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HEALTH SPENDING PASSES \$60 BILLION

Spending on health in Australia has exceeded \$60 billion for the first time, according to the latest figures released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

The 2000-01 expenditure figure of \$60.8 billion was \$5.1 billion more than the previous year, and represents a real growth rate of 5.1%, significantly higher than the 10-year trend of 4.4%.

Health expenditure Australia 2000-01 also reports that health expenditure as a proportion of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is now at 9.0% compared to 8.8% in 1999-00.

Report co-author Lindy Ingham said that Our health spending as a proportion of GDP is below levels in both the United States and Canada, and European OECD countries with the exception of the UK.

'Expenditure on pharmaceuticals in particular grew rapidly in 2000-01, rising by 14.6%, while hospital and medical services grew by 7.2% and 7.6% respectively.'

The Commonwealth's share of public hospital funding was 48% in 2000-01, with the States' share falling each year from 47% in 1997-98 to 43% in 2000-01. Public hospital funding by non-government sources was 8.5% in 2000-01.

The AIHW statement is available at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/media/2002/mr020905.html> and the publication is available at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/hwe/hea00-01/index.html>

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Interested in becoming a "friend" of the Alliance? Become more involved with the work of the Alliance by becoming a "friend". "friends" support the Alliance by being an integral part of the Alliance's policy and evaluation process. They also receive other benefits. For more information on membership see <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/friends.htm>

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Live in northern Sydney to avoid an early death
(Extract from Sydney Morning herald, 6 September 2002)

Research by Dr Kevin McCracken of Macquarie University's Department of Human Geography, has found less Sydney residents died prematurely, especially in the northern suburbs, when compared to the rest of NSW. In the State's far west, half of all deaths were found to be premature, compared to one third in the remainder of NSW and only 25 per cent in the city. The full article is available at <http://www.smh.com.au/text/articles/2002/09/05/1031115912321.htm>

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PARTYline is the official newsletter of the National Rural Health Alliance. Keep up to date with rural health policy information and good news stories on living and working in the rural health community. Available online on <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/partyline.htm> or receive a hard copy by emailing michele@ruralhealth.org.au

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GOVT MUST FIND WAY TO END CRITICAL DOCTOR SHORTAGE, SAYS NACCHO HEAD

The Chairperson of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO), Ms Pat Anderson, has called on the Federal Government to find ways that would attract doctors to work in the Aboriginal health sector.

"The shortage of doctors is critical," Ms Anderson told an AMA (NT) conference in Darwin. "Recent evidence from the NT Remote Health Workforce Agency points to a significant shortage of GPs across all areas of the territory. For example, the Palmerston area of Darwin, which has a significant proportion of Darwin's Aboriginal population, has some of the worst GP ratios in the country with 1 GP for every 2,949 residents. This problem of chronic undersupply is repeated across all regions of the Territory.

"The story is the same throughout most of Australia. The overwhelming majority of our member services report difficulties in the recruitment and retention of doctors in the Aboriginal health sector, Ms Anderson added. "Part of the problem is money for most Aboriginal Health Services are simply not funded to be able to pay the kind of salaries necessary to compete with private practice or government positions.

Ms Anderson said that one way to begin to address the situation was to extend the remote and rural incentive programs to all Aboriginal health services, no matter where they were located.

The full text of the NACCHO statement is available at <http://www.naccho.org.au/mediarelease120902.html>

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RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH WORKERS - BETTER CONNECTED, BETTER SUPPORTED

The Federal Minister for Health and Ageing, Senator Kay Patterson, has announced funding of \$1.2 million to extend the Bush Crisis Line, a telephone counselling service that offers support to rural and remote health practitioners and their families. The full text of Senator Patterson's statement is available at <http://www.health.gov.au/mediarel/yr2002/kp/kp02091.htm>

Senator Patterson also announced funding of \$7.5 million each for the Broken Hill University Department of Rural Health and the Geraldton Rural Health Education Centre. Her statements are available at <http://www.health.gov.au/mediarel/yr2002/kp/kp02092.htm> and <http://www.health.gov.au/mediarel/yr2002/kp/kp02093.htm>.

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BUSH CRISIS LINE - 1800 805 391

Bush Crisis Line is a twenty-four hour confidential telephone support and debriefing service for multi-disciplinary remote health practitioners and their families. It is staffed by qualified psychologists with remote and cross-cultural experience, is toll free and available from anywhere in Australia. For more information http://www.crana.org.au/pandp_psn.html

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The "Australian Journal of Rural Health" is a refereed journal with a national and international reputation for quality scholarship. Its focus is multi-disciplinary and it includes articles of interest to general practitioners, nurses, allied health professionals, pharmacists, health administrators, universities and rural health units. Reduced rates apply to members of some organisations. For more information see <http://www.blackwell-science.com/ajr>

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From: Elizabeth Fudge (CAMHS) <fudgee@wch.sa.gov.au>
Subject: Discussion Document regarding Children of Parents With A Mental Illness released for comment.

A Discussion Document has been released by the team from the national COPMI (Children of Parents With A Mental Illness) initiative. Service providers, mental health service consumers, carers, and young people have been invited to comment on the document, which is downloadable from the AICAFMHA (Australian Infant Child Adolescent and Family Mental Health Association) website <http://www.aicafmha.net.au/copmi/> or contact Sue Garvin phone (08) 8132 0786, e-mail secretary@aicafmha.net.au for a copy to be sent to you. Feedback on the document is due by October 25th 2002.

For people who wish to provide verbal feedback on the COPMI Discussion Document, a telephone feedback-line will be staffed on Wednesday 16th October during the following hours:

Eastern States: 4.30 – 9.30pm
SA and NT: 4.00 – 9.00pm
Western Australia: 2.30 – 7.30

People from all states can call the one number: (08) 8161 6190. We will be happy to return your call at the project's expense - simply advise us of your return 'phone number and area code as soon as your call is answered.

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7th NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

The 7th National Rural Health Conference is to be held at the Grand Chancellor in Hobart Tasmania from 1 - 4 March 2003. Registration for the Conference will be available in September 2002. This will include online registration for the first time.

The Conference website is at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/seventhconf/seventhconf.htm> and includes information and a booking form on the exhibition.

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CONTRIBUTION AND SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION AND DISCLAIMER

The NRHA e-forum is edited by a third party moderator, Jim Groves. Contributions are sought on any topic relevant to rural health concerns. Please send contributions to the moderator at grovesc@winshop.com.au.

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 1,167 recipients. Please forward a copy to any colleague you think may be interested.

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