

KNOWLEDGE NETWORK IN PALLIATIVE CARE

Incorporating CareSearch



Project Update February 2007

What's happened in the first six months?

As with many projects, the initial phase is about establishment. During this period there has been a heavy concentration on beginning consultations and developing the support structures such as the Knowledge Network Management Group and the National Advisory Group. Invitations to participate in the National Advisory Group have been sent out and the first meeting is scheduled for April/May.

The Knowledge Network Management Group has the same membership as the Management Group for the Knowledge Network Business Plan project. This provides for continuity within the project.

The Knowledge Network Project has also taken over operational responsibility for the CareSearch website. This involves maintaining the current functions and content within the website such as the literature databases, education and training pages and research data management system as well as introducing new website materials and planning and implementing the Knowledge Network.

After the Consultation Workshop

Following the Consultation Workshop, the record of discussions was circulated to those who attended. This was a rich summary of issues, needs and opportunities from the many constituencies represented at the workshop.

A large number of participants from the Consultation Workshop have been invited to join the National Advisory Group.

Many of the ideas documented at the Consultation Workshop will be revisited at the project team Design Workshop scheduled for Thursday 8th and Friday 9th March. This will look at creating a working plan of the Knowledge Network in terms of content, functions and resources and outlining the developmental sequence.

Our IT partner, Morton Blacketer, will be participating in the Design Workshop to ensure that planning incorporates IT constraints and considers technical issues around aspects such as accessibility and navigation.

Expanding CareSearch

Since July 2006 a number of new webpages have been added to the CareSearch website. One new section relates to the National Palliative Care Program at:

<http://www.caresearch.com.au/home/Nationalprogram/tabid/420/Default.aspx> .

This section was released to the website in November 2006 and includes links and information on a number of major projects including:

- Caring Communities
- Indigenous Palliative Care
- Knowledge Network
- Palliative Care Medicines Working Group
- Palliative care needs assessment framework
- Respecting Patient Choices
- Palliative Care Outcomes Collaborative

Work is also being completed on specific pages for GPs and for Patients, Carers, Families and Friends ready for the official launch by Professor Margaret O'Connor from Palliative Care Australia on the 26th of March 2007.

This has been a complex developmental activity as it has identified processes that need to be established to ensure quality in the development of materials for the Knowledge Network proper. The development of the pages has shown that there is significant modification from concept to final format as issues around ease of use, language level, presentation, and end user circumstances all affect the design and presentation of the content. This work also enabled us to trial possible process components such as usability testing, page teams and editorial reviews.

Developing the IT platform

The purchase of additional hardware to enhance the operability of the IT platform has been completed. This included two dedicated web servers operating as a web farm. Installation was completed last weekend with a minor disruption to the website being needed.

We are also investigating the value of new functionalities such as a virtual classroom enabling online meetings with an audio capacity and document sharing.

Promoting CareSearch and the Knowledge Network

The marketing plan for the project has been developed. The plan focuses on three aspects:

- Marketing the CareSearch website to build awareness and use of the resource
- Marketing the Knowledge Network Project to build an understanding of the purpose and status of the project
- Marketing the Knowledge Network (when developed) to build awareness and encourage use of the functions and resources

The marketing plan will build upon strong website usage with over 14 000 visits to CareSearch and 150 000 hits in January 2007.

Evaluating a Knowledge Network

One of the many challenges confronting the Project Team and the Knowledge Network Management Group is setting up a meaningful evaluation plan. The major focus is on whether a Knowledge Network can make a difference.

We are currently planning project activities to address elements of this question. Some parts are relatively simple and look at patterns of use within the website. Others will utilise feedback surveys and focus groups to establish user attitudes and satisfaction. We would also like to address more complex considerations around whether access and modes of development and delivery affect knowledge uptake and application.

Staying in touch

We are interested in setting up a means of keeping in touch with the community and of providing avenues for comment and input. So in early March we will be opening up a forum in CareSearch for the Knowledge Network project.

Discussion forums allow people to share ideas and resources online. They do not need to be in the same city, state or even country. This forum will allow users to comment on aspects of the project, leave suggestions, help us locate information and resources, and discuss issues.

So look out for it in March on the CareSearch website at www.caresearch.com.au

Participation is welcome

In developing the Knowledge Network we will require the skills and expertise of many groups and individuals. We welcome involvement in the development of the Knowledge Network. There are many ways to be involved including:

- Offering your expertise as a resource person
- Suggesting websites, resources, tools or functions that you have found helpful and that you think should be included on a Knowledge Network in palliative care
- Helping to evaluate the relevance and quality of materials for inclusion on the Network
- Promoting the CareSearch website and Knowledge Network project within your organisation

You can learn more about the Australian Palliative Care Knowledge Network by:

- visiting the CareSearch website at www.caresearch.com.au ,
- emailing caresearch@rgh.sa.gov.au , or
- phoning the Knowledge Network Project Office on (08) 8275 2816.

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