

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

SA DIVISIONS OF GENERAL PRACTICE INCORPORATED

DIVISIONS OF GENERAL PRACTICE

Adelaide Central and Eastern Division of General Practice
Adelaide Hills Division of General Practice
Adelaide Northern Division of General Practice
Adelaide North East Division of General Practice
Adelaide Southern Division of General Practice
Adelaide Western General Practice Network
Barossa Division of General Practice
Eyre Peninsula Division of General Practice
Flinders and Far North Division of General Practice
Limestone Coast Division of General Practice
Mid North Division of Rural Medicine
Murray Mallee General Practice Network
Riverland Division of General Practice
Yorke Peninsula Division of General Practice

THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

AND

REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

Children, Youth and Women's Health Service
Central Northern Adelaide Health Service
Southern Adelaide Health Service
Country Health SA

PURPOSE

The Memorandum of Understanding is the framework for the collaborative efforts of all the signatories to create a better health system for all South Australians. It builds on the achievements of the last agreement, and provides a clear direction for future efforts. Together we are committed to improving the quality and safety of health care in South Australia.

1. Introduction

1.1 History

The Department of Human Services, SA Divisions of General Practice Inc (SADI) and the fourteen Divisions of General Practice signed their first Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2002. In accordance with the MoU a work plan was developed in 2002 and 2003 to guide joint efforts until the end of 2004. This provided the framework for significant collaborative achievements such as the statewide obstetric shared care program, the GP Registry and involvement of SADI and Divisions in the Generational Health Review process. SADI and GPs have also been involved in working parties to implement the recommendations of this review.

The partnerships built throughout the first MoU have laid the groundwork for the new agreement, which now includes regional health services as signatories.

1.2 Policy context for the agreement

1.2.1 State Health Department and Regional Health Services

The South Australian Government has established a health reform agenda to reflect the directions of South Australia's strategic plan, which provides the policy context for public health services to improve population health and wellbeing. Major elements of the health reform process are¹:

- ❖ Regionalisation of health services
- ❖ The development of primary health care networks
- ❖ Local services near where people live
- ❖ An increased focus on chronic disease management
- ❖ Improved continuity of care through electronic transfer of patient information
- ❖ Increase community inclusion and participation
- ❖ Collaboration and partnerships for coordinated integrated services
- ❖ Direct resources to ensure access and equity
- ❖ Strengthen and reorientate resources for prevention and primary care
- ❖ Improve quality and safety of services.

The state strategic plan has identified baseline health indices² and set improvement targets³ within 10 years to:

- ❖ Increase the life expectancy of South Australians to lead the nation
- ❖ Continue to be the best performing state in Australia for infant mortality
- ❖ Equal or lower than the Australian average for psychological distress
- ❖ Reduce the percentage of young cigarette smokers by 10%
- ❖ Reduce the percentage of South Australians who are overweight or obese by 10%
- ❖ Exceed the Australian average for participation in sport and physical activity
- ❖ Reduce the gap between the outcomes for South Australia's Aboriginal population and those of the rest of South Australia's population, particularly in relation to health and life expectancy.

1.2.2 Divisions of General Practice Network

The national Divisions network has also undergone a review in 2003. In 2004 the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing responded with the development of a new planning and reporting framework. This framework has set the directions for the outcome-based funding of the network for the next three years⁴.

The priority areas for SADI and their interstate counterparts are:

- ❖ Governance
- ❖ Building capacity of Divisions of General Practice.

¹ SA Department of Health Strategic Directions 2004-2007

² South Australia's Strategic Plan, *Creating Opportunity*, Volume two Detailed Facts and Figures, March 2004

³ South Australia's Strategic Plan, *Creating Opportunity*, Summary of Targets, March 2004

⁴ Future Directions, Your Toolkit for Implementation. Implementing a national quality and performance system for the Divisions of General Practice network, 2005

The nine priority areas for Divisions of General Practice are:

- ❖ Governance
- ❖ Prevention and early detection
- ❖ Access
- ❖ Integration
- ❖ Management of chronic disease
- ❖ General Practice support
- ❖ Quality support
- ❖ Consumer focus
- ❖ Workforce

Divisions offer an existing, well-established infrastructure that assists in integrating and linking national initiatives with state systems, and through which a range of health and community initiatives can be introduced. The strength of Divisions is that they are simultaneously unified as a network, yet can act independently in order to provide local solutions to key local health issues. By working to build and promote primary care teams, and to link the Australian Government, State and local government health services, Divisions also offer a local means of overcoming the lack of coordination that can occur between Australian Government-State initiatives.

2. Parties/Signatories

The Department of Health, the 4 regional health services, the fourteen Divisions of General Practice in South Australia and SA Divisions of General Practice Inc are the signatories to this Memorandum of Understanding.

2.1 Department of Health

Following changes to the governance structures for the state's public health system the Department's role is to set directions, formulate policy and strategic planning, and monitor the performance of the State's health services and system. This will be achieved within a population based funding model, delivering resources to health units on a needs basis. There is a commitment to ensuring a quality, safe and accessible health care system, and to improving the health and well-being of all South Australians.

The Department is overseeing health reform with a focus on:

- ❖ providing health services closer to home
- ❖ giving greater priority to prevention, early intervention and health promotion
- ❖ strengthening primary health care services, with more opportunities for general practitioners, allied health workers and nurses to work together so that citizens have easier access to their services
- ❖ improving health services for the most vulnerable people in the community - Aboriginal people, children and young people, people with a mental illness and the frail aged, and
- ❖ developing a health system focusing on the needs of people rather than those of health institutions.

This will be done by working in conjunction with agencies that provide health services, as well as with other government and non-government organisations.

2.2 SA Divisions of General Practice Inc

SA Divisions of General Practice Inc (SADI) is the peak organisation for the fourteen Divisions of General Practice in South Australia. Its mission is to improve health outcomes by strengthening and developing the role of general practice in the health care system in collaboration with Divisions of General Practice in SA. It is a conduit and focal point for information between Divisions and State and Federal Government, and an advocate for Divisions in health policy and planning, program development, implementation and evaluation. SADI works to achieve its mission by:

- ❖ strategic partnerships, alliances and explores collaborative models for improving primary health care

- ❖ building a consultative framework to support Divisional and general practice representation and input into health policy and planning
- ❖ providing a voice for Divisions and general practice at the State level and nationally
- ❖ monitoring changes in the health system and working to ensure these changes are to the benefit of Divisions, general practice and their communities
- ❖ working to build the capacity of Divisions, including active engagement with individual Divisions developing areas of excellence
- ❖ providing support to Divisions in SA by coordination and implementation of state-wide activities in areas including, but not limited to, information management, immunisation, mental health, asthma, quality use of medicines, diabetes and cardiovascular health

2.3 Divisions of General Practice

Divisions of General Practice are local networks of GPs working within defined geographical areas. In SA there are 14 Divisions of General Practice: Adelaide Central and Eastern; Adelaide Hills; Adelaide Northern; Adelaide North East; Adelaide Western; Southern; Barossa; Eyre Peninsula; Flinders and Far North; Limestone Coast; Yorke Peninsula; Murray Mallee; Riverland and Mid North Division of Rural Medicine.

The broad aim of Divisions is to support general practices to work effectively with each other and with other health care providers to improve health services and population health outcomes. Divisions of General Practice support general practices to meet the challenges of the changing health environment, encouraging collaboration with other health providers in their local area and provide a voice for general practice, and a central point for engagement with general practice. Divisions of General Practice are a hub for the GPs in a locality to access support, skills, knowledge and information. Divisions provide opportunities for GPs to take on extended roles in general practice and to become more involved in policy, planning and local health services delivery. This enables general practice to undertake initiatives in areas such as:

- ❖ Immunisation
- ❖ Information management/technology
- ❖ Mental health
- ❖ National health priority areas as they relate to chronic disease management
- ❖ Improved coordination of care for older people
- ❖ Quality use of medicines
- ❖ Aboriginal health
- ❖ GP and health workforce support

2.4 Regional Health Services

There are three health services in South Australia based on geographical regions: Central Northern Adelaide; Southern Adelaide; and Country Health SA. There is also one population based health service: the Children, Youth and Women's Health Service.

Regional health services boards have been established to⁵:

- ❖ Protect and improve the health of its population
- ❖ Improves health services for its population
- ❖ Ensure that services are provided to a high standard of quality and safety
- ❖ Focus on health outcomes and people's experience of their local health system
- ❖ Ensure public participation measures are transparent, robust and acceptable to the population
- ❖ Ensure that the health status and health needs of their population are assessed on an on-going basis as part of an integrated state-wide planning process
- ❖ Promote integrated regional health service planning
- ❖ Ensure effective participation in the planning and development of metropolitan and state-wide clinical networks
- ❖ Take responsibility for the provision of specialist state-wide services within its mandated area of responsibility
- ❖ Provide a single focus of accountability for the performance of the South Australian health system within its area
- ❖ Ensure effective financial management within budget.

⁵ First Steps Forward South Australian Health Reform, New Governance, 2003

3. The Memorandum of Understanding

The Department of Health, the 4 regional health services, the fourteen Divisions of General Practice in South Australia and SA Divisions of General Practice Inc (henceforth titled the signatories) are committed to:

- Φ Working collaboratively to integrate health care systems to improve the health of South Australians
- Φ Working to reduce health inequities within the population of South Australia
- Φ Involving general practice in the planning and development of health services at the regional and state level
- Φ Involving general practice in the development and evaluation of health policies and health reform strategies
- Φ Improving health system efficiencies, reinvesting in building the primary health care system
- Φ Developing models of shared care in relation to specific health issues, or with particular at risk groups in the community
- Φ Identifying and building on examples of good practice.

To assist in achieving these aims, the signatories involved in the Memorandum of Understanding have agreed:

1. To develop annual state-wide Workplans to guide joint effort over the coming year and report against this Memorandum of Understanding and the Workplan in their Annual Reports.
2. That key themes of the Workplan will be as follows:
 - Integrated systems of care (ie. between general practice and hospitals and between general practice and other primary and community care providers)
 - Population health
 - Health workforce
 - Policy and health reform
3. That further themes and priority areas to the Workplan must be considered and agreed by all of the parties in the Memorandum of Understanding.
4. That Divisions of General Practice and regional Health Services will develop regional health plans under the broad umbrella of the Memorandum of Understanding, in accordance with their local needs and priorities. Parties agree to report against this Workplan in their Annual Reports
5. To actively participate in a MoU Workplan monitoring group to ensure the requirements of the Workplan are met. The monitoring group will include representatives for all signatories, and the group will meet at least four times per year.
6. The Department of Health and SA Divisions of General Practice Inc (SADI) will provide executive support to the MoU Workplan monitoring group.
7. To protect the financial position of all signatories by ensuring funding of activities has occurred before any agreed work is commenced.
8. The Department of Health, the four regional Health Services, the fourteen Divisions of General Practice and SA Divisions of General Practice Inc will develop an agreed framework of consultation to ensure all signatories have input into health policy and health service development that is appropriate at the state and local levels, particularly in respect to the implementation of the health reform agenda following the Generational Review of the Health system.
9. To cooperate on funding applications, evaluation and research initiatives that relate to the key themes of this Memorandum of Understanding.

4. Term of the Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding will stand for a period of three years from the date of signing, with a review and evaluation of the document after two year. The period covered by this document may be extended beyond three years with agreement of all signatories.

5. Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding

The Department of Health, the ten Regional Health Services, SA Divisions of General Practice Inc and the fourteen Divisions of General Practice in South Australia are committed to fulfilling the obligations of the Memorandum of Understanding.

<hr/> Hon John Hill, MP Minister for Health	<hr/> Dr Mike Beckoff, Chair SA Divisions of General Practice	<hr/> Dr Tony Sherbon, Chief Executive Department of Health
Signed on behalf of Adelaide Central and Eastern Division of General Practice		<hr/> Title
Signed on behalf of Adelaide Hills Division of General Practice		<hr/> Title
Signed on behalf of Adelaide North East Division of General Practice		<hr/> Title
Signed on behalf of Adelaide Northern Division of General Practice		<hr/> Title
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