

National Rural Health Alliance E-forum - 16 February 2001

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6TH CONFERENCE'S REVISED PROGRAM: STRONG INDIGENOUS AND GENERAL PRACTICE THEMES

The 6th National Rural Health Conference starts in two weeks.

The revised and comprehensive program is now available at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/sixthconf/index.htm>

There have been many changes since the previous Program. They include:

- * a Special Breakfast address on rural and remote volunteering from Senator Amanda Vanstone, the new senior Minister for Family and Community Services on Tuesday 6 March (2001 is the International Year of Volunteers).
- * thirteen papers from Aboriginal people, including Yvette Roe from Derby, Colleen Prideaux from Ceduna, and Marion James from Cairns; and another 15-18 Concurrent Papers that will be presented by non-Indigenous people but are about aspects of Indigenous health.
- * a strong Opening Session on Sunday 4 March at 5.00pm that includes a Welcome Ceremony with Matilda House and the Woden Valley Youth Choir, and Keynote Addresses from Julian Disney, Director of the UNSW Social Justice Project, and Brian Fisher, Director of the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE), plus an Indigenous spokesperson.
- * The Panel Session on Monday 5 March will feature Jane Bennett (a rural leader from Tasmania who is a cheesemaker, and who was a Member of the Besley Committee of Inquiry into telecommunications), Michael Raper (President of the Australian Council of Social Service - ACOSS), Puggy Hunter (President of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO), a nurse (details to be confirmed!), Dr Jack Best (author of the Rural Health Stocktake), Dr Paul Hemming (President of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners - RACGP), and Megan McNicholl, National President of the Isolated Children's Parents' Association.
- * Jill Maxwell, Chair of the General Practice Partnership Advisory Council (GPPAC), will be talking briefly about GPPAC and also about the new Board of General Practice, Education and Training.
- * An important new book from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and Sydney University will be launched at the Conference. It is called "It's different in the bush: a comparison of general practice activity in metropolitan and rural areas of Australia, 1998-2000". The launch will be by Richard Madden, Director of the AIHW, Helena Britt, Director of the AIHW General Practice Statistics and Classification Unit at the University of Sydney, and

Professor Ian Wronski, President of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine.

- * The 'Night at the Theatre' (Monday 5 March) will feature Alan Hopgood in scenes from "For Better, For Worse "(about prostate cancer), a Korean Dance Troupe from the National Multicultural Festival, and Titbits (about breast cancer). (Despite the focus on these two important diseases, a memorable evening and a good time is guaranteed!)
- * There will be an international video hook-up with Dr Ray Pong, Director of Northern Health Development in Sudbury, Ontario.
- * There will be a concurrent session on "Alternative Pathways to GP Fellowship".
- * Richard Trudgen, from Aboriginal Resources and Development Services in Darwin, author of "Why Warriors Lie Down and Die", will be present to talk to people about his work and book.
- * Fiona O'Loughlin and Martin Pearson are team captains for the debate; it will be both instructive and good fun, led by these two professional comics!
- * Kerry Arabena is running a workshop in Channel 7 on management of episodes of violence in remote areas.

The core of the Conference remains the 120 papers in Concurrent Sessions - and the work to develop resolutions about how to improve health outcomes.

The conference brochure and program is available at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/sixthconf/index.htm> and the program is at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/sixthconf/program.htm>. The exhibition and sponsorship brochure for exhibitors is at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/sixthconf/exhibition.htm>

Registration on-line is encouraged. Online registration is available at <https://www.amlink.com.au/secure/nrhc01.htm>

The full registration fee is \$660.

Further information: Kate Henley, Conference Secretary, ph 02 6285 4660, email conference@ruralhealth.org.au

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From: Shirley Preston <preston@octa4.net.au>
Subject: Writing for Publication Workshop

Date: Saturday 3th March 2001 - 9.00 am - 4.00 pm.
Venue: Rydges Canberra
Cost: \$80.00, includes morning and afternoon teas and lunch.

The aim of this interactive workshop is to encourage rural and remote health clinicians to publish quality research, manuscripts and papers. It is aimed at novice researchers. The informative sessions will demystify and explain in simple terms the process of writing for journal publication. The workshop is presented by members of the Editorial Board of the Australian Journal of Rural Health. However, the information is applicable to writing for publication in any journal.

The workshop is running in conjunction with the 6th National Rural Health Conference. Registrations can be made by contacting the conference organisers.

More information on the content of the workshop is available from Shirley Preston at preston@octa4.net.au

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RURAL HEALTH IN THE STATE ELECTIONS

Each of the four major political parties that fought the WA and Queensland State elections over the past month announced policy commitments relevant to rural health. Two - the Queensland National-Liberal Coalition and the Western Australian Liberal Party - issued policy statements specifically about rural health.

The Queensland Coalition policy includes establishment of a Deputy Director-General position responsible for regional, rural and remote health; strengthening the role of the District Health Councils; a "Charter of Rural Health"; creation of a Centre for Rural Health; and a range of other measures. The Coalition policy is available at [http://www.npa.org.au/February%205,%20Simpson,%20Coalition%20announces%20\\$17%20m%20program%20to%20improve%20rural%20health%20access.PDF](http://www.npa.org.au/February%205,%20Simpson,%20Coalition%20announces%20$17%20m%20program%20to%20improve%20rural%20health%20access.PDF)

The Queensland ALP included one specific rural health initiative in its overall health policy, viz, funding for advancing nursing practice. The Queensland ALP policy statement is available at http://www.beattie2001.net/02_commitments/pdf_files/health.pdf

On the other side of the country, the Western Australian ALP included extra funding for the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme. The WA ALP health policy is available at <http://www.votelabor.org/policy.asp?val=12>

The WA Liberal Party policy announced a number of commitments covering capital works in regional areas as well as specific rural health initiatives. Its policy document is available at <http://www.wa.liberal.org.au/Policies/Policy-RuralHealth.html>

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From: Kylie Thomas KylieT@im.com.au
Subject: AICAFMHA Conference

The Fourth National Conference, Infant Child and Adolescent Mental Health - Building Bridges: Promoting Mental Health for Families and Communities is to be held on March 28-31 2001 at the Carlton Crest Hotel in Brisbane.

Further information is available from <http://www.aicafmha.net.au>

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NEW E-PHARMACY ALLIANCES

(Reprinted from Computachem E-Newsletter of February 2001. You can subscribe to the E-Newsletter by sending a single word e-mail "Subscribe" to neilj@computachem.com.au)

"It is refreshing to see that Australian pharmacists are beginning to experiment with various models of Internet alliances, and engage e-commerce in a progressive and professional manner. One of the latest entrants is eMedical Online Pharmacy, which began life in "bricks and mortar" form as Keilor Village Pharmacy, in Victoria.

The Internet site originated as a totally medical site, developed by a group of Melbourne doctors in combination with various IT specialists."

Follow the development of two different pharmacy alliances and see where they lead. Will these new entrepreneurs stake out market shares not even thought about by other pharmacists? They stand a very good chance and appear to have developed a resource to challenge Pharmacy Direct head on. Read more at <http://www.computachem.com.au/enewsletter/ed20.html>

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"IT HEALTH FUNDING CHRONIC"

(An extract from an article in The Australian of 13 February 2001 by David Hellaby). AUSTRALIA is not spending enough on health-related IT, if overseas experience is any guide. Last year we spent only about 1.5 per cent of our annual public health budget on IT, compared with more than 2 per cent in the United Kingdom and about 4 per cent for the United States.

The Collaborative Health Informatics Centre (CHIC) has called for an increase in spending on both health IT and research and development of health IT tools. A CHIC study into health IT in Australia and New Zealand last year highlighted the potential the sector, but found the lack of investment in information technology by health organisations was stifling it and preventing it realising its export potential.

The Federal Government earlier this month turned down an application for funding to establish a telemedicine co-operative research centre in Queensland. Among the perceived reasons for the knockback were a lack of likely private enterprise participants and commercial applications for its research.

But Professor Peter Yellowlees, who spearheaded the push for the CRC, is unlikely to give up. Queensland has one of the world's largest and most advanced telemedicine networks, and growing numbers of local IT companies are developing applications for the health industry. That is one of the reasons CHIC was established in Brisbane in 1998, with the help of a \$2.3 million grant from the Queensland Government. The centre is a national non-profit organisation created to liaise between the health and IT&T industries, and to push the use of health informatics.

Queensland Health and Queensland University established a telemedicine network in 1995, and the state now has more than 160 videoconferencing sites - from Torres Strait to the Gold Coast - providing clinical supervision and peer support, education and administrative back up.

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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.

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.

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 862 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. To unsubscribe, send a message saying "unsubscribe NRHA eforum" to grovesc@winshop.com.au.