

Eforum Newsletter: NRHA eforum 8 December 2006

National Rural Health Alliance E-forum – 8 December 2006

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9TH NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE, 7-10 MARCH 2007, ALBURY NSW

Close of Early Bird Registration is 15 December 2006 (with a special rate for enrolled friends of the National Rural Health Alliance)

Information and registration: <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/>
Email: conference@ruralhealth.org.au

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THE NRHA: THE 'BEST FRIEND PEOPLE WITH NO ACCESS TO MEDICARE EVER HAD'
(This statement is available at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/media/nrha%20-%20the%20best%20friend.pdf>)

Those who sit up late to watch Question Time will know that almost every Dorothy Dixer to the Government on Medicare for ten years has ended with the words "this Government is the best friend that Medicare has ever had".

And last week the Prime Minister spoke at the Pharmacy Guild Dinner and extolled the (undoubted) virtues of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and guaranteed its future as "a system that means that you don't have to be a wealthy person in order to have the same access to [these] drugs as the next man or next woman."

Medicare and the PBS are undoubtedly most virtuous and valuable programs. But we must be aware of the impact of the tyranny of distance and scattered populations on such schemes and their supposed universality.

Places too small to have a doctor - and many that are big enough to know better - cannot provide access to Medicare. No doctor: no Medicare. The 'Medicare deficit' is an estimate of the dollar value of services that people in more remote areas miss out on, calculated by comparing the Medicare benefits outlays per capita in rural and remote areas with those paid in urban and metropolitan areas. It is \$400-\$500 million a year.

Similarly, people who live in towns or settlements with no community pharmacy have no local access to subsidised medicines (section 100 normally notwithstanding). No pharmacy: no PBS.

It would be good to expand the rhetoric to acknowledge the fact that many people are not covered by the munificence of the MBS and PBS. Over 330,000 people live in RRMA 7 (2002) or 179,000 in areas classified as 'Very Remote' (in 2004). That's three to six Wagga Waggas or six to twelve Alice Springs.

Let's never forget our citizens in remote areas.

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BE AN EARLY BIRD FOR THE 9th NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE
(This statement is available at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/media/be%20an%20early%20bird%20for%20the%209th.pdf>)

There is one week to go for Early Bird registrations for the 9th National Rural Health Conference. After 15 December the full price goes up from \$737 to \$935**

The Conference is in Albury, NSW, from 7-10 March 2007. Apart from the Federal Election it will be the year's most significant public event for issues affecting the health of people in rural, regional and remote Australia. People will hear how rural people and their communities are faring in the face of the widespread drought, and what interventions and support can best help.

There will be 100 concurrent session papers and a special stream on cancer in the bush. Twenty Keynote Speakers will deal with issues such as the health impacts of the extended drought and climate change, changes in health workplaces, health finance and reform issues, and rural aspects of cancer and kidney disease.

- * Suturing as an advanced skill for Registered Nurses in the emergency department
- * Patient outcomes following an intervention involving community pharmacists in the management of depression
- * Aeromedical evacuations from an east Arnhem Land community 2003–2005: The impact on a primary health care centre
- * Managing patients at risk of deterioration in rural hospitals: A qualitative study
- * A technically simple method for staining of acid-fast bacilli in cytology smears: An evaluation
- * Short Report
- * Letters to the Editor
- * Book Review
- * Grazings

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HOSPITALISED INJURY OF AUSTRALIA'S ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE 2000-02

This AIHW report is a technical report on Australian hospital separations due to injury and poisoning for 2000-01 and 2001-02, focussing on cases identified as being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons. The report focuses on a region consisting of grouped jurisdictions of better quality of Indigenous ascertainment in hospital separations data (SA, WA, NT, Qld). Injury hospital admissions have been examined to determine relationships with remoteness of place of usual residence and types of external cause of injury, and age and sex. The report is available at <http://www.nisu.flinders.edu.au/pubs/reports/2006/injcat94.php>

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Join friends of the Alliance in 2006. By joining friends you will receive the updated CD 'Rural and Remote Health Papers 1991-2005', a 2006 friends certificate, regular issues of PARTYline newsletter, and be eligible for a discounted registration at the 9th National Rural Health Conference to be held in Albury in March 2007. Membership of friends would also give you the opportunity to be involved more closely with the Alliance's information dissemination and policy work. You will become part of a group of people who contribute to and support the work of the National Rural Health Alliance.

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RURAL AUSTRALIA MEDICAL UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP (RAMUS) - APPLICATIONS OPEN

The 2007 RAMUS Application Round was advertised nationally on Saturday 11 November 2006. Applications close 5pm, Monday 22 January 2007.

The 2007 RAMUS Guidelines are now available on the RAMUS Scholarship page (<http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/scholarships/?IntContId=15&IntCatId=7>). The Guidelines include explanatory information on each question to assist applicants in completing the Application Form.

Applicants are encouraged to apply online and the online application form is now available from the RAMUS Scholarship page.

If you require further information, please contact the RAMUS Staff on 1800 460 440 (free call). If you are not able to apply online, download the Application Form, complete it in hardcopy and send to: RAMUS NRHA, PO Box 280, Deakin West, ACT, 2600.

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PARTYline Newsletter

Latest Issue: Number 28, November 2006

Available at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/publications/pl%2028%20nov%2006.pdf>

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- * telelink: making rural connections
- * check out the views at the 9th Conference
- * photographic celebration of fitness

PARTYline readily accepts contributions from readers - articles (up to 500 words) and photographs can be sent to partyline@ruralhealth.org.au

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RDAAs CALLS FOR RURAL HEALTH SERVICE OBLIGATION

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) calls on the Australian government to put in place a Rural Service Obligation in relation to rural health services and urges that this obligation be the centrepiece of the next Australian Health Care Agreements with the State and Territory governments. This proposal is the centrepiece of the RDAA's Budget Submission, available at http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/Budget%20submission%202007-08%20final.pdf

