Eforum Newsletter: NRHA eforum 3 June 2005

National Rural Health Alliance E-forum – 3 June 2005

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COAG AGREEMENT ON HEALTH REFORM

The Council of Australian Governments meeting has agreed to establish a group to report by December of this year on a number of issues where there is an interface between the Commonwealth and State responsibilities and these include the elderly, and particularly the movement from nursing homes and hospitals, the problem of the young disabled, the operation of the home and community care system, the operation of a national call system, we want to focus on improving the supply, flexibility and responsiveness of the health workforce, increase the health system's focus on prevention and health promotion and also improve the integration of the healthcare system and accelerate work on a national electronic health record system.

The transcript of the joint Press Conference is at http://www.pm.gov.au/news/Interviews/Interview1415.html. At the time of writing, the Communique is not available on the web, but it should be at http://www.pm.gov.au/news/media_releases/index.cfm in the near future.

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PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION HEALTH WORKFORCE ISSUES PAPER

The Productivity Commission has released the issues paper for the commissioned study on the Health Workforce. The paper is intended to assist individuals and organisations to prepare submissions to this research study. It outlines the background and scope of the study and matters about which the Commission is seeking comment and information. The paper is not intended to limit comment. Details are at http://www.pc.gov.au/study/healthworkforce/issuespaper/index.html

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From: Palliative Care 2005
Subject: 8th Australian Palliative Care Conference

I am writing on behalf of the Organising Committee for the 8th Australian Palliative Conference being held at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre from 30 August - 2 September, 2005.

The 8th Australian Palliative Care Conference continues to foster the interdisciplinary development of Palliative Care. An outstanding scientific program has been arranged and includes an exciting program of national and international keynote speakers.

The conference details are:

8th Australian Palliative Care Conference (APCC) 'New Horizons' 30 August - 2nd September, 2005
Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre
Phone: 02 9265 0700

For further information on the conference and to register online please visit our
website http://www.pallcare.org.au or email the Conference Managers on pallcare2005@tourhosts.com.au

Kind regards
Rebecca Dounis
Palliative Care Conference Managers

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AMA ESTABLISHES REFERENCE GROUP ON RURAL HEALTH

Outgoing AMA President, Dr Bill Glasson, has announced the creation of a new high-level AMA Reference Group with a specific focus on the health needs of people and communities in rural and remote Australia.

Dr Glasson said the AMA wants the Rural Reference Group (RRG) to initially spend 12 months examining the unique health problems confronting country Australians and to report back to the AMA Federal Council with recommendations, which will be passed on to Federal and State Governments.

The first task of the RRG will be to host a Rural Forum in July to seek resolution of the application by Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) to recognise rural and remote medicine as a specific medical specialty. The purpose of the forum will be to attempt to establish common ground between stakeholders and for the AMA to broker an agreement on how the RACGP and ACRRM can

work together to support rural and remote doctors.

The AMA Federal Council finalised the AMA Position Statement on Regional/Rural Workforce Initiatives as a sign of the AMA's commitment to improving the quality of health care in regional and rural areas.

The AMA's statement is at http://www.ama.com.au/web.nsf/doc/WEEN-6CV2GB

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From: Clair North
Subject: Rural Health Education Foundation (RHEF) NEW Timetable - July to November 2005

RHEF has released its confirmed schedule of accredited satellite television broadcasts for the period July to November 2005. Over this period there are 10 programs that can be viewed on release usually on Tuesday and Wednesday nights, with repeats during Friday daytime on the RHEF satellite system. All programs can be viewed any time afterwards via web-streaming on their website. Information about all programs, times and access can be found by following this link http://www.rhef.com.au/timetable/timetable.html.

Scheduled programs July to November:
Tues 28 June - Injury Prevention in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities
Tues 5 July - A program on "Dermatology" broadcast by WACRRM
Tues 12 July - Taking Action to Prevent Diabetes
Tues 26 July - Paediatric Gastroenteritis
Tues 9 August - Post-streptococcal Renal Disease
Tues 30 August - Maternal and Infant Care (Aboriginal* Health)
Tues 13 Sept - Type 1 Diabetes
Tues 27 Sept - "Growing Healthy Aboriginal* Kids" The Early Years: 1-5
Tues 18 Oct - Immunisation Update
Tues 15 Nov - Colorectal Cancer: Screening

For more information or updates on programs, go to the Foundation's website http://www.rhef.com.au or contact the Foundation at rhef@rhef.com.au or (02) 62325480

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From: Karen Roberts
Subject: Bridging the Gaps : 2nd Biennial Rural Mental Health Conference 2005, 13th - 15th July 2005, Deakin University, Warrnambool campus

This conference aims to build on the success of the first Rural Mental Health Conference held in 2003 and continue to address issues faced by mental health services in rural areas by bringing together an interstate audience with national and international speakers. The conference will focus on gaps in service delivery in rural areas and is aimed at rural mental health workers and practitioners, GP's, participants, carers, the local indigenous community and key community stakeholders involved in the partnership of rehabilitation and health promotion.
Further details and Conference Flyer and Registration form can be viewed at http://www.aspire.org.au/conference or please contact Karen on kroberts@aspire.org.au

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The Australian Journal of Rural Health invites you to contribute to the ongoing development of rural health in Australia, and submit your manuscripts for publication. Send your papers to AJRH@newcastle.edu.au and be pleasantly surprised at how quickly you can be in print. Author guidelines and sample issues of the AJRH are available at http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/submit.asp?ref=1038-5282 or email ajrh@newcastle.edu.au for further information. The June 2005 issue of the journal is available online now at http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/links/toc/ajr

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8th NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

The full set of Conference recommendations, organised and edited
for format, and with the appropriate caveats as to their status and the Alliance's approach to them, is on the Alliance's website at http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/nrhapublic/publicdocs/conferences/8thNRHC/home.htm. It is about 190 in all: a useful snapshot of ideas, approaches, models, criticisms etc.

The Conference Communique and Key Recommendations are available at
http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/nrhapublic/publicdocs/conferences/8thnrhc/Communique.pdf

Available papers from the 8th Conference have been put on the ABC Website. See
http://abc.net.au/rural/events/ruralhealth/2005/papers.htm. The full proceedings from the Conference will be available in June.

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LIFELINE'S JUST ASK - 1 300 13 11 14

Your Rural Mental Health Information Service
Lifeline's Just ask is a rural mental health information service. Information provided includes: referral to services and web sites, printed material and a range of self help resources. The self-help resources focus on practical steps to help promote mental health in a range of areas. For information and copies of resources call or visit http://www.justask.org.au

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From: Sallie Scoggin - NSW Rural Doctors Network
Subject: 4 Positions Available - Health Management and Development

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES: 4 POSITIONS AVAILABLE in HEALTH MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

RURAL AND REMOTE MEDICAL SERVICES LIMITED (RARMS) and NSW OUTBACK DIVISION of GENERAL PRACTICE (ODGP)

RARMS and ODGP are non-profit companies that support and deliver health services in northwest NSW communities.

1. RARMS wishes to engage a Business and Development Manager (B&DM) to oversee existing corporate operations and respond to requests by other rural communities seeking extension of RARMS services to their area.
2. ODGP wishes to engage a Business and Development Manager (B&DM) to oversee operations, develop linkages with other services and generally maximize opportunities arising from current and evolving GP Divisions and health related programs in the region.
3. ODGP wishes to engage two (2) clinician managers (CM) to manage service delivery and development under the Commonwealth Regional Health Services (RHS) program, which is overseen by ODGP in the region.

The B&DM positions require practical business development and financial management experience, knowledge of rural general practice, understanding of rural health issues and excellent communication and inter-personal skills. Both positions are initially part-time, could be based in Dubbo or a location north west of Dubbo. Combination of both positions may be possible resulting in at least one full time position.

The CM positions are both ideally full time and combine a program management role with a clinical service delivery role. The positions require an understanding of rural health issues with a commitment to development and delivery of an integrated model of public/population health programs in the region. Current nursing or allied health experience is necessary. One position will be based in Walgett/Lightning Ridge and the other in Bourke/Brewarrina.

All four positions involve working in motivated teams, often without direct supervision but always with managerial and clinical support. All positions will require some travel.
Remuneration: Four (4) inclusive packages of up to $80k pa fulltime equivalent are available. Salary packaging opportunities are available.

A full information package is available from the NSW Rural Doctors Network website: http://www.nswrdn.com.au by accessing “News”, then “RDN Jobs”. Further information may be obtained by contacting either Dr Paul Collett or Mark Lynch at 02 4929 1811. Applications close COB 13 June 2005.

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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.bushcrisisline.org.au

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EXTRACT FROM ABC UPDATES
Subscribe at http://www.abc.net.au/health/mailinglist.htm

DROUGHT PROMPTS NEW TYPE OF MENTAL STRESS (Health & Medical News: 24/05/2005)
http://www.abc.net.au/science/news/health/HealthRepublish_1374921.htm

GOVT CONCERNED ABOUT PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF DROUGHT (AM: 21/05/2005)
http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2005/s1373876.htm

BUSH DISABLED (Stateline Queensland: 20/05/2005)
http://www.abc.net.au/stateline/qld/content/2005/s1373620.htm

CLAIM INDIGENOUS BABIES BORN UNDERWEIGHT (The World Today: 20/05/2005)
http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2005/s1373355.htm

MUMS AND BABIES PROGRAM WORKING FOR INDIGENOUS FAMILIES (PM: 20/05/2005)
http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2005/s1373635.htm

WorkSafe to probe abattoir death
WorkSafe inspectors in Western Australia are continuing their investigation into a death at an abattoir in the state's Great Southern region.
01/06/2005 http://www.abc.net.au/rural/content/2005/s1381956.htm

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STUDY INTO LOCUM RELIEF FOR RURAL OBSTETRICIANS

The Commonwealth Government is contracting the Rural Doctors Association of Australia to conduct a six-month scoping study to consider options for a locum scheme for rural obstetricians. 29 per cent of Australian babies are born in rural areas, but only 10 per cent of Australia’s obstetricians practise in those areas. Rural obstetricians tend to be older on average than those in the cities, with few younger specialists coming in to replace them.

The media statement by Health Minister Tony Abbott is at http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-mediarel-yr2005-ta-abb064.htm and the statement by the RDAA is at http://www.rdaa.com.au/default.cfm?action=docviewer&DocID=242

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NEW ARTICLES IN RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH

'Unique issues in research and evaluation in rural and remote locations: Is there a
place for specific research training?'
Is there a place for specific research training for effective research in rural and remote locations? Read this article and see if you agree with the authors.
http://rrh.deakin.edu.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=351

'Biotelemetry: could technological developments assist healthcare in rural India'
Telehealth is being considered as a solution for overcoming the barrier of isolation in rural health. But is it always the best solution? This personal view gives a perspective from rural India.
http://rrh.deakin.edu.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=234

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DROUGHT AND MENTAL HEALTH

The Federal Opposition has criticised the Government's response to the impact of the drought on farm families particularly subsequent mental health issues and personal issues.

According to the ALP, the front line in the delivery of services to farmers is the Rural Financial Counselling Service, but this is a service which has had difficulty getting funding on a consistent basis from the Government.

A second thing the Government should do, according to Health spokesperson Julia Gillard, in dealing with mental health issues in rural and regional Australia is fulfil its promises in respect of the Better Outcomes for Mental Health program. Ms Gillard claims that the Government promised in the election campaign to increase the funding by $30 million, but the Budget left an $18 million shortfall.

The transcript of the ALP statement is at http://www.alp.org.au/media/0505/dsiagrhea250.php

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PARTYline 8th Conference Edition 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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NEW RURAL CLINICAL SCHOOL FOR THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

The Australian Government will provide more than $7 million to establish a new Rural Clinical School based in the Northern Territory. The Northern Territory Rural Clinical School will be the 11th Rural Clinical School, creating a national medical training network spanning rural and remote Australia.

The school will be run by Flinders University and will begin in 2006. It will offer between eight and 16 long-term medical student placements at a time. Flinders University medical students will be able to undertake a semester of their training in Katherine, Gove or Alice Springs.

The Government's announcement is at http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-mediarel-yr2005-ta-abb059.htm and a statement by the RDAA welcoming the announcement is at
http://www.rdaa.com.au/default.cfm?action=docviewer&DocID=240

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ROAD MAP FOR HEALTHCONNECT

Implementation of the national system of electronic patient health records, HealthConnect, has moved a step closer with the release of two key documents to guide future development.

HealthConnect will ultimately link electronic health systems in all states and territories to allow secure and accurate transfer and management of patient medical information.

The documents, ‘Lessons Learned from the MediConnect Field Test and HealthConnect Trials’ and ‘HealthConnect Implementation Strategy’ jointly provide a road map to the Australian Government and state and territory governments on setting up HealthConnect and monitoring its progress. They will ensure that the nation works in partnership on e-health.

The reports are available at http://www.healthconnect.gov.au. The Health Department’s statement is at
http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-mediarel-yr2005-ta-abb066.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.

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 2,095 email addresses. Please forward a copy to any colleague you think may be interested.