the formation of partnerships with relevant organisations, which has provided specific support and enhancement to the practice nurse education program.

## Northern Tasmania Division of General Practice (GP North)

By the year 2000 the membership of GP North identified the need to offer general practice 'broader' support services than were offered at the time, and as a result the division established a service delivery entity Northern Practice Services (Tas Prac) which offers a range of additional supports for general practice. As part of Tas Prac, practice nurses are employed by the division and provided to interested practices on a contract basis. The division also assist practices wishing to recruit nurses themselves.

Through the Contract Nurse Service, GP North has been involved in the recruitment, employment, orientation, and ongoing support of Level Two experienced Registered Nurses (Clinical Nurse Specialists in NSW).

The division has also worked closely with practices nurses and general practitioners in the areas of supervision, mentoring and other professional issues. Some examples include:

- Providing information relating to the understanding of and adherence to the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council (ANC) Competencies, as well as other relevant professional guidelines.
- Working to clarify the role of the practice nurse (levels one and two) within general practice.

- Providing information relating to understanding and maintaining the ANC Competencies.
- Development of a Journal of Reflective Nursing Practice and Professional Development for practice nurses.
- Providing general practitioners with information about working with practice nurses (advantages, PIP, systems of care), including practice visits. Also providing general practitioners with opportunities to discuss systems of care including how nurses are utilised within other practices.
- Re-development of GP North's practice nurse website to include practice nurse pages.

## South East NSW Division of General Practice Group (SENSW DGP)

A Practice Support Registered Nurse Service (PSRNS) was established in June 2001 to provide outreach services in four distant geographical areas within the SENSWDGP. All practices in the target regions were approached and consulted regarding their preferences for this service. As this was a completely new and innovative program, a considerable amount of flexibility and adjustment was needed while the service was established. Providing nursing services to practices that do not have an existing practice nurse not only demonstrates the value in having a practice nurse but also reduces practice resources involved in the recruitment of a practice nurse.

As the demand for the PSRNS has exceeded the capabilities of the existing nurses, the SENSWDGP is now contracting out nurses to practices upon request. SENSWDGP is responsible for the recruitment of the practice nurse, who is then contracted out to a practice at full cost recovery to work for that practice only. The practice nurse is supported with professional development provided by the SENSWDGP.

The SENSWDGP recognised that it was important to demonstrate to the general practitioners the financial value of being involved in the EPC and PIP, however, it was equally important to provide the support to implement the Initiatives without increasing the general practitioners workload. In response to this, the PSRNS team developed assessment tools that demonstrated how the nurse could be utilised in implementing the EPC items and Chronic Disease Initiatives.

When the Riverina Division commenced its Practice Nurse Program in 2001, practice nurses were already employed in a number of practices. This was often the result of an invitation by the general practitioner to a hospital nurse with whom there was an existing solid working relationship, to work in his/her practice. As a result, recruitment does not feature in this model.

Board and executive level support has been strong from the outset with the Practice Nurse Program firmly embedded in the division's philosophy and documented in strategic plans. The focus of Riverina's model in the early stages was to consider the needs, via an annual survey, of the practice nurses in terms of educational requirements and to facilitate the provision of appropriate, high quality training in partnership with outside agencies such as the Area Health Service and RCNA.

The divisions' monthly newsletter contains a dedicated practice nurse page with up to date news on professional issues, clinical information and other items of interest. This also serves to maintain awareness of nursing in general practice among all the general practitioner readers.

The practice nurses eagerly embraced opportunities to undertake education specific to their needs and welcomed the division's practice nurse program manager, a registered nurse, as a trustworthy source of 'help desk' type support. The division's model has expanded to incorporate informal networking opportunities in combination with educational events to further support the ever growing number of practice nurses.

More Allied Health Services funding has been used to provide division employed nurses who are diabetes or asthma educators to practices in eligible RRMA 4–7. Practice nurses have benefited from the clinical expertise of these colleagues through their involvement at the practice level and also at education events. More recently a practice nurse has joined two of the three key division committees.

Another feature of the Riverina Division of General Practice model is the provision of a nursing service offered to 12 rural communities with a population of less than 1000 people. The program is funded under the Regional Health Services Program and offers:

- a community capacity building focus to encourage and assist communities to look at strategies for improved health and wellbeing—the strategies fall in line with the Healthy Cities Model and create innovative or alternate delivery of health services
- support to the visiting general practitioner, similar to the concept of a practice nurse in general practice
- follow up of general practitioner patients in their homes as required
- facilitation of patient care through development of partnerships between other health service providers and key stakeholders e.g. the support palliative care service for remote communities.

The ACT Division of General Practice (ACTDGP) practice nurse program has evolved in response to the expressed needs of practice nurses and GPs with three main focus areas of: professional development, practice nurse networking opportunities and a practice nurse staff pool. Professional development programs are provided on a quarterly basis utilising credentialed external facilitators. A practice nurse interest group was established to provide an opportunity for the nurses to explore areas of interest, and to problem solve issues of concern.

Some GPs within the ACT Division expressed a need for a practice nurse staff pool to cover periods of staff leave and provide a casual pool of nurses for periods of additional demand. The ACTDGP is in the process of exploring the feasibility of providing a practice nurse staff pool.

## Southern Metropolitan Region Divisions of General Practice (SMRDGP)

The Southern Metropolitan Region Divisions of General Practice (SMRDGP) model is not one specific project, but rather an example of ongoing regional collaboration between seven divisions.

Establishing the SMRDGP Regional Practice Nurse Support Network involved:

- a commitment of resources by each division to practice nurse support
- the identification of one staff member per division with responsibility for this role
- regular meetings, with frequency varying according to level of project activity

- ongoing communication via email and phone, and most importantly,
- a shared belief in the value of nursing in general practice.

**Project one:** National Innovations Funding Pool Project: Supporting general practitioners in enhanced primary care—identifying a role for practice nurses and divisions. This was a 12-month collaborative project across five of the SMRDGP Divisions.

**Project two:** Case studies in multidisciplinary teamwork

The SMRDGP Regional Practice Nurse Support Network is currently compiling a set of case studies, which each division will include as a monthly feature in their newsletters in 2004.

**Project three:** Information and orientation sessions

Several members of the Regional Practice Nurse Support Network identified that while there was a growing interest among General practitioners to employ nurses, the recruitment process and a perceived lack of suitably qualified nurses remain significant barriers. It was decided to address these by taking a regional approach to recruitment, which would then give each division the capacity to promote the availability of nurses and assist their own practices with employing a nurse.

The aims of the project were:

- to raise awareness of practice nursing as a career option among nurses in other sectors
- to establish a register of nurses interested in practice nurse positions
- to provide direct assistance to practices planning to employ a nurse.

There were four main components to this project: an advertising campaign, a series three information sessions, the establishment of a register of nurses interested in practice nurse positions; and an orientation day.

**Project four:** Regional Motivational Interviewing Workshop

The need for professional development to improve practice nurse skills in health promotion and motivating patients for behaviour change was identified through local surveys and focus groups. A regional whole-day workshop on Motivational Interviewing was held in May 2003, with 22 practice nurses attending from across the seven divisions.

## Townsville Division of General Practice (TDGP)

The main aim of the Townsville model was to support and enhance general practice capacity to provide effective primary health care services. The objectives were to enhance education of the practice nurse and to provide support and networking opportunities. Workforce shortages and the introduction of government incentive packages stimulated the division to kick-start the process by providing incentive funding to allow practices to set up their infrastructure to handle the new challenges.

Professional development has aimed to support the workforce through enhancing knowledge, skills and resources. It has included workshops and the establishment and development of the Practice Nurse Network, employment of a registered nurse as a Practice Support Program Manager, the establishment and development of a Practice Managers Network and the recent creation of Practice Liaison Officers. Professional development of practice nurses is now viewed as an integral part of the divisional Continuing Medical Education (CME) program.

Division involvement with practice nurses has highlighted the need to ensure that general practitioners and practice managers are aware of the scope of the practice nurse role in general practice and that nurses are appropriately educated for the role in which they are working.

To assist in leave coverage and in some instance permanent employment, a small casual staff pool was developed through the Practice Manager's Network. Many of the staff worked in other practices and all had had general practice experience. The After Hours General Practice (AHGP), coordinated by TDGP, has also provided a database of potential locum nurses. The division acted as the coordinator of the staff pool, and practice managers rang when staff were needed. This has provided temporary relief and has worked well for many practices.

The development of partnerships with other health providers has been central to the success of the whole program. Today the Practice Nurse Program is an integral part of the overall practice support program. Much has been achieved in two years. Unlike many divisions, Townsville has not had to sell practice nursing to general practice. However, much can still be achieved in the way practice nurses contribute to general practice.

# Key elements of the projects

Following are a number of tables that give a pictorial overview of the strategies utilised by the Demonstration Divisions in each of the key areas. More detailed information on the work undertaken in these key areas by the Demonstration Divisions is provided in Appendix One.

## Recruitment of practice nurses

Division/s	Division advertises or assists with advertising	Employs or assists with employment	Orientation or assists with orientation	Employment packages	PN Database	Contracts Nurses	Casual Nursing Pool
Adelaide North East Group	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Canning Group		●	●		●	●	
Fremantle Regional	●	●	●	●	●		
HUDGP	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
GP North	●	●	●		●	●	
SENSW Group	●				●	●	
SMRDGP	●	●	●		●		
Townsville	●				●		●

## Professional development

Division/s	Structured education programs	Information sessions	Inclusion in education calendars	IM/IT training. Including electronic register/recall systems	Annual survey of learning needs	Development of professional portfolio	CNE points for practice nurse education
Adelaide NE Group	●	●	●	●			
Canning Group	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Fremantle Regional	●	●	●	●	●		
HUDGP	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
GP North	●	●	●	●		●	●
SENSW Group	●	●	●	●	●		
SMRDGP Group	●	●	●	●			
Townsville	●	●	●	●	●		

## Mentoring and support

Division/s	Division Commitment to "Whole of Practice" Approach	Established Practice Nurse Program	Practice Nurse Interest Groups/Steering Committees	Dedicated practice nurse Program coordinator	Mentor Program	Help desk/ Hotline/ telephone support	Board support	Annual practice nurse dinner
Adelaide North East Group	●	●	●	●			●	
Canning Group	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Fremantle Regional	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
HUDGP	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
GP North	●	●	●	●		●	●	
SENSW Group	●	●	●	●		●	●	●
SMRDGP	●	●	●	●		●	●	
Townsville	●	●	●	●		●	●	

## Partnership and collaboration

Division/s	Practice nurse program has enhanced partnerships	Use of external agencies for practice nurse education	Partnerships with local public health units and Practice Nurse Program	Partnerships with local area health service and Practice Nurse Program	Partnerships with community health and Practice Nurse Program	Consumer input into Practice Nurse Program
Adelaide North East Group	●	●		●	●	
Canning Group	●	●	●	●	●	
Fremantle Regional	●	●	●	●	●	●
HUDGP	●	●	●	●	●	●
GP North	●	●	●		●	
SENSW Group	●	●		●	●	
SMRDGP	●	●			●	
Townsville	●	●	●	●	●	

## Teamwork and integration

Division/s	Conduct combined PN/GP education programs	Integration of Practice Nurse Program with other divisional programs	Team building skills for general practitioners and practice nurses	Collaborative programs with other divisions	Promotion of examples of effective teamwork
Adelaide North East Group		●			
Canning Group	●	●	●	●	
Fremantle Regional	●	●			●
HUDGP	●	●	●	●	●
GP North		●			
SENSW Group	●	●			
SMRDGP	●	●		●	●
Townsville	●	●	●	●	

## Promotion of practice nurse roles

Division/s	Dedicated practice nurse newsletter	Practice nurse segment in newsletter	Practice nurse webpage on division website	Practice visits – one on one education to practice staff on PN roles	Practice nurses represented on steering committees	Division presentations at nursing conferences /workshops highlighting PN roles
Adelaide North East Group						
Canning Group	●	●	●	●	●	●
Fremantle Regional	●	●	●	●	●	
HUDGP	●	●	●	●	●	●
GP North		●	●	●		●
SENSW Group		●		●		
SMRDGP		●		●	●	●
Townsville	●	●		●		

## Professional standards

Division/s	Division encourages nurses to join professional organisations	Division seeks advice from state and national professional nursing bodies	Advice / information on professional issues included in newsletters	Division provides advice to practices on nursing professional issues	Annual educational program for nurses on professional issues.	Advice provided to nurses on ANC competencies
Adelaide North East Group						
Canning Group	●	●	●			●
Fremantle Regional	●	●	●			●
HUDGP	●	●	●			●
GP North	●	●				●
SENSW Group	●	●				●
SMRDGP	●	●	●			
Townsville	●		●			

## Activities around EPC/PIP/SIPS

Division/s	Practice based EPC Nurses	Access to MAHS Funding	Development of EPC Based Resources	Regular practice nurse education of EPC Initiatives
Adelaide North East Group		●	●	●
Canning Group	●		●	●
Fremantle Regional			●	●
HUDGP			●	●
GP North		●	●	●
SENSW Group		●	●	●
SMRDGP			●	●
Townsville			●	●