



## ***Background Information***

The Australian Government has made available \$11.5 million, as part of its Better Arthritis Care budget initiative, which aims to improve care for arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions through access to quality treatment, diagnosis and prescribing information, and the promotion and support of self management options such as improved nutrition and physical activity.

The Arthritis and Musculoskeletal conditions Quality Improvement Program (AMQuIP) aims to improve care for people with osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and osteoporosis by increasing the uptake of evidence into practice in the focus areas of the National Action Plan for Osteoarthritis, Rheumatoid Arthritis and Osteoporosis.

The focus areas in the National Action Plan are:

- Promoting healthy lifestyles and self-management to optimise health outcomes for osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and osteoporosis;
- Promoting best practice for the optimal management of osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, and osteoporosis;
- Promoting early and optimal management of rheumatoid arthritis to minimise joint damage;
- Promoting appropriate post fracture assessment to minimise further osteoporotic fractures;
- Promoting timely joint replacement for osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.

The objective of the AMQuIP program is to provide funding to relevant organisations to undertake projects that will improve practice in at least three of these focus areas, producing outcomes that can be translated and implemented nationally.

Following a call for Expressions of Interest by the Dept. of Health & Ageing (DoHA) in November 2004 submissions were received from 31 consortia. Of the 31 consortia, 29 full applications were received for assessment. The AMQuIP Assessment Panel convened in May 2005 to select successful projects. Eleven projects have been recommended for funding and will commence in June 2005 and concluded in May 2006.

### **Governance**

The Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from the key stakeholder organisations has been established to provide advice and

guidance to the Program Management Unit on the implementation of the Project and on clinical and consumer aspects of the Project.

A Program Management Unit (PMU) has been established within the Policy and Communications Department, Royal Australasian College of Physicians, to implement and manage the AMQuIP.

The PMU will implement and manage the AMQuIP quality improvement program addressing the focus area of the National Action Plan. The AMQuIP PMU will coordinate education and provide project support through various delivery methods, such as workshops, site visits, videoconferences, teleconferences, website and other electronic media.

Through these various activities, the AMQuIP PMU will provide Quality Improvement experts to advise and guide projects on project design and implementation. The consultant will also provide advice on the strength of the quality improvement elements of projects, including how quality improvement may be made sustainable. These activities are all intended to assist with regular communication between projects and the provision of support.

The AMQuIP PMU will also provide administrative support to all AMQuIP projects. All financial, reporting and publicity matters will be addressed directly by the AMQuIP PMU and through the AMQuIP PMU to the Commonwealth Government.

The Australian Institute of Primary Care located at Latrobe University in Victoria has been appointed as the AMQuIP Evaluator.

The evaluation team will assist each project to refine their evaluation strategy so that key evaluation questions can be addressed. Most importantly, the evaluators will give advice about the evaluation strategy for each project in relation to the development of the collaborative approach used in each project. In addition, evaluation advice may be given in relation to clinical processes and outcomes related to the health issue being examined. Advice of this nature may also be forthcoming from the AMQuIP PMU and Quality Improvement consultant. The evaluators and the AMQuIP PMU will liaise to ensure that advice and support is provided from the best source and in a coordinated manner.

For further information please visit [www.amquip.org.au](http://www.amquip.org.au)