

National Rural Health Alliance E-forum - 4 August 2000

In this issue

- \* NRHA Statement on New Government Structure Will Help in the National Rural and Remote Health Effort
- \* Rural Health Scholarship Network Goes Online
- \* E-Health initiatives
- \* Next generation VC technology
- \* National Undergraduate Rural Health Conference website
- \* 6th National Rural Health Conference
- \* Contribution and subscription information and disclaimer
- \* Full text of NRHA statement on New Government Structure Will Help in the National Rural and Remote Health Effort

+++++

**NRHA STATEMENT ON NEW GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE TO HELP IN THE NATIONAL RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH EFFORT**

The Alliance released a statement on 31 July welcoming the new Government rural health structure. The statement is available at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/31700.htm>.

Dr Wooldridge's announcement is available at <http://www.health.gov.au/mediarel/yr2000/mw/mwhmc2002.htm>

+++++

From: Jenny Bolger <jenny@sugp.bal.cs.nsw.gov.au>  
Subject: RURAL HEALTH SCHOLARSHIP NETWORK GOES ONLINE

A new website has been launched that offers rural students a one-stop shop for information on health scholarships. The NSW Rural Doctors Network and the University of Sydney have jointly developed the Rural Health Scholarships Network website, launched at the recent NSW Farmers Association conference.

The site provides details of scholarships that assist rural students to study a health course and also offers information on scholarships to help both urban and rural tertiary health students gain rural experience as part of their clinical training. Funded by the Rural Health Support, Education and Training (RHSET) program, the site covers health disciplines offered at universities servicing students in NSW and ACT.

The site can be found at <http://www.nswrdn.com.au/scholarships/scholarships.cfm>

Any organisation wishing to promote a scholarship or bursary on this site can send the details via a form available on the Scholarships Network home page. Hyper-links to the site are welcomed.

Jenny Bolger  
Project Officer - Rural Careers

Department of General Practice  
University of Sydney  
Ph: (02) 9818 1400 Fax: (02) 9818 1343

+++++

## E-HEALTH INITIATIVES

A national health information network, HealthConnect, has been given the go-ahead by all Australian Health Ministers. The network will provide for the creation and storage of electronic health records as well as other health information. Access to this information will be only available to authorised users and participation will be voluntary. Dr Wooldridge's announcement is available at <http://www.health.gov.au/mediarel/yr2000/mw/mwhmc2005.htm>

The Australian Medical Association however expressed some reservations about the HealthConnect initiative. In particular, it described the development of regional health databases to facilitate the electronic exchange of medical records as unnecessary and called for increased privacy protection. The AMA statement is available at <http://domino.ama.com.au/DIR0103/MediaRel.nsf/2a81fe381a09008a4a2564a3000f6d05/b19f67fb739008e14a25692a0009f37a?OpenDocument>

Health Ministers also agreed to lend their support to a proposal to develop a system of electronic medication records. Called the Better Medication Management System (BMMS), this is a way to bring together currently fragmented medication record systems by using information technology to link patients, doctors, pharmacists and hospitals.

Meanwhile, e-health has moved towards the centre stage of the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care's deliberations with three changes to advisory structures. These are

? the ANZ Telehealth Committee would become a sub-committee of the National Health Information Management Advisory Council (NHIMAC). The ANZ Telehealth Committee advises Australian Health Ministers on national telehealth policies and strategies that are aligned with sound clinical practice and business objectives, and that link to the broader health reform and health information technology agendas -in particular, the strategic framework Health Online - A Health Information Action Plan for Australia. The Committee consists of representatives of Commonwealth, State/Territory and New Zealand Health Departments, the Commonwealth Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, a consumer representative, and a chair and deputy chair. This announcement is available at <http://www.health.gov.au/mediarel/yr2000/dept/mr20010.htm>

? a Health Supply Chain Reform Taskforce to develop an agreed national position on standardisation of business rules associated with using e-commerce, standard messaging guidelines for electronic transactions and an implementation plan (including financing options) and an education and training strategy. This

announcement is available at  
<http://www.health.gov.au/mediarel/yr2000/dept/mr20011.htm>

? a National Health Information Standards Advisory Committee to advise Health Ministers on priorities for national health information and communication technology standards. This announcement is available at  
<http://www.health.gov.au/mediarel/yr2000/dept/mr20012.htm>

+++++

From: Chris Ryan <[chris.ryan@vha.org.au](mailto:chris.ryan@vha.org.au)>  
Subject: Next generation VC technology - good news for telehealth

There is a launch of the "next generation" PictureTel videoconferencing technology in Melbourne on the 24th August 4-6pm at Melbourne Park. The event has nothing to do with TeleHealth Victoria.

I apologise if this bit of telehealth news may seem like an 'ad from our sponsors'. Given that videoconferencing is such a large part of telehealth however and that this new generation will solve a number of technical and usability challenges that we currently face, I thought you may be interested in taking a look.

You do need an invitation to attend but if you contact Lisa Granger of GVT on 03 9650 1033 or [lgranger@gvt.com.au](mailto:lgranger@gvt.com.au) <<mailto:lgranger@gvt.com.au>> and mention this message, she will send you one. Please do not respond to TeleHealth Victoria.

Below is a summary of the new technology that was recently given to VTAG (Victorian Telehealth Advisory Committee).

The new technology

- Is totally compatible with existing infrastructure and we will be negotiating an upgrade offer with suppliers
- Works with both ISDN and LAN's/WAN's and is easily interchangeable
- Allows for people to phone in to conferences
- Allows remote management
- Allows for dynamic bandwidth selection
- Differentiates between people and images with a dual stream, which means both can be viewed simultaneously
- XGA (computer) resolution - all images ie PowerPoint, anything computer based very high quality (medical images, patient data etc.)
- Significantly reduced delay
- Significant improvements in audio and video quality
- H.263+ video - very good at low bandwidths (128K)
- 14khz sound (CD quality is 15Khz)
- plug and play accessories, a single table top interface to connect PC's etc to - much easier
- Australian launch date 24th August 2000

Chris Ryan, Director  
TeleHealth Victoria

Level 3, 150 Albert Rd  
PO Box 365  
South Melbourne, Vic 3205  
Tel +61 3 9696 2799  
Fax +61 3 9690 0430  
MB 0414 587 608  
Web: [www.telehealth.com.au](http://www.telehealth.com.au) <<http://www.telehealth.com.au>>

+++++

### NATIONAL UNDERGRADUATE RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE WEBSITE

A website has been created for the National Undergraduate Rural Health Conference to be held in Toowoomba on September 9-13. The site is available at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/nrhn/>

+++++

### 6th NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

The 6th National Rural Health Conference is to be held at the National Convention Centre, Canberra, on 4-7 March 2001. The initial announcement and call for papers is at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/sixthconf/index.htm>.

### ABSTRACTS DEADLINE - 18 AUGUST

Dear All

Please remember that that the deadline for Abstracts for the 6th National Rural Health Conference (4-7 March 2001) is 18 August.

Please remember also that the Conference will, next year, for the first time incorporate the Infront-Outback Rural and Remote Health Scientific Conference (ie there will not be an Infront-Outback in Toowoomba in 2002).

Accordingly, additional space is being made on the program for March for the Infront-Outback health scientific papers. This is a major opportunity for you to report on your research to a wide and relevant audience, and also to publish. The two Infront-Outback streams will be subject to a referee process (courtesy NARHERO - the National Association of Rural Health Education and Research Organisations) and the publication of papers after the Conference will be further tightened to meet fully the publishing requirements of DETYA and the Universities and other research institutions.

Be assured that the 6th Conference in Canberra will also be conducive to a pleasant occasion, as well as a good opportunity to report to your target audience and to interact with them . There will be special Keynote Speakers and some emphasis again on 'Arts in Health', special events are being planned in conjunction with the Australian National Gallery and Screensound (the National Film and Sound Archive), and you will be able to view or even board balloons over the Parliamentary triangle. (Some of you will perhaps need to begin training immediately for the Dinner-Dance?) Special

efforts are being made to assist indigenous delegates, students and consumers to attend. There will be a major emphasis, in the other concurrent streams, on papers from consumers and their representatives, as requested after the Adelaide Conference. A Facilitator will be available to provide any support requested for the preparation and/or presentation of papers by Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders.

Organisation of the 6th Conference is well underway - but the overall quality and success of the Health Scientific Stream is in your hands - the researchers, clinicians, practitioners and managers.

PS We are aware that for those of you attending WONCA in Canada, 18 August may not be the most suitable date for the receipt of Abstracts. However we have tight deadlines to meet, and we would be very grateful if you would at least inform us by that date of your intention to submit an abstract immediately upon return from WONCA. If you do not do that we cannot guarantee a place for your abstract in the referee and selection process.

The best email contact for the 6th Conference is [conference@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:conference@ruralhealth.org.au)

+++++

#### 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 760 recipients. Please forward a copy to any colleague you think may be interested.

To subscribe, send a message saying "subscribe NRHA eforum" to [grovesc@winshop.com.au](mailto:grovesc@winshop.com.au). To unsubscribe, send a message saying "unsubscribe NRHA eforum" to [grovesc@winshop.com.au](mailto:grovesc@winshop.com.au).

+++++

#### NRHA Media Release

31 July 2000

New Government Structure Will Help in the National Rural and Remote Health Effort

The decision made last week by all Health Ministers in Australia to establish a new National Rural Health Policy Sub-committee is strongly supported by the NRHA, Australia's peak non-government rural and remote health body.

The new structure will be a Sub-committee of the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council and so will have a strong and continuing relationship with Health Ministers and their Departments at Commonwealth, State and Territory levels. This has the capacity to strengthen the overall national effort to improve health in non-metropolitan areas.

The States, Northern Territory and the Commonwealth have agreed that the new Committee will continue to meet regularly with the NRHA, as did its predecessor. "These face-to-face meetings are very important to the Alliance. They provide a great opportunity to exchange information and views with all health jurisdictions - the Alliance couldn't do its policy development or advocacy work properly without these relationships," according to Mr Gregory.

In another positive development for people in rural and remote area, Commonwealth Minister Michael Wooldridge has today confirmed the Budget decision to allocate \$14.2 over the next four years to a Chronic Disease Rural Strategy. It is understood that it will focus on asthma, heart disease, stroke, renal failure, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, cancers, and depression and disabilities caused by preventable injury such as farm accidents.

"The NRHA is looking forward to making a major contribution to decisions about exactly how this new program will operate," Mr Gregory said.

The non-government health sector as a whole is in a strong position to contribute to the design and delivery of support for chronic disease management. Recently a group of non-government organisations has come together to work more collaboratively on chronic disease management in rural and remote areas, and among indigenous populations. The NRHA is one of the members of that new collaboration.

Further information: Gordon Gregory, Exec. Dir., NRHA 02-6285 4660 (wk) or 02-6281 3611 (h)