

Queensland Primary Health Care Network

Statement of Commitment to Comprehensive Primary Health Care in Queensland - February 2013

Background

The Queensland Primary Health Care Network (QPHCN) is a group of primary health care related organisations, who have come together with a common interest - to network, share information and gain a collective understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing primary health care in Queensland. Network members incorporate non-government, community, consumer and allied health organisations.

Whilst the Network itself was established in 2010, its precursor commenced in late 2009 through the hosting of a series of Primary Health Care Roundtables designed to link organisations and share information relating to the national health reform agenda. It was through coming together regularly, that the organisations recognised the value of the partnerships being formed and the discussions that were taking place and agreed to formalise the Network.

Context

Currently, a range of challenges face the primary health care sector including increasing consumer demand, increase in the prevalence of chronic disease, increased workforce shortages, disparities in access and outcomes, as well as a lack of effective integration between primary health care, acute and aged care services.

Following the announcement of the Australian Federal Government's National Health Reform, organisations identified a need to understand and influence what shape the health system will take. As such, the Primary Health Care Roundtables have provided a forum for the exchange of information amongst a range of organisations, not only to improve the understanding of the spectrum of issues, but also increase the capacity of organisations, individually and collectively to influence primary health care outcomes.

Definition of Primary Health Care

For the purposes of the Network, the World Health Organization (WHO) definition of 'Primary Health Care' has been adopted and is outlined below:

The ultimate goal of primary health care is better health for all. WHO has identified five key elements to achieving that goal:

- *Reducing exclusion and social disparities in health (universal coverage reforms);*
- *Organising health services around people's needs and expectations (service delivery reforms);*
- *Integrating health into all sectors (public policy reforms);*
- *Pursuing collaborative models of policy dialogue (leadership and reforms); and*
- *Increasing stakeholder participation.*

http://www.who.int/topics/primary_health_care/en/

Purpose of this Statement of Commitment

This Statement of Commitment has been developed by the QPHCN to:

- Promote the existence of the Network;
- Highlight the importance of an integrated comprehensive primary health care system;
- Commit to principles around areas of commonality and mutuality;
- Guide the advocacy efforts of the Network.

Vision for Primary Health Care in Queensland

Our vision for primary health care in Queensland is a system where the person, family and community drive the delivery of services based on need. Health services are universally available to all people, regardless of geographical location, culture, ethnicity and economic or social status. It acknowledges and responds to the demographical diversity within Queensland and improves access and equity by targeting disadvantaged, marginalised and low income groups.

It is focussed on preventing illness and promoting health, reducing the need for curative and crisis driven responses. It promotes evidence-based quality primary health care provision. Public participation is a critical component. People are involved in decisions about their own health, and can participate in identifying the needs of their community. This ensures respect for diversity and flexible and responsive care. It also improves the quality and safety of health care.

The system is supported by integrated public policy that reflects the need for economic and social policy to improve health outcomes. Intersectoral collaboration and co-operation ensures the right mix of services is delivered to meet the needs of people accessing health services including the most disadvantaged. This includes a seamless transition to and from hospital and pathways between services.

In this system, individuals and families understand the social determinants of health and can develop skills to maintain health and wellbeing.

Enablers

The realisation of this vision can be enabled by:

- Participatory public policy development and models of care;
- Flexible funding models that enable local level response to community need;
- Integrated workforce planning and training;
- Communication and information sharing between and across sectors;
- Integrated service planning and preventative health activities; and
- Innovative use of technology such as telehealth and electronic health records.

What this Vision means for the QPHCN

This Vision provides members of the QPHCN with a collectively agreed set of principles on the primary health care system in Queensland. The Vision is aspirational, and provides something that the QPHCN can advocate for and work towards over time. Setting the Vision enables the QPHCN to analyse the current primary health care system, identify opportunities for collective action for system improvements, and respond to emerging priorities.

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