

National Rural Health Alliance E-forum – 29 October 1999

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APOLOGIES

Apologies for sending out the entire address list with the e-forum "special" last week. For those who couldn't wade through all the addresses before getting to the substance, it is repeated in the next item.

Jim Groves

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JOINT PROJECT ON RURAL HEALTH FINANCING

The following joint project is of great potential importance to health outcomes and services in rural and remote areas. We would be grateful if you would give it some time and pass your ideas and comments to Joan Lipscombe. Thanks.

Gordon Gregory

The National Rural Health Alliance has recently begun a joint project on rural health financing with the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care. The aim of the project, in summary, is to develop options for changes in health financing structures that will improve access to health services and health outcomes in remote and rural areas.

The project has a Steering Committee comprising many of the key groups in rural health including the Alliance, the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, NACCHO, RFDS, the Pharmacy Guild, the States/Territories, AMA, RDAA and other relevant Commonwealth Departments.

At its first meeting, the Steering Committee identified a range of problems with the current health financing arrangements which affect access to health services and health outcomes in remote and rural Australia. It also identified some preliminary ideas for further discussion on potential solutions to some of these problems.

The Alliance sees it as very important there is ample opportunity for interested

individuals and organisations to have their views heard and taken into account. It is intended that there be more formal consultations later in the project. As a first step the Alliance is inviting you to contribute your initial ideas to ensure that we take the widest possible range of views into account in identifying issues and possible solutions

Joan Lipscombe is the Alliance's project coordinator. As a first step Joan would welcome your early input on a range of questions.

(You may be able to respond to these questions from the point of view of the organisation you represent on Council, from your regional or area point of view, and/or from your personal experience. All these will be valuable inputs to the work.)

- What are the issues with the way health services are currently funded which inhibit access to health care or result in poorer outcomes than might otherwise be possible?
- For these issues can you provide any evidence as to the nature and extent of the problems which arise as a result?
- Can you provide examples (perhaps supported by literature references or other evidence) of innovative ways to fund health services which appear to be effective in improving access/outcomes? (The examples you quote may be from overseas.)
- Do you have any preliminary ideas on what could be done to change health funding arrangements to deal with the issues you have identified?

These might include, for example, options involving:

- macro level structural changes to health funding; or
- increased flexibility between existing programs; or
- changes within existing programs targeting specific issues for remote and rural - Australia.

Please send your ideas within the next couple of weeks to Joan via the Alliance's email address (nrha@ruralhealth.org.au), fax (02 6285 4670) or mail (PO Box 280 Deakin West, ACT 2600). Alternatively you could ring Joan directly on 02 6262 7975.

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From: Richard Sager <richard.sager@studentmail.newcastle.edu.au>
Subject: Recommendations from the 4th National Undergraduate Rural Health Conference

The 4th National Undergraduate Rural Health Conference was successfully held in Wagga Wagga during the 15th - 19th of September and explored the theme of 'Transient Populations'. During the five days the students and other Conference participants explored the many issues of transience. Delegates also took part in a local State Emergency Service disaster scenario, thus further illustrating the transience of a displaced population. In addition delegates tasks were to vet and review the past publications brought about through the three previous conferences and similar publications that focus on rural undergraduate education for health science students. There were eleven issues of priority identified (see below), with new directions developed. Included in this e-mail is the Web address for your viewing.

<http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/nrhn/recs.htm>

Recommendation Summary

1. RURAL HIGH SCHOOLS INITIATIVES
2. ALLIED HEALTH
3. ACCOMMODATION RECOMMENDATIONS
4. GENDER ISSUES
5. CURRICULUM - ABORIGINAL HEALTH
6. COORDINATION OF RURAL - UNDERGRADUATE PLACEMENTS
7. TEACHER IMPEDIMENT/REWARD
8. NURSING ISSUES
9. JOHN FLYNN SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME
10. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
11. RURAL STREAMING

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REGIONAL SUMMIT COMMUNIQUE

The communique from the Federal Government's Regional Summit is available on the Web at <http://www.dotrs.gov.au/regional/summit/communique.htm>

The health section is as follows

"The Summit urged recognition that optimal health status for all regional Australians requires recognition of the specific health needs of rural and remote residents. This can only be achieved through empowering communities and developing partnerships which change the dominant metropolitan-focused mindset, overcome barriers to access, ensure equitable resource allocation, enable appropriate workforce supply and service models and take account of the wide range of social and economic determinants of health."

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From: Michelle WENSLEY <MWENS@doh.health.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: NSW Clinical Information Access Program

The Clinical Information Access Program Website at <http://www.clininfo.health.nsw.gov.au> is a NSW Health initiative which provides free, on-line evidence-based information to doctors, nurses, and allied health professional working in the NSW public health system.

PASSWORD PROTECTED (NSW public health system password contacts at: <http://www.clininfo.health.nsw.gov.au/contacts/representatives.htm>
Primary Care On-line textbooks (9 in total!)

Harrisons Online 14th Edition
Interactive ECG Tutorials
MIMS (incl. Consumer Medicines Information for over 400 drugs)
Medline, CINAHL, Full Cochrane Library, Healthstar
15 Full Text Medical Journals
15 Full Text Nursing Journals
10 Full Text Mental Health Journals (sponsored by the Centre for Mental Health)
PsycINFO (sponsored by the Centre for Mental Health)
Micromedex:Emergindex, Martindales, Drugdex, Poisindex and DrugReax
Antibiotic Guidelines
On-line Internet Tutorials

Freely Available
Links to Clinical Policies, Practice Guidelines and Procedures
Links to interesting clinical web sites

For further information, pls contact Michelle Wensley, NSW Health
mwens@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

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9391 9762
Check out the CIAP Website: <http://www.clininfo.health.nsw.gov.au>

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From: Claire Harris <harrisc@cryptic.rch.unimelb.edu.au>
Subject: Child and Adolescent Rural Health

I am the GP Liaison officer at the Royal Children's Hospital in. I am now involved in a review being conducted by the hospital on the health issues of children and young people in rural Victoria. I would like to communicate with the various groups who are members of the alliance and would really appreciate your assistance.

We would like to consider the issues that affect children and young people in rural Victoria, and where possible, compare this with data for the Melbourne metropolitan area. Topics to be reviewed include:

- burden of disease
- availability, utilisation and impact of preventive and primary health care
- utilisation of acute health care facilities
- issues related to mental health
- identification of particularly disadvantaged groups based on geography, ethnicity, etc.

Unfortunately, (although not unexpectedly as these things go) we have a very short time frame - gathering data and drafting a report in the next 3 weeks - which means we need to contact potential sources of information very quickly. Do you know of any existing research or datasets that we could use to build a profile of the health status of

children in rural Victoria and the health services that provide their care?

Dr Claire Harris
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Phone: (03) 9345 6985
Fax: (03) 9345 5900

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From: "Current Therapeutics" <currenttherapeutics@hotmail.com>
Subject: Psychiatry and Rural Practice in Australia

In the October issue of CTonline, Dr David Rosenthal, rural GP in Renmark SA and Chair of the Rural Health education Foundation, discusses the provision of psychiatric help in rural and regional Australia, in an online article. If you would like to read this article visit the CTonline website at <http://www.ctonline.com.au>

To comment on the online discussion forum, the password is ctonline

I would be grateful if you could forward this information to those you think may be interested in reading this article.

Dr Dale Seaton
Managing Editor
Current Therapeutics

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From: Sue Gray <hawa@iinet.net.au>
Subject: Rural Health Service Update Seminar, Katanning

Don't miss the Healthcare Association of WA's one-day "Rural Health Service Update Seminar at the Katanning Club, 12 Amherst Street, Katanning on Wednesday 17 November 1999.

The Minister for Health has agreed to speak at the seminar and will join delegates for afternoon tea. Issues to be discussed include: MPS Developments; Rural workforce issues - recruitment and retention; Rural health shared services agency proposal; Early intervention to prevent adolescent depression; Diabetes; The impact of tax reforms on health services and you; Accreditation and quality improvement; The role of the Metropolitan Health Service in rural health delivery; Changes in the rural health organisational structure.

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AIHW REPORT ON THE MEDICAL LABOUR FORCE, 1997

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare recently released a report entitled "Medical Labour Force, 1997". It shows, for example, that the number of GPs working in rural areas has increased, with large rural centres now at the same level (108 GPs per 100,000 population) as metropolitan centres outside the capital cities. Small towns (95 per 100,000 population), other rural areas (77) and remote areas (72) are less well supplied. The Institute Press Release is at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/releases/1999/mlf97.html>

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CONTRIBUTION AND SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION AND DISCLAIMER

The NRHA e-forum is a forum for the expression of YOUR views. Contributions are sought on any topic relevant to rural health concerns. Please send contributions to the moderator, Jim Groves, at grovesc@winshop.com.au.

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.

The e-forum is sent to a mailing list of the Alliance and those have indicated interest through the subscription box at the NRHA Web site (<http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>). This issue is going to 633 recipients. Please forward a copy to any colleague you think may be interested.

To subscribe, send a message saying "subscribe NRHA eforum" to grovesc@winshop.com.au. To unsubscribe, send a message saying "unsubscribe NRHA eforum" to grovesc@winshop.com.au. The archive of the e-forum is at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/newsletter.htm>