

Primary Care Partnerships transition

Factsheet for PCP members – November 2021

OFFICIAL

After more than 20 years of operation, Victoria's 28 Primary Care Partnerships (PCP) are moving into a new phase. Their transition into Local Public Health Units (LPHUs) will strengthen their high-value functions, reinvigorate local partnerships, and align their objectives with current public health and wellbeing priorities.

Purpose of transition

The health landscape has changed significantly since the PCP Program was established in 2000. This includes the introduction of Primary Health Networks in 2015 and several other broader sector reforms across accompanying areas of disability, aged care, child and family services.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also resulted in new public health reform opportunities and initiatives, including LPHUs. Established in 2020, LPHUs are decentralised units led by Victorian public health services that have enabled fast, agile community engagement as part of the Victorian Government's COVID-19 public health response.

A [review of the PCP Program](#) conducted in 2019 by KPMG identified five options for investing program funding to better meet the Victorian community's current and future healthcare needs.

On 7 October 2021, the Department of Health announced that, consistent with option four of the KPMG review's recommendations, the PCPs' high-value functions would be transitioned into LPHUs, effective 1st April 2022.

Benefits

The transition of PCP high-value functions to LPHUs in a renewed and contemporary public health system offers a unique opportunity to improve population health outcomes for local communities.

The transition to LPHU's:

- consolidates the skills, knowledge and governance of PCPs and LPHUs across a catchment area
- leverages health reform opportunities to create a renewed focus on place-based population health promotion and preventative health initiatives
- strengthens the role of health services in responding to local health promotion and prevention needs
- offers consistent governance structures and authorising environments to influence system level change
- provides a clear transition pathway and certainty for PCP staff and member organisations.

Transition process

The department has engaged VicPCP to co-design the transition of PCPs to LPHUs which will ensure:

- retention of high-value functions and activities
- full reinvestment of PCP program funding
- no involuntary losses of PCP Program-funded jobs.

The final PCP transition plan will involve two inter-dependent phases:

- **transition out** – the finalisation of current PCP Service Agreements with PCP auspice agencies
- **transition in** – the transition of the PCP Program funding, funded staff and high-value functions into LPHUs.

The 'transition in' phase is being managed by the department's Public Health division in collaboration with the Commissioning and System Improvement division that currently has oversight of the PCP Program.

Next steps

The transition planning co-design process between the department and VicPCP has commenced. A Transition Project Reference Group made up of representatives from Vic PCP, PCP Chairs, Auspice and Executive Officers as well as local area Department of Health and Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and the PCP Transition Project Team has been established to support the transition process.

In particular, the role of the TPRG is to:

- support the planning and implementation of the PCP Transition Project
- review and provide feedback on the approach through ongoing consulting/communicating with PCP stakeholders in relation to the implementation
- review documentation as requested
- monitor key project deliverables, project risks and issues, and advise on appropriate action to be taken

The transition of PCP Program funded staff and high value functions to LPHUs is set to be completed by 1 April 2022.

Further Information

If you have further questions, please contact:

- Department of Health: PCP Transition Team pcp.transition@health.vic.gov.au
- VicPCP: Emma Fitzsimon, Director Strategy and Development emma.fitzsimon@vicpcp.org.au

Regular updates regarding the PCP Program Transition will be provided to all stakeholders once further details are finalised.