



Development Program for Mental Health, were completed.

Office of Rural Health

Sixty-one Queensland Health scholarships were offered in 2003 under the Rural Health Scholarship Scheme. The scheme provides financial assistance to support students during full-time tertiary study in:

- nursing;
- medicine;
- dentistry;
- pharmacy;
- podiatry;
- physiotherapy;
- occupational therapy;
- speech pathology;
- social work;
- radiography; and
- Indigenous nursing.

In 2003-04, 249 scholarship holders were managed by the Office of Rural Health and placed across the State.

After graduation, scholarship holders are contracted to be employed by health service districts in rural health care facilities throughout the State, providing rural communities with essential health services.

- trialling began of a community health system. These systems will reduce duplication, optimise return on investment and speed information relevant to the patient's treatment to the point of care; and
- statewide implementation of the Information System for Oral Health started after successful trials which included testing the system in a call centre environment.

HealthConnect trials

Queensland Health has jointly sponsored two National HealthConnect Program trials in Queensland. HealthConnect is part of the broader initiative Health Online, a health information action plan for Australia. It aims to improve health care and health outcomes through innovative use of health information.

An individual's health-related information is collected in a standard, electronic format at the point of care (such as a hospital or doctor's clinic).

With the consumer's consent, this information can be retrieved as required and exchanged via a secure network with health care providers authorised by consumers to access this information.

Access to complete and up-to-date information electronically allow consumers and their providers to make health care decisions in partnership.

The North Queensland trial commenced in December 2003 involves patients attending Townsville Hospital for elective surgery. The trial has been well received by patients and clinicians in the region. A second trial is planned for Brisbane's Southside next financial year.

support migration from paper-based medical data collection to electronic data collection

Enabling technology

Clinical Informatics Program

Clinical information management/information technology projects support migration from paper-based medical data collection to electronic data collection and development of electronic health records across hospital and community services.

During 2003-04:

- specification, development and testing of 17 clinical and patient administration information systems were progressed;
- statewide implementation commenced for pharmacy, oral health (see below), and emergency information systems, as well as a *Client Directory*;

Public health licensing system

- Phase one of the development of the public health licensing system to replace two obsolete systems, was completed. The new system provides an enhanced single licensing service responsive to the public demand for radiation health and drugs and poisons licenses. It also enables accurate use of information and measures to support legislative requirements.



Telehealth

- 2003-04 saw the expansion of Telehealth facilities across Queensland Health with 300 sites now having access to supported and consistent Telehealth technology.

Telehealth enables a range of specialist services to be delivered to Queenslanders living in rural areas, including renal services, pre-admission clinics, orthopaedic outpatient clinics and ophthalmology services.

- Queensland Health is participating as the lead agency in a trial for a State Government videoconferencing network, allowing public sector workers from around the State to access videoconferencing services, reducing the need for travel.
- Queensland Health has made considerable investments in technology to enable better delivery and administration of health care across the State. Examples include:
 - insourcing of the Finance and Materials Management Information System FAMMIS and the Decision Support System (DSS). These major administrative systems were run by an external commercial organisation, but are now operated under the full control of Queensland Health staff;
 - establishment of Enterprise Data Centres for the secure delivery of healthcare computer services across the State. In the event of an emergency at one data centre, another can take over;
 - upgrading and rationalisation of the local computer systems for office systems (file storage, electronic mail, printing) across the State;
 - development of I-Net, an advanced method of programming new healthcare computer systems so that Queensland Health gains the advantages of both local initiative and orderly collaborative development;
 - introduction of highly secure encryption so that sensitive records can be sent within and beyond Queensland Health efficiently and securely. This will enable continuity of care between Queensland Health and its partners such as general practitioners and external clinics; and
 - completion of an extensive high-speed data network across the State so that all regions have access to the main computer systems.

Skills Development Centre

During 2003-04, \$7.3 million was invested in the development of the Queensland Health Skills Development Centre (SDC) at Herston. The centre will be the hub for a wide variety of training programs for health care professionals from all over Queensland.

It will feature state-of-the-art procedural skill laboratories, sophisticated simulation models, a communications laboratory and a versatile training ward which can be adapted to meet the training needs of doctors, nurses and other health professionals.

The centre went from concept and design to construction during 2003-04.

State-of-the-art equipment

The centre placed most of the orders for its medium-to-hi-fidelity automated training manikins during 2003-04 and has purchased a number of 'firsts' in Australasia. The endo-vascular virtual reality trainer, VIST, is the first of its kind in Oceania. It will allow training from basic to advanced level for proficiency in a range of interventional radiology, invasive cardiology and vascular surgical techniques.

The centre is procuring two Haptica trainers, which will allow for assessment of the motor skills of surgeons. This system uniquely combines both real tissue and virtual reality and will be the first of its kind in Australasia.

Financial model

Considerable work has been undertaken in developing the SDC financial model. The pricing strategy has been agreed; the basis of which is that the core overhead of the centre (staff and non-staff costs) will not impact on any course costs for Queensland Health staff.

Supporting instructors

Instructors have received training at the centre's main crisis resource management courses: Anaesthetic

*secure delivery
of healthcare
computer services
across the State*