

**National Rural Health Alliance E-forum
11 April 2008**

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MEDICARE FIGURES CONFIRM POOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN THE BUSH

Figures released by the Australian Government reveal what rural people have suspected for some time – that the bulk of mental health services covered by the new Medicare item numbers are being accessed by people in the cities.

The figures show that, overall, 79 per cent of Medicare claims for mental health services under the new items are in metropolitan areas. For some psychological services the figure is as high as 85 per cent. This means that the 30 percent of Australians who live in rural and remote areas, who suffer a higher incidence of mental illness and face greater risk factors, are being short changed by the initiative.

The full text of the Alliance statement is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/mediareleases/?IntContId=274&IntCatId=16> and is reproduced below.

The Minister's release of the data is at
<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr08-nr-nr049.htm>

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AIHW REPORTS

The effectiveness of the Illicit Drug Diversion Initiative in rural and remote Australia Since its announcement in 1999, the IDDI has contributed to the development or expansion of over 22 programs in rural and remote Australia. This relatively young initiative is a large and complex response to drug use—spanning the health, police and justice sectors, and involving state/territory and Australian governments and the government and nongovernment drug and alcohol service delivery networks. The initial IDDI framework focused on police diversion but was adapted early in the life of the Initiative to include court diversion. Police diversion generally involves issuing a caution in conjunction with referral (voluntary or compulsory) to an education session, assessment and/or a brief intervention or treatment. Court diversion generally involves a more intensive intervention, with a target group that has more complex drug and alcohol, criminal and other issues. Accounting for nearly one-quarter of all diversions in rural and remote Australia in 2005–06, court diversion has emerged as a major component of the IDDI in practice.

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/phe/teotiddiirara/teotiddiirara-c00.pdf>

Rural, regional and remote health Indicators of health status and determinants of health

Key findings

- * Rates of self-reported diabetes, cerebrovascular disease, coronary heart disease, depression, and anxiety were generally similar for those living in Major Cities and those living in regional and remote areas
- * Compared with those living in Major Cities, the incidence of cancer was slightly higher for those living in regional areas and slightly lower for those living in Very Remote areas in the two years 2001–03
- * People in regional and remote areas were more likely than those in Major Cities to report an acute or chronic injury, to drink alcohol in quantities risking harm in the short term, or to be overweight or obese
- * Compared with people living in Major Cities, people living in regional and remote areas were less likely to consume low-fat or skim milk or to consume the recommended two serves of fruit per day. However, they were more likely to consume four or more serves of vegetables per day
- * Lower birthweights outside Major Cities were particularly marked for teenage mothers (those aged younger than 20 years)
- * Life expectancy decreases with increasing remoteness. Compared with Major Cities, the life expectancy in regional areas is 1–2 years lower and in remote areas is up to 7 years lower

* Compared with those in Major Cities, people in regional and remote areas were less likely to report very good or excellent health

* Across all geographic areas, the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples was generally worse than non-Indigenous Australians. The higher proportion of Indigenous Australians in remote area populations contributes to, but does not completely account for, the generally poorer health of people living in remote areas.
<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/phe/rrrh-ihsdh/rrrh-ihsdh-c00.pdf>

Key national indicators of children's health, development and wellbeing: indicator framework of 'A picture of Australia's children 2009'

This bulletin previews the reporting framework and key national indicators that will be the basis of the report, 'A picture of Australia's children 2009', scheduled for release in 2009. This bulletin also contains the Headline Indicators for Children's Health, Development and Wellbeing. The indicators cover a broad range of areas of children's health, development and wellbeing, including: morbidity, disability, mortality, health risk and protective factors, early learning and education, the influences of family, neighbourhood and community factors, safety and security, economic and social influences, and measures of system performance.
<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10561>

Drowning - 1,000 a year either die or are hospitalised

Over the five-year reporting period, an average of 370 people died and 618 were hospitalised each year as a result of drowning, according to a new report released today by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

Media release at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/mediacentre/2008/mr20080402.cfm>

Publication at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10444>

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From: alison.diamond@aihw.gov.au <alison.diamond@aihw.gov.au>

Subject: Australia's Health 2008 conference

Australia's Health 2008 Conference National Convention Centre, Canberra, ACT 23 June 2008 - Welcome Dinner 24 June 2008 - Conference Held by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), this conference will provide insights into what the evidence is showing on key health issues facing Australia. Topics covered include national health priorities, children, oral health, expenditure, health and the socioeconomically disadvantaged, cancer, diabetes, plus many more. The conference includes the public release and launch of Australia's health 2008, the AIHW's flagship report on the nation's health and health services. Further information: Conference Coordinator, Alison Diamond. Phone: (02) 6244 1000 Email: alison.diamond@aihw.gov.au or visit the AIHW website – <http://www.aihw.gov.au>

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ANNUAL PRIME MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON CLOSING THE GAP

The Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, has announced that, on the first working day of every parliamentary year, he will report to the Parliament on progress on closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. This annual report will report on progress in closing the life expectancy gap, progress in closing the gap on infant mortality and mortality of children up to five years of age, and progress on closing the literacy and numeracy gap.

The full text of the Prime Minister's statement is at
http://www.pm.gov.au/media/release/2008/media_release_0166.cfm

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HEALTH PROFESSIONALS CONFERENCE, PORT FAIRY

Port Fairy is a historic seaside village located on the southwest coast of Victoria, known for music festivals and fine restaurants. With many pleasant cafes, art galleries and day spas, it is a charming and relaxing destination.

The conference is focused on mental health services and professional development workshops. It is an opportunity to meet mental health academics, practitioners, and colleagues working in rural health.

If you would like to conduct a half-day workshop at this conference, please contact Professor Prasuna Reddy, phone 03 5563 3501 or email director.hsr@greaterhealth.org

Registration details for the conference are on the website:
<http://www.greaterhealth.org/education-training/>

Enquiries: Ms Amanda Gaudion, phone 03 5563 3501, email: Amanda.Gaudion@greaterhealth.org

DATE: Monday 5 May – Wednesday 7 May 2008

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PARTYline Newsletter

The March 2008 version of PARTYline is now available. Contents include:

- * The full agenda on the rural health workforce challenge
- * Calls for further debate about professional scopes of practice, multi-disciplinary teams and the design of training systems for health professionals.
- * Reports on the forthcoming Federal Budget, the Health and Hospitals Reform Commission, ambulance services, allied health and the work-life balance of general practitioners.

* A two-page spread on 'Advice to the Health Minister' from friends of the Alliance.

PARTYline is available at

http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/publications/partyline_32_08.pdf

The Alliance's newsletter, PARTYline, is a means of exchanging information between those with an interest in rural health, including friends of the Alliance, health consumers, health professionals, students and policy makers. Contributors report on their personal rural experiences, on programs with which they have been involved, provide information on new initiatives and resources, and it is a vehicle for opinions on rural health issues and events.

PARTYline has a print circulation around Australia of 13,000 and is also available on-line below. PARTYline readily accepts contributions from readers - articles (up to 500 words) and photographs can be sent to partyline@ruralhealth.org.au

The electronic version of Partyline is also available in the 'Publications' section of our website at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/publications/?IntContId=57&IntCatId=6>

If you don't receive Partyline but would like to, send your contact details to nrha@ruralhealth.org.au and let us know if you'd prefer a hard copy in the mail or email notification of its availability on the webpage.

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From: Don Perlgut (ceo) <ceo@rhef.com.au>

Subject: Rural Health Education Foundation live program Smoking and Pregnancy: Womb to Breathe - Tuesday 22nd April 2008

Smoking and Pregnancy: Womb to Breathe

Live Satellite TV broadcast and free DVD or VHS video

Produced by the Rural Health Education Foundation

Tuesday 22nd April 2008 at 8.00pm AEST (Repeated Thursday 24th April 12:30pm AEST)

This program explores the health impact of smoking on pregnant women, their unborn child, and young children. It canvasses the range of effective smoking cessation interventions, including the use of *Lifescrript* tools, and considers how and when such interventions are best delivered. Cessation strategies that are specifically designed for intervention with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are also discussed.

The program includes filmed case studies featuring the role of the Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Health Service in long term research aimed at developing a culturally specific smoking intervention for pregnant Indigenous women; and the work being done by QuitSA training health professionals in the National Smoke-Free

Pregnancy Project.

Panel of Speakers

Chair: *Dr Norman Swan*, Presenter of the *Health Report* on ABC Radio National.

Ms Viki Briggs, Manager, Centre for Excellence in Indigenous Tobacco Control, Melbourne

Dr Kate Strasser, General Practitioner, Altona, Victoria and former advisor to Quit VIC

Ms Sue Hendy, Clinical Midwifery Consultant, Liverpool Hospital, NSW and Australian College of Midwives representative on the National Smoking and Pregnancy Advisory Group

Assoc. Prof. Raoul Walsh, Researcher, Centre for Health Research and Psycho-oncology, University of Newcastle

Further program information, resources and detailed broadcast times can be found by clicking <http://www.rhef.com.au/programs/808/808.html>

This program will also be available as a free DVD or VHS video for health professionals in Australia. Contact the Rural Health Education Foundation via email rhef@rhef.com.au or telephone (02) 6232 5480.

Rural Health Education Foundation
Unit 17/2 King Street, Deakin ACT 2600
(PO Box 324, Curtin ACT 2605)
Tel. (02) 6232 5480; fax (02) 6232 5484
<http://www.rhef.com.au>

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RDAА STATEMENTS

Rural doctors' 2020 Summit submission drives home rural health crisis
9 April 2008
http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/Rural%20doctors'%202020%20Summit%20submission%20drives%20home%20rural%20health%20crisis%20--%20April%202008.pdf

RDAА submission to the Australia 2020 Summit
9 April 2008
http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/RDAА%20submission%20to%20the%20Australia%202020%20Summit%20--%209%20April%202008.pdf

Rural doctors "dismayed" at Summit snub
1 April 2008
http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/Rural%20doctors%20dismayed%20at%20Summit%20snub%20--%20March%202008.pdf

published in the last decade covering some of the most pressing topics in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

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Join friends of the Alliance in 2007. By joining friends you will receive the updated CD 'Rural and Remote Health Papers 1991-2007', a 2007 friends certificate, and regular issues of PARTYline newsletter. 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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LIFELINE INFORMATION SERVICE - 1300 13 11 14

Your Rural Mental Health Information Service

Lifeline's Information Service 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.lifeline.org.au/infoservice> and further information is available at infoservice@lifeline.org.au and <http://www.lifeline.org.au>

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REGIONAL POPULATION GROWTH, AUSTRALIA, 2006-07

ABS 3218.0

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3218.0?OpenDocument>

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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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From: Lanning, Delwyn <DLANNING@pc.gov.au>

Subject: Productivity Commission News: ROGS 2008 Indigenous Compendium

The Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision's publication *Report on Government Services 2008 : Indigenous Compendium* is available from the Productivity Commission's website today (Wednesday, 2 April

2008).

The publication gathers together data drawn entirely from the previously released 'Report on Government Services 2008'. This report is available on the website only <http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/compendium2008>

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RURAL HEALTH ON THE ABC

(From ABC Health Updates, <http://abcmail.net.au/t/73489/614869/1366/0/>)

INDIGENOUS EAR HEALTH LABELLED AN 'EMERGENCY' (PM: 08/04/2008)
<http://abcmail.net.au/t/126021/614869/2670/0/>

Govt to study 2,000 Indigenous children: Macklin
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/04/08/2211358.htm>

Indigenous leaders welcome 'closing the gap' reports
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/04/06/2208983.htm>

Medical students bemoan lack of rural teamwork
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/04/03/2206877.htm>

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ARTICLES IN "RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH"

'Alcohol harm and cost at a community level: data from police and health'
Community intolerance to alcohol abuse is increasing. In Australia, the new Labor government has called for greater efforts to discourage irresponsible alcohol use. But how do we measure alcohol harm in a community? If we cannot answer that, we cannot tell if interventions are successful. This paper from rural New South Wales, Australia, describes lessons from a pilot to compile data on alcohol harm from emergency departments and policy records.
<http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=878>

'West African refugee health in rural Australia: complex cultural factors that influence mental health'
If rural communities have not been exposed to the diversity of cultures typical of major cities, the resettlement of refugees can bring challenges to effective healthcare delivery. This article eloquently describes some of the complex cultural factors underpinning the belief systems of West Africans. As such it is a valuable resource for promoting the understanding of a patient who is also refugee.
<http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=884>

'Rural parents' perspectives about information on child immunization'

The explosion of information about immunization (and sometimes mistakes) creates uncertainty. This is multiplied by alternative viewpoints and anecdotes spread across the web, where information is much more accessible than actual data and research. However often absent is the perspective of the patient (or, in this case, the parent of the patient). Our authors collaborate with rural nurses to explore this perspective.
<http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=863>

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INDIGENOUS NURSE HOME VISITING PROGRAM TO COMMENCE

Health Minister Nicola Roxon announced that Wuchopperen Health Service in North Queensland has been selected as one of two sites for the early roll-out of the Australian Government's nurse home visiting program for Indigenous children. The nurse home visit program is part of the Rudd Government's \$260 million commitment to closing the life expectancy gap and improving the health of Indigenous women and children, ensuring Indigenous children are healthy, happy and ready to learn. The full text of Ms Roxon's statement is at
<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr08-nr-nr039.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2008&mth=4>

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CURRENT ISSUE OF eMJA, 7 April 2008
(Available at <http://www.mja.com.au/>)

From the Editor's Desk: Medical "Iron Curtains"
Can liability rules keep pace with best practice? The case of multidisciplinary cancer care
Will prasugrel supersede clopidogrel for acute coronary syndromes?
New vision, new paradigm: health and wealth for all by 2100 — or for no one
National Breast Cancer Audit: the use of multidisciplinary care teams by breast surgeons in Australia and New Zealand
When continuity of care breaks down: a systems failure in identification of osteoporosis risk in older patients treated for minimal trauma fractures
Teenage smoking in pregnancy and birthweight: a population study, 2001–2004
The National Open Disclosure Pilot: evaluation of a policy implementation initiative
Medicolegal implications of a multidisciplinary approach to cancer care: consensus recommendations from a national workshop
Implementing the national priorities for injury surveillance
Management of adrenal insufficiency during the stress of medical illness and surgery
Empathy and competence
What has happened to clinical leadership in futile care discussions?
Liver failure associated with the use of black cohosh for menopausal symptoms
Fatal paramethoxy-amphetamine (PMA) poisoning in the Australian Capital Territory
Ready, SET, go for academic surgery?

Chronic kidney disease and automatic reporting of estimated glomerular filtration rate: revised recommendations
Successful lung transplantation for adolescents at a hospital for adults
Informing prospective medical students
Haemopericardium in blue rubber bleb naevus syndrome (Bean syndrome)
Book Reviews:
Failure to atone. The true story of a jungle surgeon in Vietnam
Heart failure and palliative care: a team approach
Corrections:
Implementing and sustaining transformational change in health care: lessons learnt about clinical process redesign
Respiratory syncytial virus infections in children in Alice Springs Hospital
The national inpatient medication chart: critical audit of design and performance at a tertiary hospital

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NEW COMMISSION CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS TO HELP DESIGN AUSTRALIA'S FUTURE

The recently established National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission (NHHRC) announced it is calling for submissions to help the Commission design Australia's future health system. The NHHRC is seeking input from the public, frontline health workers, professional and consumer groups, and other interested people and organisations. Submissions will be accepted from now until the end of May. For further details including the terms of reference of the Commission, the principles and a guide to making submissions, please visit the website at <http://www.nhhrc.org.au>

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RURAL HEALTH ON THE WEB (FROM Google Alert at <http://www.googlealert.com>)

More virtual links will bring healthcare to rural areas - CNN.com
In rural areas, where accessing health care is often a challenge, the doctors and patients of the future will increasingly be linked by virtual interstates.
http://www.cnn.com/2008/TECH/03/19/rural.telemedicine.ap/index.html?eref=rss_health

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2nd NATIONAL MEN'S HEALTH CONFERENCE - "FROM BABIES TO BLOKES: THE MAKING OF MEN"

MAN, the Men's Advisory Network, Western Australia's peak men's organisation,

will host their second national conference entitled 'from babies to blokes: the making of men' in Fremantle, Western Australia in August 2008. The Men's Advisory Network (MAN) is the peak body for service providers, organisations and individuals concerned with men's health, wellbeing and other issues affecting males of all ages in Western Australia. With nine outstanding keynote speakers already confirmed, this conference will be an important learning experience for all those who work with men and boys. A new understanding of manhood is essential to improving the wellbeing of the whole community. We invite your participation. The Call for Papers is available online <http://www.promaco.com.au/2008/man/>

The Men's Advisory Network Inc. 2nd National Conference Fremantle, Western Australia Esplanade Hotel 3-6 August 2008

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AUSTRALIA 2020 SUMMIT BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Australia 2020 Summit launched the background papers which will frame the discussion in each stream at the Australia 2020 Summit. The background papers explore the themes set out in each stream and provide some background information on some of the major areas to be discussed at the Summit.

- * the paper on future directions for rural industries and rural communities is available at <http://www.australia2020.gov.au/topics/rural.cfm>
- * the paper on health is at <http://www.australia2020.gov.au/topics/health.cfm>
- * the paper on indigenous Australia is at <http://www.australia2020.gov.au/topics/indigenous.cfm>

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Well Women's & Men's Sexual Health Workshop
28th April - 2nd May 2008
Liebig Building
Alice Springs Hospital

3 Days Theory and 2 Days Practical

Topics to be covered:

- STI Management
- Cultural Issues
- Contraception
- Cervical Screening
- HIV Update
- Hep's ABC
- Chronic Disease Screening

Contact: Sandy McElligot - sandra.mcelligot@nt.gov.au

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**CRIAH Aboriginal Health Research Conference 2008
Strong Foundations...Strong Future**

The second CRIAH Aboriginal Health Research Conference will be held on April 29 and 30 at Dockside at Cockle Bay Wharf, Sydney. Information at <http://www.saxinstitute.org.au/newsevents/EventItem.cfm?objid=754>

Enquiries:
The Sax Institute
PO Box 123
BROADWAY NSW 2007
Ph (02) 9514 5950
aboriginal.health@saxinstitute.org.au

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**10th INTERNATIONAL PAEDIATRIC AND CHILD HEALTH NURSING
CONFERENCE**

The 10th International Paediatric and Child Health Nursing Conference is to be held at the Holiday Inn Esplanade and Darwin Entertainment Centre, Northern Territory, from Wednesday, 30 April to Friday, 2 May 2008. The conference is being hosted by the Australian Confederation of Paediatric and Child Health Nurses. The conference is expected to attract between 200 and 400 delegates from across Australia and abroad.

Through the implementation of the theme "Crossing barriers", this conference aims to illustrate that barriers can and must be crossed to improve health outcomes for children and young people. The conference aims are: to advance paediatric and child health nursing's contribution to health care and facilitate the dissemination of evidence highlighting effective nursing interventions to arise the profile of the benefits of interdisciplinary collaboration to identify future directions for paediatric and child health nursing to provide a forum that stimulates debate and collegiality.

For more information please visit the conference website at <http://www.ipchnconference.com.au> or by contacting the conference secretariat via email at info@ipchnconference.com.au or by telephone +61 7 3858 5503.

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From: Anita Cromb <<mailto:Anita.Cromb@heartfoundation.org.au>>
Subject: Challenges in Cardiology VIII conference 9 & 10 May 2008

Challenges in cardiology VIII 'Prevention and management of cardiovascular disease'

9 - 10 May 2008

A joint conference of the Heart Foundation, Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand (CSANZ), and the Queensland Cardiac Rehabilitation Association.

The 8th Challenges in Cardiology conference will be a significant date on the calendar in 2008. The one and a half day conference will provide an exciting and unique opportunity for health and medical professionals, nurses and students, medical researchers, industry and government to receive the latest information in various formats, including practical sessions, on the challenges and solutions to the prevention, assessment, and management of risks associated with heart disease, both acutely and for secondary prevention.

Venue: Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Education Centre, Herston, Queensland 4029

Topics will include:

Absolute risk - tools and implementation, updated hypertension guidelines, management of CVD (including biomedical and psychosocial risk factors), secondary prevention, Quality Use of Medicines, various workshops, and a panel discussion: *CVD - are we losing the battle?*

Day registration (Friday or Saturday) \$77 (earlybird \$55 before 11 April 2008)

Friday and Saturday (inc. cocktail function) \$132 (earlybird \$99 before 11 April 2008)

Cocktail function \$33 (earlybird \$22 before 11 April 2008)

The Heart Foundation has applied to the RACGP QA&CPD Program for Category 1 points (40 points) for this Activity.

For more information log onto our website <http://www.heartfoundation.org.au> and click on Queensland in the map of Australia.

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ETHICAL RESPONSIVENESS – 2008 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Stamford Grand, Adelaide, 23-25 May 2008

You are invited to attend the third national conference for the Australian College for Child and Family Protection Practitioners in Adelaide.

The conference theme "Ethical Responsiveness" reflects the broad contexts of Australian child and family practice. Workers in the child and family welfare sectors

are generally ethical and responsive. This conference celebrates the work done by both statutory and non-government agencies alike in supporting vulnerable children, young people and their families. As debates continue within the child and family welfare system about the effectiveness of strategies to support vulnerable children, the professions are instead struggling to reconcile the need for appropriate supportive relationships with clients against ever increasing compliance bureaucracy. This conference supports the presentation and testing of practice frameworks and is interested in hearing about approaches which make a real difference to people's lives. Conversely presentations on practice issues are also welcomed to improve the evidence base of the profession.

The Conference secretariat is based at the Mackay Offices of Relate Human Services, PO Box 1401, Mackay 4740, Phone 07-49575400 Fax 07-49575488
Email: accfpp@bigpond.net.au
<http://www.relatehumanservices.com.au/events.htm>

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From: Rogan McMahon-Hogan <rogan.mcmahon-hogan@deafnessforum.org.au>
Subject: National Deafness Summit 08

The Deafness Forum of Australia is pleased to announce that registrations are now open for the 2008 National Deafness Sector Summit which will be hosted in Canberra 24-25 May 2008. These biennial summits are a fantastic opportunity for disability professionals, carers and the Deaf and hearing impaired community to learn about new developments in the sector, a chance to discuss issues, network and catch up with old friends. The previous summit held in Perth in 2006 was very successful, and we look forward to more success in 2008. Further information is available through the Deafness Forum Website <http://www.deafnessforum.org.au> or via email info@deafnessforum.org.au

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2008 GENERAL PRACTICE AND PRIMARY HEALTH CARE RESEARCH CONFERENCE – HEALTH FOR ALL?

4 -6 June 2008, Hobart

The aim of this Conference is to address and reflect on what we have (and have not) done towards achieving the goal of Health for All. Keynote speakers will provide and challenge you with their take on: 1) Health for All? (with researchers, practitioners and policy makers); and 2) how to have a greater impact on improving primary health care.

Further information regarding the Conference, program, workshop details and the abstract submission process are all available on

<http://www.phcris.org.au/conference/2008>

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From: Roger Strasser <Roger.Strasser@NorMed.ca>
Subject: ICEMEN Conference: 9-14 June 2008

Now is the time to register for ICEMEN (International conference Community Engaged Medical Education in the North) which takes place in Northern Ontario June 8 - 14. Presented jointly by Flinders University, Australia and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM), Canada, this conference has "something for everyone". The first two days in Sudbury will focus on community based medical education program delivery; the middle day will be "medical education on the move" with on-site learning in several NOSM communities; and the final two days in Thunder Bay will be focused on rural clinical skills education, in collaboration with the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada.

Full information is available through the conference website:
<http://www.nosm.ca/icemen>

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From: McLean, Cherie <cherie.mclean@aihw.gov.au>
Subject: Australia's health 2008 conference

How are we going? How do we know?
Reserve your place for *Australia's health 2008* - the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's major biennial health conference providing insights into the health of Australia.

National Convention Centre - Canberra
Monday 23 June - Welcome Dinner
Tuesday 24 June - Conference

The program has been finalised and registrations are NOW open...

Guarantee your copy of *Australia's health 2008* - an essential reference and resource for all Australians with an interest in health, by registering for the conference.
Registration Cost \$440 (inc. GST)
Details at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/eventsdiary/ah08/index.cfm>

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INAUGURAL RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH SCIENTIFIC SYMPOSIUM
6-8 July 2008, Brisbane

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POPULATION HEALTH CONGRESS 2008
A Global World – Practical action for health and Well-being

The Population Health Congress 2008 will be held on July 6-9 in the Brisbane Convention and exhibition Centre. Regular updates on Congress 2008 will be available at <http://www.populationhealthcongress.org.au> - log on to register your interest.

The Population Health Congress 2008 is for everyone working in Population Health in Australia and New Zealand - abstracts will be accepted over the full range of public health, health promotion and epidemiological topics.

Conference Coordinators
PO Box 139
Calwe ll ACt 2905
Ph (02) 6292 9000
congress2008@confco.com.au

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Continence Awareness Week 3 to 9 August 2008
Website <http://www.continence.org.au>

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9th INTERNATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

14-16 August 2008, Holiday Inn, Gold Coast.
The revised link for access to the conference website and for abstract submissions is
Conference website: <http://www.gcimh.com.au/conference/>
Abstract Submission http://astmanagement.com.au/gcimhforms/MH_Abstract.asp

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2008 SARRAH CONFERENCE

27-30 August 2008, Yepoon. Details can be found on SARRAH's website at <http://www.sarrah.org.au>

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2008 AIDA Symposium - Our Culture, Our Kids, Our Future
Saturday 4 October, 2008
Darwin

Information at <http://www.aida.org.au/news.asp?id=30>

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17th National Conference on Incontinence - 5 to 8 November 2008 – Grand
Chancellor Hotel, Hobart
Website <http://www.continence.org.au>

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10th NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE
The 10th National Rural Health Conference will be held in Cairns in May 2009. Keep
an eye on our website at
<http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/conferences/docs/10thNRHC/10thNRHC.htm> for up-to-
date information about the Conference. The first announcement will be the Call for
Abstracts in early 2008.

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CONTRIBUTION AND SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION AND DISCLAIMER

The NRHA e-forum is published fortnightly. Contributions are sought on any topic
relevant to rural health concerns. Please send contributions to the moderator at
grovesc@winshop.com.au (do not "reply" to this email - send contributions to
grovesc@winshop.com.au). Contributions received by the Friday of publication will
be included in the e-forum.

The NRHA e-forum is edited by a third party moderator, Jim Groves. 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

Please forward a copy to any colleague you think may be interested.

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NRHA Media Release
4 April 2008

The full agenda on the rural health workforce challenge

An adequate supply of safe and high-quality health care to people in rural and remote
areas is possible, provided attention is given to both the number of health personnel
and the quantity and mix of care provided. This is the view of the National Rural
Health Alliance, the peak non-government body for rural health.

This broad agenda featured prominently in the Alliance's submission to the rural health workforce audit, commissioned by Health Minister Nicola Roxon, as reported in the latest issue of Partyline, now available on-line (www.ruralhealth.org.au).

"The Australian Government must continue to lead work on these issues. The free market and fee-for-service alone will not deliver fair amounts of health care where populations are small and distances vast," said NRHA Chair, Professor John Wakerman.

"Not only is access to professional health care a human right that is currently not available to many people in remote areas, it is also a way of investing in the national economy. A successful economy requires fit and healthy workers, so better health services will improve workforce participation and national productivity.

"Programs must be in place to ensure that sufficient numbers of health professionals are being trained and that a fair proportion of them - 30 per cent or more - are equipped for and enthusiastic about practice in rural and remote areas.

"Rural and remote health advocates need to get away from a deficit model and build on our advantages, rather than emphasising what we lack," Prof Wakerman said.

"It is not hard to find health professionals who are enthusiastic about their work even in the most remote locations. It would be great to have similar enthusiasm and job satisfaction in large numbers of health professionals in rural and regional centres."

The Alliance is calling for a broad approach to health workforce planning, involving consultation between consumers and professionals and all levels of government, and for the use of benchmarks to inform policy makers if and when targets have been met.

It is also calling for a HECS reimbursement scheme for health science graduates who practise in rural and remote areas, and a national rural placement scheme for students of health sciences as a means of increasing the numbers willing and able to work in the bush. In addition the Alliance seeks a uniform national approach to assessing, training and supporting international health professionals - including doctors - who are particularly important in country areas.

The recent commitment of the Council of Australian Government (COAG) to 50,000 extra health workers in three years through the vocational education sector will be welcomed by people in rural and remote areas.

The Alliance believes priority must be given to regions, sectors and professions in which shortages are the most serious. This includes Aboriginal Health Workers, oral and dental health, mental health, maternal and child health, and aged care, with the greatest need in more remote areas.

"Rural development is the best long-term strategy for recruitment and retention of

professionals to non-metropolitan areas - and a comprehensive and affordable IT system will be needed for this," said Prof Wakerman.

The latest issue of Partyline calls for further debate about professional scopes of practice, multi-disciplinary teams and the design of training systems for health professionals.

Other reports discuss the forthcoming Federal Budget, the Health and Hospitals Reform Commission, ambulance services, allied health and the work-life balance of general practitioners.

There is also a two-page spread on 'Advice to the Health Minister' from friends of the Alliance.

http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/publications/partyline_32_08.pdf

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Media Release

11 April 2008

Medicare figures confirm poor mental health services in the bush

Figures released today by the Australian Government reveal what rural people have suspected for some time – that the bulk of mental health services covered by the new Medicare item numbers are being accessed by people in the cities.

The figures show that, overall, 79 per cent of Medicare claims for mental health services under the new items are in metropolitan areas. For some psychological services the figure is as high as 85 per cent. This means that the 30 percent of Australians who live in rural and remote areas, who suffer a higher incidence of mental illness and face greater risk factors, are being short changed by the initiative.

National Rural Health Alliance Chairperson, John Wakerman, welcomed the proposed National Advisory Council on Mental Health, but stressed that the new body and the Government needed to squarely address rural services.

“Even if we had the telecommunications capacity we require, simply providing telephone or computer based access to mental health services in the bush is not enough,” Prof Wakerman said.

“We don’t need more piecemeal programs. We do need to build sustainable primary health care systems for the bush that include mental health services. These will be different from those in the city, and different between rural areas and remote areas.”

“Rural and remote Australia is best serviced by multidisciplinary models specifically designed for their particular circumstances. The fee-for-service model is dependent

on health professional supply and is failing people in the bush.”

“We need to systematically apply models that are known to work, such as shared care models in rural areas. We also need to systematically address workforce issues, such as supporting undergraduate mental health professional placements, enhancing professional development opportunities and providing other incentives for mental health professionals to relocate and stay in rural areas,” he said.

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Media Release

1 April 2008

Virtual issue reveals all about Indigenous health

Students and researchers keen to learn more about the changing facts surrounding Indigenous health are encouraged to consult the 2008 ‘virtual issue’ of the prestigious *Australian Journal of Rural Health*.

Freely available through the website <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/loi/ajr> readers can access 22 key reports published in the last decade covering some of the most pressing topics in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

Among these are articles by Lowitja O’Donahue promoting a culture of improvement in Indigenous health, and by Richard Hays on improving care through medical education. Other issues dealt with include barriers to improved health and increased life expectancy, the impact of disadvantage and discontent on Indigenous mental health, and oral health training for Aboriginal Health Workers.

The freely-available issue also has papers on the connection between alcohol and psychological health, and between housing and health, a partnership approach to Indigenous primary health care, innovations in management of diabetes, communication issues, educational resources, behavioural change, special services for remote areas and a fascinating review of post-operative pain experiences in Central Australian Aboriginal women.

This Indigenous issue of the AJRH has already seen a significant spike in the number of hits since it was posted in January. Special interest has come from tertiary institutions because of its value as a teaching resource.

Now into its 16th year of publication, the AJRH has an international reputation for the quality of its scholarly discourse and for its value to health researchers, professionals and policy makers. Apart from readers in Australia, the Journal has subscribers in Canada, Japan, the United States and United Kingdom.

The Journal is managed by a Board comprising delegates of the supporting constituent organisations of the National Rural Health Alliance. Edited by Professor

James Dunbar, it continues to maintain its position as one of the world's few peer-reviewed multidisciplinary journals about rural and remote health.