

# Continuing Care and Clinical Service Development News

March 2006

## Record numbers for February Provider Forum

*Improving assessment for older people* was a popular topic for our first Provider Forum, motivating record attendances and generating excellent representation from right across the health care continuum.

A joint presentation from Susan Race, Programs Branch and Heather Russell from the Aged Care Branch of the Department, provided policy and background information outlining the importance of assessment processes across the health care range. Our program branches are working closely with the field meeting the challenges of assessment and improving outcomes for older people.

A key feature of this forum was launching the resource *A guide for assessing older people in hospitals*. Dr Mike Dorevitch, Director, Centre for Applied Gerontology, and the principle consultant involved in developing this resource, was a lead speaker. Mike provided project background, took us through the guide's structure and content and discussed implementation issues. Each attendee received a copy of the resource.

Barbara Allen, from the Office of Health Information Systems, gave an illuminating presentation about assessment in the electronic environment and provided some clarity around HealthSMART. Barbara outlined the functionality of this tool and it was very exciting to see the potential it has to reduce duplication, facilitate information sharing, and manage records and reports. Barbara also provided the implementation schedule for HealthSMART.

The afternoon session produced vigorous discussion in small groups around a number of topics relating to assessment:

1. common assessment tools
2. improving the patient assessment journey across the care continuum
3. when is a comprehensive assessment needed?
4. interdisciplinary assessment
5. assessing older people in acute hospitals
6. assessment in an electronic environment
7. sharing assessment information.

Each group was asked to discuss the issues relating to their topic; identify how we can improve assessment in that area; and generate recommendations for implementation. Interestingly, and not surprisingly, common themes were highlighted throughout the feedback. These included:

- executive support
- education – about comprehensive assessment; appropriate use of assessment tools; and interdisciplinary practice
- interdisciplinary approach to education including undergraduate education
- single assessment tool that populates easily across health services and existing records
- development of a common screening tool to advise the need for more comprehensive assessment
- comprehensive assessment is a continual process
- agreed tools and pathways for assessment, referrals and responsibilities
- common documentation
- electronic records, assessments and referrals.

Susan Race concluded the day with a presentation addressing what we need to improve care and assessment for older people. Recommendations developed during the Forum have provided a strong basis for us to work in close partnership with the field in this area. It is noteworthy that such a partnership is already operating with the HARP-CDM/ACAS Pilot where the InterRAI Home Care is being piloted electronically in six settings.

### The next Provider Forum will be held on Friday 12 May 2006.

The topic will be *Person-centred care* with Minister Jennings launching a number of products developed supporting the *Refocusing Culture: Improving care for older people initiative*. We will provide more details closer to the date.

Copies of the presentations can be found at our provider forum website at [www.health.vic.gov.au/subacute/forums](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/subacute/forums)

The resource *A guide to assessing older people in hospitals* can be downloaded from [www.health.vic.gov.au/acute-agedcare](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/acute-agedcare)

For further information, or to subscribe/unsubscribe, contact Coralie Kennedy on [coralie.kennedy@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:coralie.kennedy@dhs.vic.gov.au)