

THE FOOD ALLERGY PREVENTION PROJECT – AN INITIATIVE OF THE NATIONAL ALLERGY STRATEGY

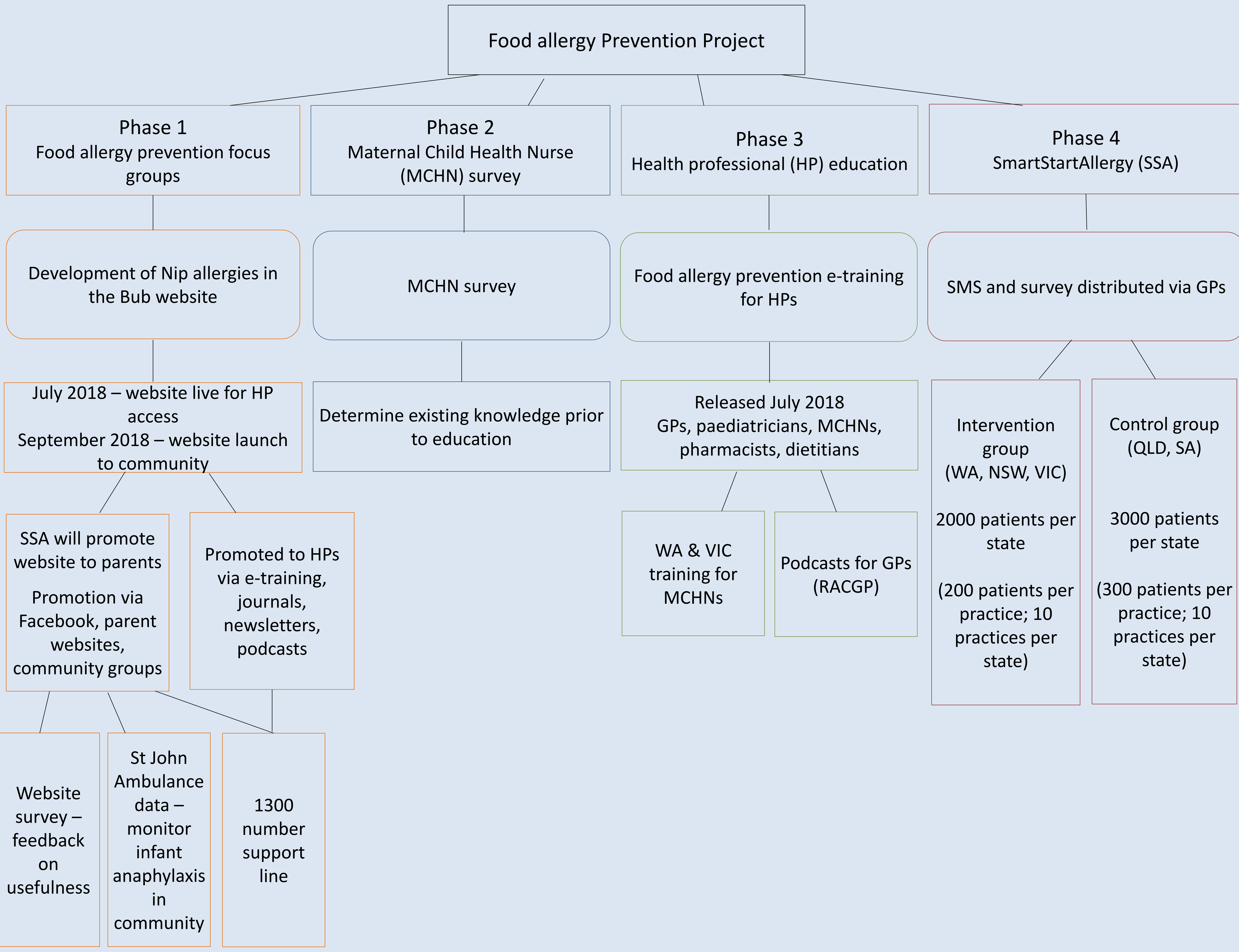
ABSTRACT

Background: The National Allergy Strategy (NAS) Food Allergy Prevention (FAP) project funded by the Australian Government Department of Health, aims to take a public health approach to implementing the ASCIA Guidelines for infant feeding and allergy prevention. The evidence-based ASCIA Guidelines were first released in 2008 and updated in 2016. The NAS FAP project aims to engage both consumers and health professionals (HP), including Maternal Child Health Nurses (MCHN), general practitioners (GP), pharmacists and dietitians.

Method: Implementation of the NAS FAP project comprises four phases: 1-Community website (including website survey) developed based on focus group consultation; 2- MCHN online survey of current infant feeding knowledge and practice; 3-HP education (online training; podcast; pre-post quiz); 4-SmartStartAllergy SMS message system generated through the patient's GP practice.

Results: Each phase identified: 1- the need to develop a FAP consumer education website and social marketing strategy; 2- the need to develop FAP education materials for MCHNs; 3- development of HP education resources including FAP e-training (including pre-post quiz to assess knowledge change); 4- development of the SmartStartAllergy SMS program (a modification of the SmartVax), to determine behaviour change (particularly for high risk infants) and monitor allergic reactions to common food allergens in those who choose to participate. During all phases, rates of infant anaphylaxis in Western Australia were monitored real-time, through St John Ambulance.

Discussion: The combined phases of the NAS FAP project provide a comprehensive public health approach to implementing the ASCIA Guidelines. This approach assesses resource requirements, trains health professionals and measures knowledge change. The FAP website provides consumer friendly information to encourage uptake of ASCIA Guidelines with a feedback survey in place to assess the website's effectiveness. A social marketing strategy actively promotes resources, while SmartStartAllergy assesses behaviour change and monitors allergic reactions in participants in addition to the state-wide St John Ambulance infant anaphylaxis monitoring.



The National Allergy Strategy is an initiative of the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) and Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia (A&AA). This project was funded by the Australian government.