Chasing the Sun - Virtual reference service

Memorandum of Understanding for Group Administrators

1. Introduction.

This memorandum of understanding (MOU) sets out the conditions to be observed by each group of participating libraries joining the Chasing the Sun Service, hereafter referred to as CTS. The MOU is a formal agreement between these groups of participating libraries on the goals, principles of collaboration, management procedures and governance of the CTS service. The Memorandum provides the framework by which these groups of libraries shall collaborate with each other in the delivery of the CTS service at the international level.

2. Background.

CTS represents an international collaboration of various groups of health libraries to provide an after-hours virtual reference service to clinicians in the regions of the participating libraries. The concept relies on health librarians in different time zones providing expertise for an after-hours virtual reference service to clinicians. CTS will assist in answering urgent or pressing information queries relating to direct patient care. The objective of CTS is to ensure that appropriately resourced and expert clinical information is readily available to support patient care, irrespective of time or location.


3.1 To enable appropriately organized groups of libraries to collaborate with each other at the international level in developing, promoting and maintaining a virtual reference service for patient care on an after-hours basis.

3.2 To share equally the responsibility for managing the technical, administrative and professional facets of the CTS virtual service around the globe.

3.3 To facilitate the exchange of information, expertise and training between participating groups of libraries thereby ensuring the
effectiveness, currency and reliability of the CTS service in the delivery of clinical information.

3.4 To promote internationally the CTS service and the accompanying role of health librarians as an integral and essential component in health care.

3.5 To cooperatively negotiate with relevant agencies, health professionals and suppliers in the selection, developments and promotion of virtual reference service software and associated enhancements.

4. **Management procedures / governance**

4.1 Each group membership will have an Administrator and a deputy Administrator from within the group. The combined hours of the Administrator and deputy Administrator should cover the majority of core business hours, Monday to Friday working hours. The appointment of the Administrator and deputy Administrator shall be at the discretion of the group.

4.2 Each group membership will contain a maximum of 25 account holders as mandated by the current software provider. It will be the Administrator’s responsibility to ensure that a minimum 20 of the 25 account holders positions are filled at all times. This is to allow for staff absences, leave, sick days etc. Each of the account holders must be a professionally qualified Librarian with relevant experience in answering reference questions of a medical and clinical nature. A single institution may have more than one Account Holder; however the Administrator should ensure that an adequate mix of expertise is available across account holders.

4.3 The Administrator will need to ensure that the account holders in their group are from a similar time zone with no more than a 1 hour time difference. This is to ensure coverage clarity.

4.4 The Administrator is responsible for contributing one (1) complete record to QuestionPoint KnowledgeBase per year. This will enable a saving on their group membership subscription price. If the Administrator fails to fulfil this role the additional cost will be passed onto their own membership group. The Administrator may delegate this task to a group member.

4.5 The Administrator is responsible for ensuring communication between their own group members and also with other Administrators of the Chasing the Sun Service via a discussion list. It is suggested that each Administrator set up a closed discussion list or email list for their own membership group.
4.6 The Administrator will be responsible for ensuring that all questions are answered by one of their group members. This may require the Administrator to intervene if a chat session is not taken up immediately by one of the members. The Administrator may delegate this responsibility to one of the group members.

4.7 The Administrator will be responsible for ensuring the annual payment to the software provider (currently OCLC QuestionPoint) is made on behalf of their group. The division of the group bill is a matter for determination by each group.

4.8 Administrators will be responsible for ensuring all of the group account holders understand the rules and intentions of Chasing the Sun and will be responsible for any delegations they make to group members. It is recommended that Administrators have their account holders sign a local MOU for participation in Chasing the Sun. A pro-forma MOU is attached as an appendix to this document as a guide.

4.9 Administrators will be responsible for organizing the training of account holders.

4.10 Administrators will need to advise other Administrators via the closed discussion list of dates and times when their coverage is unavailable. (ie public holidays). Administrators will be responsible for communicating this information to their own account holders. Each account holder will be responsible for advising their own users of times when the service will be offline.

4.11 Administrators will be the contact point for queries from both other administrators and their own membership.

4.12 Administrators will be responsible for the information relating to their group on the CTS web pages being up to date. Administrators will be expected to share in the development and enhancement of the CTS website.

4.13 Administrators will be responsible for managing the pro-forma messages and standard disclaimers sent with responses to client queries.

4.14 Administrators will participate in discussion groups and voting processes with regard to developments and changes to the Chasing the Sun Service. This includes the application of new groups to join CTS. Each administrator will exercise one vote on behalf of their respective groups.

4.15 The administrator will be responsible for ensuring that all chat and question form sessions established with account holders of their group comply with the conditions as described in attachment 1 (How to use Chasing the Sun)
5 Review.

The operation of the MOU will be reviewed by group Administrators annually.

Signed:

Group Administrator

Co-Administrator

Date: