

Primary Care Partnerships Program

Frequently Asked Questions: 1 June 2021

PROGRAM STATUS

#	QUESTION	DEPARTMENT RESPONSE
1.	What updated advice was provided in March 2021 on the Primary Care Partnerships Program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary Care Partnerships (PCP) were advised that service agreements will remain in place until 31 March 2022. PCPs will continue to fulfil their obligations and implement planned activities identified in their strategic plans along with key planning and activities to support transition.
2.	What are the key next steps?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over the next 12 months, the Department of Health (the department) will work with VicPCP and all 28 PCPs to develop a transition plan that will see the high-value functions of PCPs maintained and strengthened in the context of wider health reforms. As an initial step the department is undertaking a 'deep dive' to understand the current state of each of the 28 PCPs. A template was sent out to PCPs on 11 May 2021. Information gathered will provide a snapshot of current projects and activities, staffing commitments, and financial position. This important process will inform subsequent steps. PCPs have until 16 June 2021 to submit the requested information.
3.	What does 'guarantee' mean in terms of ongoing PCP funding and staffing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There will be no change to PCP service agreements during the transition period (until March 2022). There will be no reductions to overall funding to the PCP Program after the transition period. Any transition plan developed by the department will be on the basis of guaranteeing no reduction in funding and no involuntary losses of PCP Program-funded jobs.
4.	Why has a final decision not yet been made about the long-term future of the PCP Program and when will a final decision be announced?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The department acknowledges that this is a time of some uncertainty for PCP stakeholders. The department is currently examining the recommendations from the PCP Program review published in February 2020, the current Victorian primary health landscape, particularly in the context of wider health reform, and the learnings and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This work will inform the department's decision on future arrangements. The department will provide further advice once this is available.

TRANSITION PLANNING

#	QUESTION	DEPARTMENT RESPONSE
5.	Can PCPs recruit new staff to fill current vacancies or extend short-term contracts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is the responsibility of individual employers to make employment decisions. The department suggests that PCPs consider limiting new employment contracts to 31 March 2022 to align with the current agreement period.

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6.	What resources or information on a human resource strategy including job re-design, staff entitlements etc, can be provided to assist PCPs' considerations regarding auspice agencies and staff entitlements?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCPs should continue to be prudent in planning for all contingencies in line with best practice. • PCPs are encouraged to include all relevant employment and contractual information in the 'current state' snapshot template. • The department will seek guidance to ensure compliance with existing industrial and legislative requirements. Relevant advice will be provided once received, together with guidance once the future state is clear. • Any transition process will be undertaken within the appropriate legal and industrial agreements and legislation. • Until the details of the transition to the future arrangements for the PCP Program are known, it may be premature to seek legal advice on actions not yet decided.
7.	What reporting requirements are expected of PCPs for 2020–21 and 2021–22? Will the reporting format allow PCPs to reflect work undertaken in the transition period?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the 2020–21 period, PCP reporting requirements will remain unchanged and PCP Program reports should be submitted by 30 September 2021. • Further advice about PCP Program reporting requirements for 2021–22 will be provided to PCPs in due course.
8.	What are the department's expectations of PCP auspice agencies as the transition progresses?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department expects that auspice agencies will work with the department in the transition process. • Auspice agencies are required to endorse the completed 'current state' snapshot template currently being prepared by PCPs.
9.	What is the process for the development of the new governance structure, and importantly, how can PCPs meaningfully contribute to that process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent with the advice provided in the letter to PCPs on 31 March 2021, the department is currently considering PCP functions in the context of emerging health reform opportunities. • As a first step, PCPs are being asked to complete the 'current state' snapshot template. This information will inform next steps in planning and transition considerations. • The department is aware some Local Public Health Units are currently examining their potential future model. They may seek to include PCPs in their discussions.
10.	Is there an opportunity to have regional discussions with the department and VicPCP to ensure the pathway for transition reflects local needs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department will have discussions with PCPs and VicPCP as part of transition planning. • There will be a range of opportunities to discuss transition planning, one of which is a regional discussion.

OPERATIONS DURING TRANSITION PLANNING

#	QUESTION	DEPARTMENT RESPONSE
11.	What work should PCPs undertake between now and March 2022?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCPs should review current and planned activities and projects in light of the advice provided in March 2021. • PCPs are expected to continue to undertake planned activities to deliver the outcomes identified in their strategic plans.

PROVIDING 'CURRENT STATE SNAPSHOT' INFORMATION

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12.	How do PCPs provide financial information before the end of the financial reporting cycle?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCP Program funding financial information should be captured in the template provided to document all necessary information to inform planning considerations.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is acknowledged that PCPs' end of year financial statements may differ.
13.	Should PCPs develop a 12-month or 9-month budget?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PCPs are asked to prepare a 9-month budget to 31 March 2022.
14.	Should PCPs provide the total forecast unallocated PCP Program funds carried over from the last financial year?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The department is interested in the total amount of unallocated PCP Program funds expected to be carried forward into the next financial year. This may include unallocated funds for previous financial years plus or minus any projected unallocated funds for this financial year.
15.	What advice can the department provide about PCP intellectual property (IP)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IP types can include copyright, design, patent, trademark, and confidential information. PCPs should refer to their service agreement for the department's requirements concerning IP. If you do not already have an existing IP register, the department can provide a template to you. Email pcp.transition@health.vic.gov.au to request an IP register template.
16.	Is there a cut-off value for asset register items – i.e. items that do need to be recorded?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PCPs should refer to their service agreement for the department's requirements concerning asset registers.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

We are currently seeking advice in relation to the questions below and will provide an answer as soon as we have more information.

17.	What will be the PCP insurance program policy renewal dates? Will the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA) issue certificates before the end of the financial year for 2021–22?
18.	What advice can you provide on the Integrated Health Promotion (IHP) guidelines (e.g. activities and requirements for PCPs) for 2021–22?

CONTACT US

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular communication bulletins will be provided through VicPCP. Should you require further information, please: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email pcp.transition@health.vic.gov.au Contact your local area contact or VicPCP Formal announcements will be posted on the department's 'Review of PCP program' webpage.
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