

# Innovative collaborations to improve data flow in Community Nursing

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## Abstract

*This poster will explain a community nursing service project that successfully used a blend of skills and experiences in nursing informatics, project management, human resource management and a firsthand understanding of contemporary clinical practice. An innovative interface between clinical activities and financial functions ensured availability of information and data flow. The key to this interface was the development of collaborative relationships between internal departments and external funding partners.*

## Keywords:

Nursing informatics, Community health nursing, Economics, Organisation & administration

## Introduction

The Royal District Nursing Service (RDNS), is an independent not for profit Melbourne (Australia) based organisation, providing home nursing and healthcare with 1300 staff. The latest mobile computing technology and mobile phones are used by staff to improve accuracy of clients' records and free nurses from administrative tasks to concentrate on nursing. To generate its income, RDNS holds contracts with funding bodies. One such contract is with the Australian Government's Department of Veterans' Affairs for community nursing services for eligible war service veterans. This contract has complex guidelines requiring information from clinicians to be translated by the organisation's Finance programs in order for accurate claims to be generated. The potential for rejected claims as a result of clinical activities not meeting the complex claiming rules of the contract required an innovative solution.

## Methods

The success of the business venture between RDNS and the funded program pivots on the development of a central nursing role of the RDNS Client Services Project Officer. In collaboration with the RDNS General Manager Director of Nursing, contract manager, the Project Officer coordinates information flow to support the clinical care and the financial management of veteran clients.

The Project Officer provides to field staff:

- face-to-face education and mobile phone and email advice

- a comprehensive intranet site devoted to the complexities of the program and policy and procedure e-documents to guide field staff in data collection and documentation of care

In addition, the Project Officer is responsible for working with RDNS Finance and Informatics Departments to:

- resolve claiming issues
- data audit and investigation of data aberrations for claims management
- advise on impact of contractual alterations.

In collaborating with the external funding partner, the Project Officer:

- discusses and advises on program, contractual and clinical practice issues.

## Results

The results of the project reflect gains in the key role areas of the Project Officer role including:

Collaboration with Field staff:

- more informed dissemination of information
- clinical audit process demonstrated improved compliance between client care, client care records and contractual obligations
- increased staff satisfaction due to prompt issue resolution

Collaboration with internal departments:

- increased revenue by 23% over 3 years
- increased successful claims and decreased claim errors; decreased rejected claims by 86%
- Clarity of responsibilities and information flows between internal departments
- Enhanced reports and more of them with tighter parameters to assist with issue identification

Collaboration with external funder

- Enhanced working relationship with the external funding organisation
- Increased clarity around funding bodies expectations about clinical practice