

National Rural Health Alliance E-forum – 4 February 2000

In this issue

- \* Rural and Remote Pharmacy CPE/Professional Development Scholarship Scheme
- \* Rural and Remote Scholarships
- \* National Mental Health Report
- \* Book Review
- \* Study of Effects of GST on cost of healthy foods
- \* ALP calls for new approach to rural health
- \* New Regional Health Services
- \* Contribution and subscription information and disclaimer

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From: Stephanie Thrift <stephanie.thrift@guild.org.au>  
Subject: Rural and Remote Pharmacy CPE/Professional Development Scholarship Scheme

Scholarships are now available to provide financial support to encourage and enable pharmacists practicing in rural and remote communities, and pharmacists preparing to re-enter pharmacy practice in rural and remote areas, to participate in CPE and professional development opportunities.

Funding for the scholarships has been provided through the Commonwealth's Rural Health, Support, Education and Training (RHSET) program, as part of a broader collaborative project aimed at improving the recruitment and retention of pharmacists in regional areas.

The CPE and professional development activities that may be funded through this scheme include:

- ? costs associated with participation in CPE activities organised and managed by The Pharmacy Guild of Australia, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) national or state offices, the Australian College of Pharmacy Practice (ACPP), the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA), the Australian Institute of Pharmacy Management (AIPM), Rural Health Training Units, University Departments of Rural Health, and each of the Pharmacy Schools attached to Australian Universities;
- ? costs associated with participation in preceptor training activities;
- ? pharmacy workforce re-entry courses and other courses that will assist re-entry to pharmacy practice;
- ? costs associated with conference, seminar or workshop attendance, where the event has direct relevance to rural health service delivery; and
- ? costs associated with obtaining locum relief while undertaking CPE/professional development, but not including locum wages.

The first round of applications close on 25 February, 2000 and are open to all pharmacists in rural and remote areas.

Application forms, guidelines and eligibility criteria for the scholarships can be requested from The Pharmacy Guild of Australia. Please contact Stephanie Thrift on 02-6270 1888 or email [stephanie.thrift@guild.org.au](mailto:stephanie.thrift@guild.org.au)  
Application forms and associated documents are also available from the Guild's website at <http://www.guild.org.au/rural/scholarships.htm>

For more information, please contact

Kerrie Watson  
Rural and Remote Pharmacist Workforce Development Program  
The Pharmacy Guild of Australia  
National Secretariat  
PO Box 7036  
Canberra Mail  
Centre ACT 2610  
Ph: 02-6270 1888  
Fax: 02-6270 1800

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From: Michele Foley <[friends@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:friends@ruralhealth.org.au)>  
Subject: Rural and Remote Scholarships

As some of you will know, the National Rural Health Alliance has recently been awarded the coordinating role for the John Flynn Scholarship Scheme. The Scheme provides financial support to enable medical students to form a long-term relationship with a rural community and gain a better understanding of rural medical practice and non-metropolitan health care services.

The Alliance has an 1800 phone number for the students to enquire about the details of the JFS Scheme. This number is sometimes (mistakenly) used by people interested in obtaining a scholarship for studies in allied health, nursing, oral health, indigenous health or other related health fields.

To assist such callers, and also to put together a national list that will clearly be useful, the Alliance is looking to compile an up-to-date list of all available scholarships that relate to rural and remote health. The list will include scholarships offered by the States or the NT, by national organisations (eg: Country Women's Association or Royal Flying Doctor Service), or by local authorities or community groups.

Could you please forward details of any rural and remote scholarships of which you are aware, including the name and number of a contact person, to me, Michele Foley, at [friends@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:friends@ruralhealth.org.au).

Michele Foley  
friends, Manager

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From: Sue Mills <sue.mills@mhca.com.au>  
Subject: National Mental Health Report

The Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care has recently provided the MHCA with copies of the National Mental Health Report 1997. Copies of the Report may be obtained by telephoning 1800 066 247. Alternatively an Internet version of the Report along with other publications released under the National Mental Health Strategy may be found at the Internet site: <http://www.health.gov.au/hsdd/mentalhe>

Sue Mills  
MHCA Secretariat

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Subject: Book review - Aboriginal primary health care. An evidence-based approach. Sophia Couzos, Richard Murray. Melbourne: Oxford University Press 1999 (xxxi + 453pp., \$45.00). ISBN: 0 19 550836 X

The grim statistics of Aboriginal illness and death cry out for a different approach to health services for Aboriginal people. This publication was instigated and developed by the Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services Council. Such Aboriginal control is the highest qualification that the authors can have. They are also qualified in general practice, public health and rural and remote medicine. The book represents explicit acknowledgement that Aboriginal people have different medical needs from non-Aboriginal people. Although there are clearly important roles for health professionals in the improvement of Aboriginal health, most improvement will come from better education, nutrition, housing and employment opportunities. This book places emphasis on evidence.

Seven important issues in Aboriginal health are discussed in depth. The areas chosen are those in which Aboriginal people have substantially worse health than other Australians, in which there is controversy about management, but for which a useful amount of scientific evidence is available to help develop health service guidelines. The comprehensive references will enable readers to develop their own evidence-based practices; however, the reference list is somewhat daunting. For example, the chapter on ear health cites 643 references. Unfortunately, each citation is given a new number and the full title is not restated. The reader is left to manually search for the authors' names through hundreds of preceding references. In addition, some of the references are secondary sources. This leads to further work for the reader interested in quality evidence. Aboriginal health organisations currently developing management protocols will find it a useful work. Busy clinicians may use it to develop an evidence-based approach. However, it shows that we must still rely on sometimes contradictory opinion-based advice as we wait for evidence.

Rosalie Schultz Gove District Hospital, NT

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From: Roy Price <Roy.Price@ASPASH.HEALTH.nt.gov.au>  
Subject: Study of Effects of GST on cost of healthy foods

My name is Roy Price, Nutritionist and Dietitian living and working in Central Australia. I am currently enrolled in a Master of Public Health at the Menzies School of Health Research in Darwin.

The purpose of this message is to call for expressions of interest from nutritionists, nurses, doctors, police officers, public servants, teachers, health promotion and environmental health officers, and any other interested people who are interested in assisting me to conduct a study on the effect of the impending GST on the cost of healthy foods in the bush. The information gathered would be used for a research treatise for my MPH.

In general terms the hypothesis for the treatise would be that while in theory there will be no GST on fresh and unprocessed foods, the effect of a GST on transport, fuel, electricity, and other services will impact on the cost of healthy foods particularly in rural and remote areas.

I also suspect that reductions in income tax rates or increases in benefits from social security will be insufficient to offset the increased costs particularly to those with fixed low incomes.

The survey tool I intend to use is the NT Nutritionist's Market Basket Survey. The "basket" costs a selection of commonly available healthy core (and other) foods with sufficient energy and nutrients to meet the requirements of a family of 6 people for 14 days (see <http://welcome.to/dietinfo> for more information).

At present I plan to conduct the first survey in April/May 2000 and the next one April/May 2001. Doing the surveys at the same time of year over 2 years should help level out the effect of seasonal fluctuations in fruit and vege prices and also give the stores plenty of time to work out their GST stuff.

We in the NT have conducted the Market Basket Survey over the past three years and have it down to a fine art. The costing section usually takes no more than an hour. Reading and becoming familiar with the instructions will take 15 to 30 mins. Once the survey form is complete it will be just a matter of faxing it to me. Of course participants will receive a copy of the final report.

For the study to adequately reflect the effect of the GST on food prices it will be important that a representative sample of stores from all cities, towns and remote communities throughout Australia are included.

So, if you have an interest in participating in the study, or know someone who might be interested, particularly those of you who live and work in rural or remote areas of Australia, please reply to me at [roy.price@nt.gov.au](mailto:roy.price@nt.gov.au).

Also, if you belong to an email discussion group whose members may be interested in participating in the study I would be most grateful if you would forward this message on to them. The more people participating in the study the better.

In your reply, please provide your name and contact details including your town/city name and postcode. I look forward to hearing from you.

Roy Price  
Dietitian/Nutritionist/MPH Student  
Alice Springs  
0889516911  
0409695949  
roy.price@nt.gov.au

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### ALP CALLS FOR NEW APPROACH TO RURAL HEALTH

In a series of press releases recently, Federal ALP health spokesperson, Jenny Macklin, has called for a new approach to rural health.

In a statement issued on 31 January, Ms Macklin called for the Government to accept Labor's proposal for 100 bonded scholarships for young doctors. She also criticised the city-centric nature of the Government's "fixation" with the private health system. The statement is available at <http://www.alp.org.au/media/jmmsrh310100.html>

In a second statement on 2 February, Ms Macklin called on the Government to ensure that Victoria's small bush nursing hospitals survive. She was responding to reports of the impending closure of the Chiltern Bush Nursing Hospital. The statement is available at <http://www.alp.org.au/media/jmmsbnh020200.html>

A third statement released on 3 February criticised the Government for its failed initiatives on rural health, including the closure of the Health Jobs Australia Web site, the Register of Medical Opportunity, the Clinical Assistanships program, and that, in Ms Macklin's words, the "much-vaunted Rural Health Stocktake turned out to be a series of whistlestop tours by a single doctor flying around Australia" and "its report is now months overdue. This statement is available at <http://www.alp.org.au/media/jmmshja030200.html>

Meanwhile, in a statement released on 2 February, ALP regional development spokesperson, Martin Ferguson, criticised the Government for not increasing funding for nursing homes in rural and remote areas. Mr Ferguson's statement is available at <http://www.alp.org.au/media/mfmsnh020200.html>

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### NEW REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

The Federal Government has announced a \$137 million package aimed a providing vital health services to towns with populations of less than 5000 in regional Australia. The Regional Health Services program aims to encourage communities to play a significant role in the planning and management of health services. A percentage of the money will go to existing health facilities, including multipurpose services, but

\$42 million Australia-wide is earmarked specifically for new or improved regional health services.

The media statement by the Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government, Senator Ian Macdonald, on the program is at [http://www.dotrs.gov.au/media/macdon/archive/2000/feb\\_00/m14\\_2000.htm](http://www.dotrs.gov.au/media/macdon/archive/2000/feb_00/m14_2000.htm)

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#### CONTRIBUTION AND SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION AND DISCLAIMER

The NRHA e-forum is a forum for the expression of YOUR views. Contributions are sought on any topic relevant to rural health concerns. Please send contributions to the moderator, Jim Groves, at [grovesc@winshop.com.au](mailto:grovesc@winshop.com.au).

The NRHA e-forum is edited by a third party moderator, Jim Groves. As such, the Alliance does not control postings and the contents do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Alliance. Nor do postings necessarily reflect the view of Jim Groves or any organisation he is associated with. Jim Groves can be contacted at [grovesc@winshop.com.au](mailto:grovesc@winshop.com.au).

The e-forum is sent to a mailing list of the Alliance and those have indicated interest through the subscription box at the NRHA Web site (<http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>). This issue is going to 662 recipients. Please forward a copy to any colleague you think may be interested.

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