



Victorian Healthcare Association

5 December 2008

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The Victorian Healthcare Association Submission on:

Rural procedural services – Principals for defining the scope of clinical practice for GP Surgeons Discussion Paper

The Victorian Healthcare Association welcomes the opportunity to submit on the Rural procedural services – Principals for defining the scope of clinical practice for GP Surgeons.

The Victorian Healthcare Association

The Victorian Healthcare Association is the major peak body representing the public healthcare sector in Victoria. Our members include public hospitals, rural and regional health services, community health services and aged care facilities. Established since 1938, the VHA promotes improvement of health outcomes for all Victorians from the perspective of its members.

The Victorian Context

Victoria has decentralised governance arrangements for the management of health services across the state. To support the provision of safe and effective health services to local communities it is important that the Department of Human Services (DHS) provides robust guidelines for the credentialing of health professionals. Victoria's rural health services face workforce shortages that necessitate a range of recruitment and staffing decisions. Within this context, maintaining high clinical standards and ensuring patient safety is critical. Clear principles to define the scope of clinical practice, guidance on minimum qualifications and standards, as well as ongoing professional development are important to support health service managers and boards in their decision making processes.

The VHA's Response

The VHA supports the proposals made within the Discussion Paper and believes they will improve the provision of health services across rural Victoria. The process of defining the core capabilities and training expected of rural GP surgeons, operating in local or sub-regional rural Victorian health services, will assist health services to make clear recruitment and training decisions for their services locally.

Broader issues associated with the training of sufficient numbers of GP proceduralists are of continuing concern to those who provide health services in rural areas. A lack of suitably qualified professionals places workforce pressures on services and this needs to be addressed through other avenues.

Additional strain is placed on existing rural staff by the need to train and supervise new graduates and internal medical graduates. Strategies to address these pressures are needed to guard against a loss of experienced staff.

Supervision requirements for international medical graduates also places financial pressures on larger institutions and this is of concern to the VHA.



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Conclusion

The VHA welcomes the interest shown by the DHS in undertaking this work and in the development of the Discussion Paper. The robust process has resulted in a document that informs professionals working within health services and guides health services in governing how they credential medical staff. The VHA strongly believes that local needs are best met by local solutions. The framework outlined in this Discussion Paper provides support for this approach.

Please contact the VHA for any more information about this response. We welcome the opportunity to represent the Victorian public healthcare sector throughout this or future inquiries.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Trevor Carr', written over a horizontal line.

Trevor Carr
Chief Executive

