Primary Health Care Research Evaluation and Development Program

Business Plan 2004

*Developing a culture of research-aware and research-oriented practitioners*

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Vision Statement
for Flinders Primary Health Care Research Evaluation and Development Program (Flinders PHC RED):

Developing a culture of research-aware and research-oriented practitioners

The Flinders University Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development (PHC RED) Program aims to use a ‘whole-system approach’ to increase the research capacity of primary health care providers, consumers and students, and to provide leadership in developing a research-aware and research-oriented culture in primary health care.

Guiding Principles of Flinders PHC RED

1. Initiate and drive a change process that recognises the value of research and evaluation skills and the value of development of these skills in primary health care providers.

2. Develop, encourage and implement excellence in research and evaluation skills within Flinders University Department of General Practice, within the network of primary health care practitioners, within all stakeholder and consumer groups, as indicated in Figure 1, and within the training and educational facilities of the Flinders Medical School.

3. Contribute to primary health care service delivery and development by reflecting current and local priorities in areas of health, and to ensure that education and research opportunities reflect the needs of all stakeholders, including consumers, practitioners and policy-makers.

Executive summary

As shown in Figure 1, Flinders PHC RED has developed a two-pronged approach to capacity building: at the local level in the Department of General Practice through the activities of the PHC RED team and at a community level through the services and activities of the SARNet research network. Flinders PHC RED views 2004 as a year of developing new initiatives to build on and strengthen our existing capacity building strategies, activities and infrastructures.

At the local level, planned activities for 2004 fall into four key areas. First the continued supervision and mentoring of the two PHC RED research fellows (general practitioner and occupational therapist), our NH&MRC PhD candidate and our academic registrar. Second, participation in research by PHC RED team members. This will include completing and publishing a major national research and evaluation needs-analysis survey of GP registrars and GP supervisors, and developing stronger links with the Greater Green Triangle University Department of Rural Health to facilitate joint research initiatives. Third, we will continue our successful dissemination of research and evaluation activities through the biweekly seminar series. Finally we will continue to foster the publication record and dissemination skills of the PHC RED team writing group, the South Australian Divisions Inc (SADI) writing group and a new writing group for Department staff.

At a community level, activities will build on the success of SARNet (the South Australian Primary Health Care Research Network). As of January 2004 the official membership was 214, however, feedback from member organisations indicates that information disseminated via the network e-alert is forwarded to an estimated audience of closer to 1,000 primary health care practitioners, researchers, students and consumers across SA.

Network-related activities in 2004 will focus both on providing training and facilitating increased communication between SARNet members. Training will be provided in topic areas identified from the SARNet needs-analysis survey administered in 2003. In 2004 SARNet events will be incorporated into a schedule of events provided by the state-based collaboration, thereby increasing access of PHC stakeholders to our training opportunities in multiple locations across the state. The two major state events in 2004 will be the Researcher Forum (a research gathering for state-wide PHCRED bursary, seeding grant and fellowship holders) and a five-day intensive research and evaluation training course for Indigenous PHC researchers. Communication between SARNet members will be enhanced by the new SARNet on-line discussion forum and associated SARNet Special Interest Groups. The on-line discussion forum aims to provide a virtual meeting place for members to post questions, share information and discuss ideas. This service aims to facilitate and foster research and evaluation skills development in rural and remote members where access to training events is limited. Associated Special Interest Groups are able to provide the opportunity for focussed communication around a specific topic area or methodology. We anticipate that these groups will provide opportunities for peer-support, mentoring, project collaborations and group oriented
grant applications. PHC RED will broker the formation of these groups and provide on-going support via the Special Interest Group event.

Executive summary cont.

(February 11th 2004), the on-line discussion forum and face-face group meetings.

To meet the increasing needs of the SARNet research network membership, two positions have been included in the 2004 Business Plan and Financial statement. Specifically, the SARNet Research and Development officer (0.5 FTE) Dr Karin Ried PhD responsible for training event planning and the management of the Special Interest Groups/on-line discussion forum and the SARNet co-ordinator (0.2 FTE) responsible for website management and communication with SARNet members. We are fortunate have attracted two staff members with exceptional skills to fill these positions and look forward to a very productive year for SARNet.

A highly successful initiative in the past two years has been the offering of targeted capacity building bursaries of up to $5000 on a competitive basis through SARNet. The number of applications is steadily increasing as is the quality, such that several applications of high quality and interest can not be funded from the current budget. In addition the mentoring and supervisory roles associated with bursary recipients increases the workload of the program manager considerably and we have budgeted for an increase to 0.7 FTE to assist because this initiative is highly successful in meeting the aims of the PHC RED program in our region as it is in the PHC RED program in the Spencer Gulf. We are committed to finding ways to support the growing interest in participating in, and initiating PHC research in SA however current funding levels are limiting the potential of this activity.

Finally, we will continue to work on dissemination and marketing of PHC RED in conferences, newsletters and peer-reviewed publications.
**Figure 1:** Flinders PHC RED capacity building strategies
Figure 2: Flinders PHC RED core staff and affiliations

Core PHC RED Group
- Director
- Program Manager
- SARNet Research and Development Officer
- SARNet Coordinator
- SARNet IT support
- Program Consultant

State-based collaboration
- Flinders University Dept of General Practice
- Adelaide University Dept of General Practice
- Spencer Gulf Rural Health School

Multidisciplinary alliances
- Individual practitioners
- Divisions of General Practice / SADI
- Departments of Nursing & Midwifery
- Centre for Allied Health Research (Uni SA)
- SA Community Health Research Unit (SACHRU)
- Australian Centre for Evidence-Based Clinical Practice (ACEBCP)
- DATIS

Interstate associations
- Greater Green Triangle University Department of Rural Health (VIC)
- Centre for Remote Health (NT)

Academic associations
- Flinders Centre for Epidemiology and Biostatistics
- PHC RIS

Students
- PhD candidate (NHMRC)
- Academic registrar (GPET)

Research Fellows
- 2 appointments annually (0.1 FTE)

Consumer groups
- Individuals, support groups and consumer organisations

Individuals, support groups and consumer organisations
Figure 3: Communication strategies

Flinders University
PHC RED Program

SARNet & PHC RED websites
State-based collaboration website
PHC RIS website
Newsletters, eg SARNews, GPInfonet
Letters to individuals and groups
On-line discussion forum
Opportunities at training events, seminars, conferences, and SARNet events
Personal communications

Increased capacity

Increased capacity
Strategic Objectives 2004

The Flinders PHC RED specific objectives\(^2\), as stated in the Strategic Plan are to:

1. Raise the profile of research, evaluation and development in primary health care
2. Develop the research and evaluation skills of primary health care providers, students and consumers
3. Encourage a multidisciplinary approach to research and evaluation in primary health care
4. Develop and foster collaborative links with and between primary health care organisations
5. Enhance the research, evaluation and development infrastructure for primary health care providers
6. Raise the profile and quality of the Department of General Practice in research, evaluation and development
7. Help achieve an evidence-based culture in primary health care
8. Contribute to setting priorities for primary health care research and evaluation directions and policy at a national level

For each broad objective, strategies activities and performance indicators are detailed on the following pages. Details of the intended expenditure associated with these activities is presented in the accompanying 2004 budget document

\(^2\) Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing draft objectives
Objective 1. Strategic activities

To raise the profile of research, evaluation and development in primary health care

- Continue to consult with the advisory group regarding the development of the Flinders PHC RED Program,
- Continue to promote our research network (SARNet) to all primary health care practitioners, including allied health, consumers, rural groups and students

Performance indicators

- Minutes of twice yearly advisory group meetings
- Maintenance of register of local and regional primary health care and consumer groups
- Continued advertisement of SARNet to all affiliated groups shown in Figure 1, with particular focus on allied health, rural groups and consumers
- Maintenance and updating of SARNet membership database
- Maintenance and updating of PHC RED and SARNet website
- Article to GPInfonet or similar submitted
- Conference abstract to GP&PHC conference 2004 submitted, and conference attended
- Article on primary care research issues for peer reviewed journal submitted
- SARNet newsletters for electronic distribution continued

Communication strategies and stakeholder involvement

- Continue to advertise PHC RED and SARNet in multiple media, including newsletters, brochures and electronic media,
- Continue to disseminate the results of PHC RED activities at relevant conferences, and in peer-reviewed and other professional journals and newsletters.

Objective 3. Strategic activities

To encourage a multi-disciplinary approach to research and evaluation in primary health care

- Promote SARNet membership to all affiliated groups shown in Fig. 2, utilising the range of Communication Strategies listed in Fig. 3
- Foster development of multidisciplinary Special Interest Groups, e.g. through on-line discussion forum
- Use SARNet events to provide opportunities to discuss multi-disciplinary collaborations in project and grant applications, and promote SARNet funded bursaries for multi-disciplinary groups
- Promote other funded research opportunities to multidisciplinary groups

Objective 3. Performance indicators
Objective 4. To develop and foster collaborative links with and between primary health care organisations

Strategic activities

- Continue to facilitate and develop strategic collaborative links with affiliated groups as shown in Fig. 1, in particular, Divisions of General Practice, the Greater Green Triangle University Department of Rural Health (UDRH), and with the State-based PHC RED Collaboration

Performance indicators

- Contribution made to the state-based collaboration links
- Program of SARNet event(s) with opportunities for organisations to meet and discuss potential areas of collaboration
- Continued development of relationships with regional Divisions, South Australian Divisions of General Practice Inc. (SADI)
- Collaborations sought with and involvement of PHC RED staff offered to research and evaluation groups eg Divisions, SADI, number of opportunities identified and outcomes
- Continued involvement of Southern Division of General Practice representative on Flinders PHC RED advisory committee and SADI representative at state collaboration business meetings
- Continued exploration of areas for further collaboration with and between rural groups including Limestone Coast, Southern and Riverland Divisions, and the Greater Green Triangle UDRH
**Objective 5.** To enhance the research, evaluation and development infrastructure for primary health care providers, students and consumers

**Strategic activities**

- Further develop infrastructure and resources e.g. access to written resource materials, books and papers, and advertise availability on SARNet website
- Offer PHC RED Research Fellowships, SARNet bursaries and writing grants
- Maintain and enhance PHC RED and SARNet websites, including links to relevant sources of national and international expertise and PHC RIS website
- Secure further physical resources and space for PHC RED activities, if required
- Offer expertise to registrar research grants activities nationally by acting as member of GPET Registrar Research Committee on behalf of the National Standing Committee - Research [NSC-R] of the RACGP

**Performance indicators**

- Continued employment of core PHC RED staff (Figure 1). Specifically, Director, Program Manager, SARNet R&D officer, SARNet co-ordinator, SARNet IT support and PHC RED consultant.
- Membership list and activities of SARNet as in Objectives 1 & 2
- Advertisement of local research and evaluation resources
- Numbers of Fellowships, bursaries and writing grants awarded (see Objective 2 for outcomes)
- Website presence of PHC RED and SARNet and links
- Number and type of physical resources secured including space, computer hardware and software
- Supervise and support to state-based collaboration coordinator in day-to-day tasks

**Objective 6.** To raise the profile and quality of the Department of General Practice in research, evaluation and development

**Strategic activities**

- Continue to manage and support joint PHC RED and Department fortnightly research seminar program
- Appoint PHC RED Research Fellows and New Researcher Development Program fellows (if funding is successful)
- Advertise and support applications for PHC RED initiated NH&MRC Primary Health Care Postgraduate - Research Scholarships
- Contribute to supervision of PhD student, funded by joint Department of General Practice/Flinders PHC RED NH&MRC grant
- Encourage staff to publish in relevant literature and offer support to Departmental staff in completing manuscripts, articles, abstracts, competitive grant applications, scholarships and awards

**Objective 6.**

- Improve supervisory capacity in Department for higher degree students
Continued...

- Involvement of Department representative in National Priority setting and policy development arena.

Performance indicators

- Seminar series organised within Department, nature of Program, speakers attracted and record of attendance
- Numbers of PHC RED and New Researcher Development Program Fellows (if applicable) (detailed under Objective 2)
- Number of supported applications for PHC RED/NH&MRC Primary Health Care Postgraduate - Research Scholarships, if applicable
- Progress report of NH&MRC-funded PhD student
- See Objective 2 for documentation of departmental publication and other research outputs
- Attendance of eligible staff at supervision workshops and number of staff qualified to supervise higher degree students
- Participation of department of General Practice staff in national priority setting activities.

Objective 7. Strategic activities

To help achieve an evidence-based culture in primary health care practice

- Develop links to evidence-based sites through SARNet website
- Continue to provide SARNet training events
- Notify SARNet members of relevant capacity building opportunities offered by local providers including Australian Centre for Best Clinical Practice (ACEBCP), South Australian Community Health Research Unit (SACHRU), Flinders Centre for Epidemiology and Biostatistics (FCEB)

Performance indicators

- Invitation to Divisions to facilitate seminars and symposia on skills involved in using evidence in practice (see also Objective 2)
- Inclusion of training in evidence-based skills at SARNet event(s)
- Program of SARNet events (see Objective 2)
- Website links from SARNet website to evidence-based sources
- Subscription to Clinical Evidence (BMJ)

Objective 8. Strategic activities

To contribute

- Maintain effective communication and liaison with PHC RIS
to setting priorities for primary health care research and evaluation directions and policy at a national level.

regarding PHC RED issues

• Facilitate presentations from State and Federal Departments of Health in Departmental seminar program and at SARNet events to continue dialogue and mutual interaction regarding policy and research and offer such opportunities to SARNet members

• Contribute to Annual University PHC RED workshops and related initiatives

Performance indicators

• Attendance of PHC RIS representative on PHC RED business meetings

• Presentation by Department of Human Services (DHS) or Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) representative at seminar series and/or SARNet event

• SARNet forum organised for discussion between State and Federal Departments of Health policy representatives and SARNet members

• Attendance at annual PHC RED University initiative meeting, contributions to meeting and related initiatives

• Continued representation of Flinders PHC RED at national forums including RACGP National Standing Committee – Research (A/Prof Liz Farmer)

• Invitation for Jim Birch (CEO, DHS) to present on the Generational Health Review/Research opportunities in Primary Health Care.