

Barwon South West Enhancing Care Coordination Project To date: January 2014

Background:

The **aim** of Barwon South West Enhancing Care Coordination Project is to improve the capacity of primary care service providers to deliver appropriate care coordination to consumers throughout the Barwon South West (BSW) region. The Department of Health has provided one-off project funding to achieve this aim over a two year period. A small Project Working Group comprising of the three Primary Care Partnerships (PCPs) within the region, Department of Health and Western District Health Service have developed the project to date, incorporating information from agencies.

Project Approach:

In broad terms, the first year of the project will focus on 'internal organisational change' and will be delivered over three stages: with 1 full day and two half-day workshops. These sub-regional workshops are based on the Studer Group's Hardwiring Excellence Framework, this will allow participants to learn change management tools, to review these learnt tools and tactics, to learn from each other's implementation experiences and problem solve any barriers encountered throughout the journey. Between workshops support is offered through PCP staff and direct coaching from Studer Group to help overcome any implementation issues. Evaluation points have been created to inform further group coaching needs and the next phase of the project.

The structure of second year is more dynamic at this stage. This will be developed depending on agency's needs.

Steps to Date:

Leaders from fourteen state-funded primary care service agencies from across the BSW attended the Project Development Workshop held in August, 2012. Participants at the workshop described the attributes of excellent care co-ordination practice and identified some of the key barriers to delivering best practice. Participants were also introduced to the Studer Group, who delivered an abbreviated training session on Hardwiring Excellence and also heard from Barwon Health about the benefits of implementing the Hardwiring Excellence approach.

From there, the Project Working Group undertook a telephone interview needs assessment with 18 primary care agencies in the BSW region. The needs assessment used the outcomes from the workshop to assist agencies with evaluating their own current practice. The needs assessment looked at four key principles of Enhancing Care Coordination (ECC) – Systems Integration, Responsive Identification of Needs, Care Coordination and Consumer Participation.

Key themes identified from this needs assessment were:

- Many agencies identified that there are inconsistencies in delivering care coordination, suggesting that there isn't an embedded culture of accountability.
- Agencies highlighted that even though they have strategic care coordination policies in place this was not always effectively filtered to the ground level.
- Small agencies identified the need to focus on strategic change as a priority while mid-size to larger organisations felt focussing at the operational level would be more beneficial.
- It was noted that there were varying levels and commitment in delivering integrated care coordination throughout the region, issues included: referral quality, different organisational

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priorities, poor intra-organisational coordination and time spent following up patient information.

- Agencies recognised the importance of improving the journey for clients however they did not have the tools, knowledge or capacity to achieve this.
- Many agencies noted that any project should be aimed at senior staff that would enable these staff to act as change agents in their organisations.

In August 2013 organisational leaders were invited to a detailed workshop to get a better understanding of the proposed project, possible organisational benefits of the whole project and the expectations of participants. Organisational leaders were armed with enough information to assess their own organisational readiness to be a committed participant of the ECC Project. Post this engagement process 'Phase One- Internal Excellence,' began with participating organisations working with Studer Group to improve their internal working environment with a focus on **accountability, leadership, culture and structure**. Studer Group used its Hardwiring Excellence Training Model to focus on building an organisational culture of excellence prior to the ECC Project tackling process improvement changes in the project's second year. The first phase has also incorporated ways in which agencies engage and interact with consumers and provide simple tools and processes to support participants in having conversations with external stakeholders to improve system integration.

'Phase Two – System Excellence' will focus on improving care coordination at the local systems level through to the regional systems level. Using the approaches and learnings from Phase One, the project will be able to focus on building a 'whole of system,' approach to accountability, leadership, culture and structure that will enhance and sustain system integration and best-practice in care coordination. As we move into this phase the Project Working Group will work with organisations to scope out what tools and tactics need to be focused on to best help them move forward collectively at the local, sub-regional and regional level.

As of January 2014 there are 304 active participants from 27 organisations from throughout the BSW project. Agencies are representative of local hospitals & health services, community health centres, rural health centres, bush nursing centres, child & family services, aged care services, disability services, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs), crisis support, Local Government Authorities (LGAs), drug & alcohol services, Medicare Locals, the BSW Department of Health (DoH) & of course the Primary Care Partnerships (PCPs). This includes people from varying backgrounds including primary health care, acute care, allied health, mental health, children services, alcohol & other drugs, aged care, health administration, management, human resources, finance and maintenance.

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