

National Rural Health Alliance E-forum – 10 October 2003

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POVERTY AND CHILD HEALTH IN RURAL AND REMOTE AUSTRALIA

Calls for greater national commitment to children in poverty and in particular to those in rural and remote areas will be highlighted at a Forum in Canberra on Monday 15 October. The full text of the statement is available at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au> and is reprinted below.

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PARTYline Issue No.16 - OUT NOW. 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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From: Gordon Gregory <gg@ruralhealth.org.au>
Subject: Plans for an Alliance submission on privatisation of infrastructure

There is a House of Reps Inquiry into the impact on regions of the privatisation of infrastructure. It defines 'infrastructure' as hard economic infrastructure - transport, power etc - with no mention of other types of infrastructure.

Submissions are due by 14 November. The Alliance has produced earlier pieces on telecommunications, CSOs and regional development to draw on. Would you please send your thoughts on what might be included in such a submission within the next week. What have been the direct impacts of privatisation (eg of transport) on patient access to health services? Access to electricity in more remote areas?

The Committee's background paper is at
<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/trs/privatisation/prpaper.pdf>

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NRHA SUBMISSION TO SENATE INQUIRY INTO TELSTRA PRIVATISATION

On 2 October 2003 the NRHA appeared before the Senate inquiry into Telstra privatisation. The Alliance's opening statement and its submission to the inquiry is available at
<http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>

The ABC described the Submission as saying that "there's no way phone services in country areas will be maintained if Telstra is fully privatised. The ABC report is available at
<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/stories/s958486.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 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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From: Don Perlgut <ceo@rhef.com.au>
Subject: Satellite Television Broadcast – Tuesday 21 October 2003 - "Breathing Easy: Respiratory Disease in Indigenous Children"

This program will:

- * Provide an update on the prevalence of asthma and other respiratory infections in Indigenous and non-indigenous children in Australia as well as the hospitalisation rate for both
- * Outline the major respiratory problems for Indigenous children and their causes
- * Discuss hospitalisation rates of Indigenous children with respiratory infections and asthma and how they can be reduced through: Recommended preventative measures; Latest management and treatment strategies; and Follow-up

Chair: Dr Norman Swan, Presenter of the Health Report on ABC Radio National
Chiquita Bicknell, Aboriginal Health Worker, Anyinginyi Congress, Tennant Creek, NT
Sabina Knight, Centre for Remote Area Nursing of Australia, Senior Lecturer, Centre for Remote Health, Alice Springs, NT
Dr Brent Masters, Deputy Director, Respiratory Medicine, Royal Children's Hospital, Brisbane
Indigenous rural GP – to be confirmed

Watch this program:

- * At a Rural Health Satellite Network site on Tuesday 21 October, Channel 4, at 8pm Eastern Standard Time in ACT, NSW, QLD & VIC, 7.30pm Central Standard Time in SA and NT, 7.00pm

Daylight Saving Time in TAS, 6.00pm Western Time repeated at 8.00pm on Channel 23 Western Time in WA

* Repeated at a Rural Health Satellite Network site on Friday 24 October*

* On VIDEO and on the INTERNET

To RSVP or for information on videos and your nearest viewing venue in the Rural Health Satellite Network, contact the Foundation on Ph (02) 6232 5480 or Fax (02) 6232 5484 or visit our website at <http://www.rhef.com.au>

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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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From: Tanya.Boston@health.gov.au <Tanya.Boston@health.gov.au>
Subject: Bonded Medical Places Scheme

Thank you very much to those who provided comments on the Australian Government's Bonded medical Places Scheme Information Pack in such a timely manner. I am pleased to advise that the information pack was launched on the Department's website at <http://www.health.gov.au/workforce/>. Hard copies will be available on request but we would prefer students are directed to our website as we anticipate that the information will be updated regularly in response to specific inquiries.

We are hoping to have a draft agreement between the Commonwealth and the bonded student available shortly. Once finalised, it will be mounted on our website.

I hope this information is of assistance to you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any comments or queries on the BMP Scheme.

Tanya Boston
Assistant Director
Health Workforce Undergraduate Initiatives Scheme
Workforce and Quality Branch
Phone: 02 6289 8366

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MORE HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES WORKERS, BUT SUPPLY UNEVEN ACROSS REGIONS

Health and community services worker numbers in Australia have risen by 11.4% and 26.8% respectively since 1996, but supply was unevenly distributed across the regions, according to a report jointly released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

“Health and community services labour force, 2001” shows there were 450,792 Australians employed in health, and 237,055 in community services in 2001. Employment in the aged and disabled care areas experienced the largest absolute growth in numbers between 1996 and 2001 (15,849)- representing a 44.1% increase. The number of complementary health therapists increased by 31.2%, followed by allied health workers (26.6%), medical imaging workers (25.0%), pharmacists (13.0%), doctors (12.6%), dental workers (11.0%), and child and youth services workers (9.0%).

Despite this growth, Head of the AIHW's Labour Force and Rural Health Unit, Glenice Taylor, said the workforce supply seemed to be 'unevenly distributed' across some areas of Australia.

'There was a general decrease in the supply of health and community services workers with increasing remoteness-from 3,005 and 1,008 per 100,000 population, respectively, in Australia's major cities to 1,498 and 796 per 100,000, respectively, in very remote areas', she said.

The AIHW statement is available at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/media/2003/mr030930.html> and the publication at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm?type=detail&id=9328>

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Extract from ABC Health-Updates

(Health-Updates is a weekly alert about recent ABC health coverage now available online.

Information on how to subscribe can be found at <http://www.abc.net.au/health/maillinglist.htm>)

EVENT DIARY: Rural Health Week, Huon Valley, TAS, 11 - 18 October 2003, 9.00am to 5.00pm. A week of community run events with the theme 'Be Involved', which will culminate in a two day health fair at Huonville.

<http://www2b.abc.net.au/abcdiary/event.asp?id=38109&display=fromtoday&gatewayid=221&presdir=health&PageRec=0>

For more health events, or to enter your own event, visit the Health Matters Event Diary: <http://www2b.abc.net.au/health/diary/index.htm>

HEALING WATERS (George Negus Tonight: 07/10/2003)

Nearly 200 people live in Jigalong, a tiny settlement in outback Western Australia, where dry, dusty conditions have a negative impact on the health of the locals. But thanks to government funding a swimming pool has been built at Jigalong and is has become an oasis in the desert.

<http://www.abc.net.au/gnt/health/Transcripts/s961410.htm>

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From: Mark Dunn <markdunn@tassie.net.au>

Subject: Radio National Perspective - Aboriginal Health - Dr Sophie Couzos

None of this will be news but you might be interested in this transcript from Perspective on Radio National. Those with good bandwidth can listen to the piece at

http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/perspective/audio/perspect_24092003_2856.ram

Dr Sophie Couzos is co-author of "Aboriginal Primary health care: An evidence-based approach" 2nd edition, for the Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services Council.

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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.blackwellpublishing.com/journals/ajr/>

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From: Joanna Kyriakakis <joannak5@chariot.net.au>
Subject: Unique CD-Rom Health Resource for Women

The Jean Hailes Foundation has produced and is now releasing an interactive CD-Rom Resource titled "Midlife Choices for Health and Wellbeing" aimed at women approaching midlife and beyond.

The CD-Rom covers topics about the areas of most interest and relevance to women including menopause, emotional health, stress management, sexuality, osteoporosis, cardiac disease, breast health, relationships, nutrition, herbal therapies, hormone therapy and lifestyle issues, lesbian health and access to health professionals, and information for families.

Rural Health: The CD-Rom initially came out of a kit designed for rural health professionals who work with women at midlife. It has been piloted over the past 12 months throughout Victoria and the results have been overwhelmingly good for women in regional and rural locations. The contents and style of the CD-Rom were directed by rural women steering committees. The choice to create a CD-Rom included considerations of access by regional and rural women to health professionals and information.

For further info you may want to check out this link: <http://www.jeanhailes.org.au/cdrom/intro.htm> or call our National Communications Manager Natalene on 0416 000 124.

Joanna Kyriakakis
Media Assistant
The Jean Hailes Foundation
p: 039562 6771
m: 0416 000 124

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SUPPORT FOR AUSTRALIAN REMOTE AND RURAL NURSING UNDERGRADUATES

The Australian Government Rural and Remote Undergraduate Nurse Scholarship Scheme will be expanded by an additional 30 undergraduate scholarship places, the Australian Government has announced. Funding of up to \$900,000 has been made available for the additional places bringing the total funding under the Australian Government Rural and Remote Nurse Scholarship Program to approximately \$25 million.

The Government's announcement is at <http://www.health.gov.au/mediarel/yr2003/kp/kp03217.htm>

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From: Charmain Weeks <charmaine.weeks@hunter.health.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: Innovations in Skill Mix and Rostering in Hospitals

ARCHI Toolkit Seminar, Innovations in Skill Mix and Rostering in Hospitals, Stamford Sydney Airport 27-28 November 2003. Discounts for groups. Download program and registration forms from <http://www.archi.net.au> or email us at admin@archi.net.au or phone 02-4985 3165

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From: Mary Lawson <mary.lawson@med.monash.edu.au>
Subject: Graduate Certificate in Health Professional Education

The Centre for Medial and Health Sciences Education, Monash University, Clayton campus offers a one-year part-time Graduate Certificate in Health Professional Education. This innovative programme enables teachers from the health professions to develop their teaching and supervision skills and course development techniques.

The four core units cover studies in teaching and learning in health professional education; developing clinical teaching and supervision; assessment, evaluation and research in health professional education; and educational project research and development in health settings.

For more information, please visit our website: <http://gchpe.med.monash.edu.au/> or contact the course co-ordinator, Mary Lawson, on (03) 95790 3188 or at mary.lawson@med.monash.edu.au

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From: Public Health Association of Australia <phaa@phaa.net.au>
Subject: Conference Advert - Abstracts Closing date for IUHPE Conference, Melbourne April 2004

Newsletter of the 18th World Conference on Health Promotion and Health Education Melbourne, 26 - 30 April, 2004
No 6 (October2003)
<http://www.Health2004.com.au>

Important Reminder - Abstract submissions close on 31 October

Sue Chaplin
Development Manager
XVIIIth World Conference on Health Promotion and Health Education
Conference Secretariat: VicHealth
15 Pelham Street, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia
Tel +61 3 9667 1315
Fax +61 3 9667 1375
Email schaplin@vichealth.vic.gov.au
Web page: <http://www.Health2004.com.au>

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Extract from AMWAC and AHWAC, "Health Workforce Intelligence", September 2003

Wilkinson D, Laven G, Pratt N, Beilby J, "Impact of undergraduate and postgraduate rural training, and medical school entry criteria on rural practice among Australian general practitioners: national study of 2414 doctors," *Medical Education* 37:809-814, 2003.

The purpose of this study from the University of South Australia was to determine the association between rural general practice and (1) undergraduate rural medical training; (2) postgraduate rural medical training; and (3) preferential entry to medical school for rural students, amongst GPs who are graduates of Australian medical schools. A questionnaire was mailed to a sample of 4,513 general practitioners throughout Australia. It was found that compared to urban GPs, rural GPs were 1.6 times more likely to report having had rural undergraduate training, and 3.14 times more likely to report having had some rural postgraduate training. GPs who reported that more than half of their postgraduate training was rural were 10.52 times more likely to be rural GPs. Most GPs (75% of urban GPs and 50% of rural GPs) reported having no rural postgraduate training. South Australian high school graduates whose final year is spent in a rural school are eligible for special entry to medical school at the University of Adelaide. It was found that amongst GPs who spent their final year of high school in South Australia, those who went to a rural school were 3.18 times more likely to become rural GPs than those who did not do so. The researchers conclude that amongst GPs who are graduates of Australian medical schools, undergraduate rural medical training, postgraduate rural medical training and medical school entry criteria favouring rural students are associated with an increased likelihood of being a rural GP.

Rourke JTB, Incitti F, Rourke LL, Kennard M, "Keeping family physicians in rural practice," *Canadian Family Physician* 49:1142-1149, 2003.

In 1998 the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada, Ontario Regional Committee, and the Professional Association of Internes and Residents of Ontario produced the report "From Education to Sustainability: A Blueprint for Addressing Physician Recruitment and Retention in Rural and Remote Ontario". The purpose of this study was to determine which of the report's proposed solutions for recruiting and sustaining rural family doctors were perceived to be most important to practising rural family doctors and family medicine residents. It was found that residents thought the most important solutions were an alternate payment plan with time off for continuing medical education (CME), sabbaticals with pay, and a locum program with financial support for travel and accommodation and a guaranteed income. Practising doctors thought the most important solutions were continued funding for the rural CME program, being on call no more than 1 night in 5, and a locum program. The researchers conclude that recruitment and retention of rural family doctors will depend on a comprehensive plan that acknowledges the opinions of residents and practising family doctors.

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NEW HEALTH MINISTER

On 29 September 2003, the Prime Minister that the Hon Tony Abbott MP would replace Senator Kay Patterson as Commonwealth Minister for Health and Ageing.

A short profile of Tony Abott is available at <http://www.health.gov.au/profile/ta/profile.htm>

In a subsequent radio interview (available at <http://www.pm.gov.au/news/interviews/Interview497.html>), the Prime Minister said that “I wanted to bring the particular skills that I believe Tony Abbott has to bear on what is an important portfolio of health. Tony is wrongly typecast as a headkicker, that is not right, he’s a highly intelligent person who has a very well developed sense of the importance of social policy and I think he’ll turn out to be a very good health minister.”

The response of ALP spokesperson Julia Gillard (available at <http://www.alp.org.au/media/1003/20005957.html>) was slightly different. She said that “I think Tony Abbott is an odd choice for health minister. What health requires is someone who can do the policy work and Tony has never delivered a big-picture reform in any of his portfolios, and someone who can manage the stakeholder groups. Someone who is normally represented in the press with boxing gloves on has that image for good reason. Tony has been dogged by confrontation wherever he has gone. He is a divisive personality. And what we need to better our health system is cooperation and work with the stakeholder groups.”

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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 2,282 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 “Publications & News”.

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NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH ALLIANCE INC

Media Release

7 October 2003

Poverty and Child Health in Rural and Remote Australia

Calls for greater national commitment to children in poverty and in particular to those in rural and remote areas will be highlighted at a Forum in Canberra on Monday 15 October.

Dr Nigel Stewart, Chairperson of the Alliance, is a regional paediatrician who devotes his professional life to children in remote and regional areas.

"Children often can't advocate for themselves so it's incumbent upon us as parents, citizens and professionals to be committed to their welfare. A healthy pregnancy and a good start to life lay the basis for well-being throughout the life cycle - and poverty undermines such chances. We have to be concerned about poverty wherever it exists and there is unfortunately plenty of it in rural and remote areas," Dr Stewart said.

"As a nation we must be concerned about the increasing divide between rich and poor, and we have to be especially concerned about the status of child and adolescent health in Indigenous communities," Dr Stewart said.

The Forum will also be addressed by Liz Harris, Director of the Centre for Health Equity, Training, Research and Evaluation; by public health physician Dr Ben Bartlett; and by Tony Windsor, the Independent Federal Member for New England. Professor Fiona Stanley, child health specialist and Australian of the Year, will welcome participants to the Forum by video. Dr Bartlett will outline some of the reasons why it is Indigenous children who are the long-term losers from "dithering by the health system".

The Forum has been arranged by the Alliance as a contribution to Anti-Poverty Week and as part of its annual face-to-face Council meeting. The event is at Regatta Point from 2.00-5.00pm on Monday 13 October.

Further information:

Nigel Stewart, Chairperson, NRHA, 08 8648 5578 (0419 810 526)

Gordon Gregory, Exec. Director, NRHA, (02) 6285 4660

Lyn Eisele, NRHA (lyn@ruralhealth.org.au)