

National Rural Health Alliance E-forum – 14 March 2003

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From: Gordon Gregory <nrha@ruralhealth.org.au>
Subject: 7th Conference wrap-up

The 7th National Rural Health Conference was underway in Hobart two weeks ago.

The Program for the event is at
<http://www.nrha.net.au/nrhpublic/publicdocs/conferences/7thNRHC/program.htm>

The Communiqué and all recommendations are at
<http://www.nrha.net.au/nrhpublic/publicdocs/conferences/7thnrhc/communique.htm?>

ABC radio's coverage of the Conference can be seen and heard at:
<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/ruralhealth2003/stories/s798397.htm>
<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/ruralhealth2003/>
http://www.abc.net.au/rural/ruralhealth2003/indexes/papers_default.htm
<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/telegraph/index/weekly.htm> - see Monday 3 March - the whole program was from the Conference

All of the Alliance's Conference Media Releases will be on the homepage soon.

WORK ON CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Immediately following the Conference there was a Workshop to consider the priority recommendations ('From Energy To Shared Action'). A draft set of recommendations from that Workshop has been sent to participants in it. In some cases the Workshop confirmed the Conference positions; in others, not. The Alliance and other bodies will take the Workshop's views as the starting point for action.

The Workshop endorsed positions on:

- * the urgent need to improve the status of Indigenous health, including through better evaluation of the performance of ‘mainstream health services’, greater use of joint planning forums, and ensuring Indigenous content in curriculums;
- * the need for data on the rural and remote health workforce that are timely, have accepted validity and enable ‘drilling down’ for particular geographic areas and health professions; (it was suggested that the NRHA establish a Working Party on the matter);
- * a collaborative rescue package for procedural medical services in rural areas (obstetrics, anaesthetics and general surgery);
- * the concern that taxonomies currently used for funding and resource allocation for rural and remote health (ARIA, RRMA and ASGC) be reassessed as to their appropriateness as planning, resource allocation and reporting tools;
- * support for the seven goals and eight principles of “Healthy Horizons Outlook 2003-2007”;
- * support for the 7-Point Action Plan on Nursing in Rural and Remote Areas - and the point that such a range of incentives would have significant and beneficial impacts on health professionals from other disciplines; (there was also support for the proposal from the Allied Health Conference in Adelaide in February 2003 to convene a summit on issues affecting rural and remote allied health professionals);
- * in light of the impact of the drought and bushfires, a call on governments to give special consideration to people and communities adversely affected, by augmenting programs for income security, disaster relief, housing, transport, education, physical infrastructure and social capital (such as arts-in-health);
- * a funded national strategic approach to rural and remote health research, building on the existing research infrastructure in rural, regional and remote areas;
- * the need for more attention in Australia to early intervention in child and adolescent health; and
- * increased commitment to a comprehensive system of aged care and other services for the elderly in rural and remote areas.

The details of these recommendations will be on the Alliance’s homepage in the near future.

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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>

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RURAL COMMUNITIES TO BENEFIT FROM NATIONAL APPROACH TO SUSTAIN PROCEDURAL MEDICINE

A symposium organised by the Rural Doctors Association of Australia, the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine and the Australian Rural and Remote Workforce Agencies Group has come up with a raft of recommendations to stem the decline of obstetric, anaesthetic and surgical services to rural communities. The full text of the joint statement is available at <http://www.rdaa.com.au/>

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RURAL HEALTH IN THE NSW ELECTION

In his Country Policy Speech, Premier Bob Carr committed his Government to additional ambulance officers, a mobile surgical service, renal services, and extended coverage of medical indemnity insurance. The full text of his speech is available at http://www.nswalp.com/alpweb/2003electionpolicies/Country_Policy2003.pdf

The National Party meanwhile has committed itself to restore community ownership and involvement in public hospitals by abolishing current Area Health Service Boards and creating local Hospital Boards and District Hospitals Boards. The full text of the Nationals' statement is at http://www.nswnationals.org/html/appointing_local_hospital_boards.cfm

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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> or receive a hard copy by emailing michele@ruralhealth.org.au

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CARING FOR THE RURAL DOCTOR

(Extract from "Regional Health Check", February 2003, <http://www.ruralhealth.gov.au/news/rhc.htm>)

General practitioners constantly put the health care needs of the patient and the community as a first priority often on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

But who is the doctor's doctor?

As part of the Dr Doc Program, checkups are being conducted by a pool of trained, urban-based physicians and GPs who travel out to rural areas on weekends conducting the discreet and confidential checkups for the rural GP and their family.

The Program is proving to be a successful and accessible support network for rural medical families caring for their health and wellbeing.

Users of the visiting health check-ups, openly expressed their gratitude: “The visiting doctors were great”; “The long appointment was very useful”; “This is a great idea I am going to let my colleagues know”; and “The visit proved to be very timely”.

The visiting doctors have also responded enthusiastically. “I am willing to provide a more regular rural service”; “It is a necessary service which was a very interesting experience”; and “I have a greater respect for the rural GP and the daily challenges they face”.

The checkups have now been conducted for two years and statistics show that 20 percent of rural GP’s have accessed the service for a health check. The Program ultimately aims to highlight the importance of caring for their own, and their family’s, health and wellbeing by encouraging GPs to find their own doctor.

Dr Doc Program is a GP retention initiative of the South Australian Rural Doctors Workforce Agency. It is funded by the Department of Health and Ageing as part of the Rural and remote General Practice Program aiming to retain medical practitioner’s in rural areas. The Program is managed by Rural Doctors Workforce Agency.

For more information www.ruraldoc.com.au or contact the Rural Doctors Workforce Agency on T: 08 83577444.

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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 and rural 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_bcl.html

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NHMRC ANNOUNCES INDIGENOUS HEALTH INITIATIVES (FED)

Over the next three years, the National Health and Medical Research Council will increase its focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. The initiatives were discussed at the Council's recent meeting and the results were presented to the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council and the Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health. The Council has committed to increase its investment into Indigenous health research at least five per cent of its funding. The full text of the NHMRC statement is available at <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/media/rel2003/indigini.htm>

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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: Wal Taylor <w.taylor@cqu.edu.au>
Subject: Call for Abstracts - ITiRA 2003 - Caloundra, Australia

The organising committee of the Information Technology in Regional Areas Conference (ITiRA) invites submission of abstracts for its 2003 Conference.

Dates: 5 - 7 November 2003

Venue: Rydges Oasis Resort, Caloundra, Queensland Australia

Abstracts due: 28 March 2003

Further details available at: <<http://itira.cqu.edu.au/2003>> or please email enquiries-itira2003@cqu.edu.au

The ITiRA 2003 Conference explores strategies that link ICT enhanced economic, social and cultural development efforts with emerging opportunities in such areas as electronic commerce, community and civic networks, telecentres, electronic democracy, on-line participation, self-help and virtual health communities, advocacy, cultural enhancement and others. We see ITiRA 2003 as being of interest to practitioners, and policy makers in both developed and developing countries, and are particularly interested to share ideas across practice, research and policy. Hence, ITiRA 2003 encourages submissions for double blind refereed papers as well as practitioner case studies and policy development.

Tracks include Community Informatics, IT for Developing Countries, IT Indigenous Voices on IT for Indigenous Peoples, IT for Regional Culture, Media and the Arts, IT for Regional Education and Training, IT for e-Democracy, IT for Regional Health, IT for Regional Industry and e-Commerce, IT for Tourism in Regional Areas, IT for Social Marketing in Regional Areas.

Important Dates:

Invitation to submit: 17 April 2003

Refereed papers due: 30 May 2003

Acceptance or Rejection: 12 July 2003

Final papers due: 15 August 2003

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From: Elizabeth Sturgeon <elizabeth.sturgeon@hunter.health.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: Two more forthcoming ARCHI seminars

1. Innovations in Health Workforce Management, 23rd/24th April 2003, Alice Springs Convention Centre, Alice Springs NT

2. Innovations in Health Service Delivery in Rural and Remote Australia - Call for Papers - 30th May 2003 - Australian War Memorial Telstra Theatre, Canberra ACT

Further information is available from me on (02) 4985 3371 or via email.

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From: Josie Brooker <jbrooker@doh.health.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: ACHSE (NSW) State Conference 2003

The Australian College of Health Service Executives (NSW Branch) State Conference is to be held on Friday, 4 April at Rydges-Jamison Hotel, Sydney. Associated with the conference is the "Implementing an Integrated Risk Management Strategy" Workshop to be held on Thursday, 3 April at the Rydges-Jamison Hotel, Sydney. Registrations close Friday, 27 March 2003.

Information is available from <http://www.achse.org.au/nsw/upcoming.html>

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KIMBERLEY MAN NEW CHAIR OF NACCHO

Mr Henry Councillor, 41, a Jaru man from the Kimberley Region of Western Australia became the Chairman of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation. The full text of the NACCHO announcement is available at <http://www.naccho.org.au/mediareleases.html>

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Extract from ABC Health-Updates
(<http://abc.net.au/health/subscribe.htm>)

NEW - HEALTH MATTERS: REGIONS

Australians living outside the major cities face special challenges when it comes to health. Our new 'Regions' section explores health issues relating to a diverse range of people, places, and lifestyles. Peter Lavelle asks why rural and regional communities have poorer health than their urban counterparts. Rural nurse practitioner Julie Scott describes her typical working day. Cathy Johnson gives us the run-down on allied health services, like physios and dieticians. Plus health stories featured on ABC regional radio, and transcripts from other ABC programs about rural and Indigenous health. And don't forget the Events Diary, where you can find health events happening next door or across the country - or add your own. <http://www.abc.net.au/health/regions/default.htm>
<http://www2b.abc.net.au/health/diary/index.htm>

JOURNALS GUILTY OF 'INSTITUTIONAL RACISM' SAYS EDITOR (Health News: 04/03/2003)

The top medical journals are biased against diseases of the poor, have few editors from the Third World, and are probably guilty of 'institutional racism', a prominent journal editor has argued. http://www.abc.net.au/science/news/health/HealthRepublish_794950.htm

COUNTRY LIFE: A HEALTH HAZARD? (Health Matters Feature: 06/03/2003)

Stressed city folk like to think that rural living is a calmer, healthier alternative. But the facts are otherwise. What's so toxic about country living? <http://www.abc.net.au/health/regions/features/countrylife/default.htm>

NURSE ON THE ROAD (Health Matters Feature: 06/03/2003)

Nurse practitioners have additional training to allow them to prescribe some drugs and order tests, relieving some of the strain on country areas that are short on GPs. Join a rural nurse practitioner for a day to see what challenges she faces in an 'office' that can be 100km from home. <http://abc.net.au/health/regions/features/nurseprac/default.htm>

NEW DIMENSIONS PEOPLE: Aboriginal Birth Ceremony

Wednesday 12 March, 6:30pm, ABC TV

The first of two programs exploring the diverse ways in which we celebrate pivotal moments in our lives. We look at an Aboriginal birth smoking ceremony in the Kimberley. The smoking ceremony is seen as an important way to keep their children healthy, as well as to keep their traditional way of life alive. http://www.abc.net.au/dimensions/dimensions_people/default.htm

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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 or use the eforum contribution box at the NRHA website, <http://www.ruralhealth.org.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.

This issue is going to 1,528 email addresses. Please forward a copy to any colleague you think may be interested.

To subscribe or unsubscribe, use the “sign up” box at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>. The archive of the newsletter is available at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au> under “Publication & News”.