



***Expression of Interest***



SUSTAIN

The Sydney Children’s Hospitals Network (SCHN) and the Central and Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network (CESPHN)/Southwestern Sydney PHN (SWSPHN)/South Eastern NSW PHN (SENSWPHN), are pleased to announce the SUSTAIN trial project, building on our Strengthening Care for Children trial. **Funded through a New South Wales Health Translational Research Grant (TRGS)**, we seek six practices in each PHN region to take part in this trial. The purpose of this document is to provide prospective applicants with information relating to the project, including requirements that successful applicants will undertake during the project period.

# About the Project

In 2018, the Strengthening Care for Children (SC4C) model of care was piloted in five GP practices across Melbourne’s metro and inner regional areas, looking to strengthen GP care for common childhood conditions and reduce Outpatient clinic and Emergency Department referrals. The findings of this pilot study showed that over 12 months fewer referrals were made by GPs to private paediatricians (pre: 34%; to post: 20%) and emergency departments (19% to 12%). Participating GPs reported improved confidence in paediatric care (pre: 88%; to post: 100%) whilst a greater number of families reported confidence in GP care for their child (78% to 94%). These findings have encouraged us to pursue a rigorous trial of the model of care.

The SUSTAIN trial will run in your practice for 12 months. The model will involve:

* Virtual GP-Paediatrician co-consulting fortnightly sessions for 12 months. The co-consulting sessions will allow the GP and Paediatrician to provide shared care to your paediatric patients.
* The Paediatrician will run monthly 60-minute virtual case study discussions
* The Paediatrican will be available during business day hours for email and phone support to GPs.
* Participating GPs will enrol **free of charge** in the Sydney Child Health Program (SCHP), formerly Diploma of Child Health (DCH) .

As part of the study, we ask GPs and practice staff to complete some evaluation surveys and complete data entry for paediatric consultations.

# Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to participate in the project, general practices must:

## Be located within and provide services to the Central and Eastern Sydney/Southwestern Sydney/ South Eastern NSW region.

1. **Be accredited or working towards accreditation.**

Accreditation is the process of external evaluation of general practices against the Standards for general practices (5th Edition), developed by the Royal College of General Practitioners (RACGP). Achieving independent accreditation against the Standards indicates the general practice is committed to providing high quality, safe and effective care to standards of excellence determined by the general

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practice profession. Further information on becoming an accredited general practice can be found

through the RACGP’s website [here](https://www.racgp.org.au/running-a-practice/practice-standards/accreditation). All general practices must be accredited to be eligible for the project.

1. **Have *Best Practice* or *Medical Director 3* software.**

The audit and data collection software that the project will use, GRHANITE, currently works best with these two versions of the general practice electronic record.

## Be able to complete the project over a 12-month period

Each practice will have the intervention for a 12-month period within the time frame of 2023 to 2025. The order in which practices receive the intervention will be randomised.

# Participation Criteria

A $1,000 grant will be provided to participating general practices for completion of the trial project requirements:

## General practices who participate in the project will be required to undertake the following:

1. **Provide protected time for staff and clinicians to participate in grant activity**

General practices must be able to demonstrate a commitment to participating in the project by allocating the identified dedicated general practice team members protected time to undertake project activities, such as fortnightly co-consultations where each GP should have time allocated for at least 1- 2 co-consults per fortnight with Paediatricians via telehealth, and time to attend monthly multi-topic case discussions.

## Install audit and data collection software

Data for the project will be collected using the audit and data collection software, GRHANITE, developed and managed by the Health and Biomedical Informatics Centre at the University of Melbourne. Once installed, the software does not require GP or administrative time to extract data, as the software pulls information directly from *Best Practice* and *Medical Director 3* medical records. The project team will extract non-identifiable data on every child seen by participating GPs, including diagnosis, prescriptions, testing ordered, and whether a referral was made or not. More information on the software, its capabilities and uses are available on the GRHANITE website, [here](https://www.grhanite.com/).

## Manage bookings and reminders for paediatrician appointments

During the main phase of the project, a poster advertising the project will be displayed in the waiting room of the practice. Practices will be required to have the **necessary telehealth platforms to support the virtual co-consultations and case discussions.** Administrative staff at each practice will be required to manage the bookings and reminders for these appointments. These sessions provide GPs with the opportunity to co-consult on the care of children and are a major component of the shared care model.

## Attend monthly multi-topic case discussions

Once per month, virtual 60-minute case discussions will be led by the paediatrician online, in which GPs and other allied health clinicians are invited to discuss paediatric cases.

## Participating GPs enrol in the Sydney Child Health Program (SCHP) free of charge

The SCHP (formerly the DCH) is a renowned modular online 1-year paediatric education program under the auspices of SCHN, and designed specifically for general practitioners. This is being offered free of charge for GPs participating in the trial.

## Receive regular general practice support visits by the project team

The project has a dedicated team who will support successful applicants throughout their participation in the project. Nominated practice staff will meet with the NSW project leads, Professor Raghu Lingam and Dr Annemarie Christie, the UNSW Project Manager and Research Assistant in an initial meeting at the practice. Initial meetings will provide an overview of the resources available through SCHN and the PHN that will support the practice throughout the project. Dedicated project staff will be available via phone and email throughout the project, to address any enquiries or issues that arise.

## Complete all evaluation requirements

All practices will be required to participate in the evaluation of the program. For GPs, this will include completing a short survey prior to the main phase of the project and a similar survey toward the end of this phase. Practice staff may be asked questions related to costs as part of the health economic analyses at completion of the project.

All practices will need to be willing to send a virtual link (via practice booking system) to families of children < 18 years who have attended the practice in the previous three months, both during the baseline and outcome phases of the project.

1. **Record coded diagnosis and referral activities for all children (<18 years ) seen by participating GPs**

Monthly audit and feedback cycles will be conducted by the project staff to ensure that data regarding diagnoses and referrals are being entered in sufficient detail to report on project outcomes. These audit cycles will likely require very little practice administrative time, as the information can be extracted remotely using the GRHANITE software.

1. **Receive a *HealthPathways* demonstration and utilise in practice**

*HealthPathways* is an online resource that gives clinicians up-to-date, localised clinical and referral information. The resource provides clear, concise guidance for assessing and managing patients with particular symptoms or conditions, as well as outlining the most appropriate referral pathways. Practices who participate in the project will receive an in-practice demonstration of *HealthPathways*, including an overview of the pathways relevant to the project. Automatic logins to the portal can also be created upon request.

## Share learnings, achievements and collaborate with others

In the spirit of quality improvement and collaboration, successful general practices will be invited to share learnings and achievements. This may occur at education events, general practice visits, on-line and or through PHN media publications.

# Assessment and Selection Criteria

General practice applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria listed above. A limit of six practices within each of the three PHNs can participate in this trial project. A randomization process will be used in selection and ordering the start of the 6 practices. Practices involved in other Quality Improvement initiatives through the PHN may be excluded to allow sufficient time to complete trial activities, however, interested practices are invited to apply and to discuss any concerns with the project team.

# Grant Funding and Reimbursement

* Quality Improvement grant paid to each GP practice at project milestones (Total of $1,000);
* GRHANITE software installed FREE;
* RACGP CPD points available.
* GP enrolment in SCHP – FREE (Usual cost ~$4000)

# Timeline

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| **Activity** | **Date** |
| **EOI applications open** | December 2022 |
| **EOI applications close** | 1 February 2023 |
| **Initial meeting with project team** | March/April 2023 |
| **All 6 GP practices enrolled in study** | March/April 2023 |
| **GRHANITE installed at each practice** | April/May 2023 |
| **Model of care roll out to GP practices (month-by-month)** | May/June 2023- Dec 2024 |
| **Project evaluation period** | Jan-June 2025 |

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