

National Rural Health Alliance eforum - 15 December 2009

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Delays in reform 'blueprint' put rural health at risk

People in rural and remote areas are concerned that specific improvements in rural and remote health might be put on hold pending agreement by the Commonwealth and States about their respective roles and responsibilities in the wider reform picture.
<http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/mr-09-12-09.pdf>

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National Rural Health Alliance E-News November 2009

NRHA annual meetings

The Alliance held its annual face-to-face meeting in Canberra from 13-17 November 2009. Council used this opportunity to promote the interests of people in rural and remote areas to Parliamentarians and the media.

Thank you to all who provided feedback to the Alliance through the Health Reform section of the website. The feedback was valuable in helping Council form views to take to Parliament on Monday 16 November 2009.

The Alliance's AGM was also held during this time. Jenny May was re-elected as Chair for another year and a new Board appointed, with some Board members re-elected plus some

new blood.

Policy work

Intensive policy discussions at CouncilFest emphasised the desirability of the Commonwealth assuming responsibility for public primary care; full equivalence funding to underserved areas, based on making up the whole of the rural and remote health deficit (not just the GP Medicare deficit); the establishment of regional primary healthcare organisations - with the regions defined so as to be 'fit for purpose' for individual areas; and the allocation of new money for the roll-out of integrated health services.

Many of the principles of the successful Multipurpose Service (MPS) scheme were identified as important in service development for rural hubs in catchment centres where integrated primary, acute and aged care is justified by demographic and geographic considerations.

The face-to-face meeting also gave close attention to workforce issues; patients' assisted travel schemes; oral and mental health; maternity services; and the desirability of a national rural health plan to tie together the rural and remote aspects of existing developments and reform directions.

Since CouncilFest the Alliance has attended a consultation with Minister Roxon on the primary care aspects of the reform agenda, and is monitoring developments with national registration of ten health professions and the initiatives to enable nurse practitioners and midwives in certain circumstances to access the MBS and PBS.

"From creative ageing to the end-of-life in rural and remote Australia" The proceedings of the Public Seminar held on 17 November 2009 are now available on the Alliance website. There is a link to YouTube for the presentations of our guest speakers from overseas, the CEOs of Carers Australia, Frontier Services and Palliative Care Australia, and Jenny May.

RAMUS Applications

The 2010 application round for the Rural Australia Medical Undergraduate Scholarship (RAMUS) Scheme is now open for applications from students with a rural background interested in studying medicine. Details are available and applications can be made at the RAMUS page of the website: <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/scholarships>

Partyline

The next edition of Partyline will be in the post shortly. Previous editions can be accessed on the Partyline page of the website. If you would like to contribute to the next edition (article, photo, letter to the editor, poem) please contact the Editor at partyline@ruralhealth.org.au

Australian Journal of Rural Health

Issue 17(6) of the Australian Journal of Rural Health is now available to subscribers online and in hard copy. There are original peer-reviewed articles on emergency department performance; psychological screening of newly diagnosed rural cancer patients; prevention of osteoporosis post minimal trauma fracture; oncology services; promoting positive coping skills for rural youth; and an Editorial on small rural emergency departments. Access AJRH online at: <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/118489045/home>

'Rural and Remote Health Papers 1991-2009'

The updated CD 'Rural and Remote Health Papers 1991-2009' will soon be available free to

all friends of the Alliance. Make sure your membership is up-to-date to receive your copy.

A membership form is available on the friends page of the Alliance's website.

Follow us on twitter

Are you a tweeter? Follow the NRHA on twitter from the front page of our website.

11th National Rural Health Conference

Set aside the date now: in Perth, 13-16 March 2011. We look forward to hearing from you on all things rural and remote.

<http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>

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GP Anaesthetists Locum Scheme

The new General Practitioner Anaesthetists' Locum Scheme (GPALS) is underway. An Australian Government rural health workforce initiative, GPALS is designed to specifically support GP anaesthetists throughout rural and remote Australiacountry-region> and generous subsidies are available.

Managed by the Australian Society of Anaesthetists, GPALS is currently seeking applications from all interested Hosts in Remoteness Areas 2-5 (GP anaesthetist/practice/hospital) and Locums (both GP and specialist anaesthetists).

For more information, please call Dianne on (02) 9327 4022, send an email to gpals@fed.asa.org.au or visit the ASA website at <http://www.asa.org.au>

Information on Remoteness Area classifications is available at <http://www.doctorconnect.gov.au>

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Call for funding applications - Health and Hospitals Fund - Regional Cancer Centres Initiative

In the 2009-10 Budget, the Australian Government committed \$2 billion to build a world-class cancer care system. Included in this investment is \$1.3 billion over six years from the Health and Hospitals Fund towards infrastructure and support, essential to providing better cancer treatment and access to care, including for patients in rural, regional and remote Australia. This investment includes funding of \$560 million over five years to build a network of best practice regional cancer centres.

On 14 November 2009, the Government advertised an Invitation to Apply for public or private organisations interested in establishing new or enhanced Regional Cancer Centres around the nation. Joint private and public ventures may also be considered. Applicants must be able to demonstrate they have the capacity to support and maintain a viable and sustainable regional cancer centre, including addressing workforce needs and recurrent operational costs. Applicants must also show how the proposed centre will align with state

and territory cancer services plans, be part of a collaborative network of cancer services and have appropriate referral pathways.

The Centres will help close the gap in cancer outcomes between city and country by improving access and support for cancer patients in rural, regional and remote Australia. The Centres will also consider the needs of Indigenous Australians and people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

The closing date for organisations wishing to apply for Regional Cancer Centre funding is Friday 8 January 2010. The application guidelines, funding application form and supporting documentation can be obtained by registering at the Department of Health and Ageing website <http://www.health.gov.au/tenders>

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Join friends in 2010

2010 is shaping up to be another interesting and important year for health in rural and remote areas. We are writing to encourage you to join or renew your membership of friends of the Alliance for another year. The cost of membership is unchanged: \$44 (including GST) for an individual, \$165 for an organisation of less than 50 people, and \$330 for a large organisation.

On joining you will receive a friends membership pack including a certificate, the Rural and Remote Health Papers CD, lapel pin, fact sheets and the latest annual report. A membership form can also be found on the friends page of the Alliance website at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/friends/?IntCatId=4>

The NRHA values the input of friends and finds its advice and contributions invaluable to the work of the Alliance. We look forward to working with you again in 2010.

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RAMUS Scholarships now open

Applications are now open for the Rural Australia Medical Undergraduate Scholarships (RAMUS) Scheme, funded by the Australian Government and designed to encourage medical students with a rural background to pursue a medical career in rural, regional or remote Australia.

Successful applicants will receive un-bonded scholarships worth \$10,000 a year while completing a standard medical degree at their chosen university. The RAMUS Scheme is open to medical students from rural and remote areas, with demonstrated financial need being one of the criteria for ranking those who apply.

"The RAMUS Scheme supports a total of 550 ongoing scholarships and up to 120 new scholarship places are available in 2010. Applications must be submitted by 5pm on 18 January 2010," said RAMUS Manager, Susan Magnay.

The RAMUS page of the Alliance website has all the details - see <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/scholarships/?IntCatId=7>

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NSW Regional Dentistry Scholarship

The NSW Regional Dentistry Scholarship aims to support a student with strong links to regional New South Wales to train for a professional dental career. The scholarship will be awarded annually to a student commencing dentistry studies to help offset their costs in establishing themselves in their course.

Applications for 2010 are now open. Applications must be submitted by 24 February 2010. Application form available at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/otherscholarships/docs/NSW-RDS%20Application%20Form.doc>

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Australian Farm Institute-Research report- Essential services in urban and regional Australia

Newly released research has for the first time quantified the extra costs faced by Australia's non-metropolitan residents in accessing essential government services, and highlighted the need to find better ways to deliver essential services in regional Australia.

The research, commissioned by the Australian Farm Institute and carried out by the National Institute of Industry and Economic Research (NIEIR), used census and other objective data to calculate the costs faced by all Australian residents in accessing essential services such as doctors, hospitals, schools, TAFE colleges and universities. These costs were then compared between metropolitan, urban and rural residents.

The research showed that:

- * on average, it costs rural residents five times as much to access essential services as it does metropolitan residents
- * the biggest access cost disadvantages faced by rural residents are for hospitals, residential care services, secondary schools, TAFE colleges and universities
- * the services for which there is least access cost disadvantage for rural residents are pharmacies and Centrelink centres and agencies.

The research report: Essential Services in Urban and Regional Australia - a Quantitative Comparison, is available for purchase at http://farminstitute.org.au/CampaignProcess.aspx?A=Link&VID=3177391&KID=72441&LID=253455&O=http%3a%2f%2ffarminstitute.org.au%2f_catalog_31033%2fResearch_Report_S

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Partyline is the newsletter of the National Rural Health Alliance. Partyline enables communication within the rural community and invites contributions about issues relating to health and wellbeing in rural, regional and remote parts of Australia. Subscription is free. All back copies of Partyline are available at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>

To submit contributions or request subscription, email partyline@ruralhealth.org.au

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AIDA congratulates seven Indigenous medical pioneers

The nation's peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors - the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA) - has congratulated the first wave of Indigenous medical graduates, who were recognised for their pioneering efforts at an international medical education conference in Melbourne on 3-4 December.

<http://www.aida.org.au/viewrelease.aspx?id=56>

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CLICK TO GIVE FREE MAMMOGRAMS

<http://www.thebreastcancersite.com/clickToGive/home.faces?siteId=2>

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AIHW REPORTS

OECD says 'smoking down, but obesity up' for Australians

The proportion of Australians who smoke has more than halved in the past 20 years, while the proportion of obese Australians has almost tripled, according to a report released by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The OECD's fifth biennial report *Health at a Glance 2009 - OECD Indicators* compares key health data across its 30 member countries. Australian data for the report were supplied by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/mediacentre/2009/mr20091209.cfm>

Long road ahead to cut risks for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic kidney disease
A new report released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) shows that while a lot is being done to reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular disease, diabetes and chronic kidney disease, significant levels of risk still remain. According to the report, *Prevention of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and chronic kidney disease: targeting risk factors*, cardiovascular disease (CVD), diabetes and chronic kidney disease (CKD) account for around a quarter of the burden of disease and just under two-thirds of all deaths in Australia. Indigenous Australians and people from lower socioeconomic groups are particularly affected.

Media statement at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/mediacentre/2009/mr20091211.cfm>

Report summary at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/phe/phe-118-10696/phe-118-10696-sum.html>

Full report at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10696>

Caesarean rate stabilises as baby boom continues

The rate of women undergoing caesarean section has stabilised for the first time in more than ten years according to a report "Australia's mothers and babies 2007" from the AIHW. The report also shows more women are having babies and more are delaying having children until

later in life. The baby boom continued with over 12,000 more births in 2007 than in 2006 and 14% more than in 2004. The perinatal death rate was 10.3 per 1,000 births and fetal and neonatal deaths were 7.4 per 1,000 births and 2.9 per 1,000 live births respectively. Young maternal age, maternal Indigenous status and multiple births were associated with higher rates of perinatal deaths.

Media statement at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/mediacentre/2009/mr20091210.cfm>

Report summary at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/per/per-48-10972/per-48-10972-sum.html>

Full report at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10972>

NT child health checks-many children benefit, some still need follow-up services

Many children have benefited from health services following health checks in the Northern Territory, but not all children have received follow-up services for their health problems, according to a report released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare "*Progress of the Northern Territory Emergency Response Child Health Check Initiative: final report on results from the Child Health Check and follow-up data collections*". The shows that more than 10,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged between 0 and 15 years received a Child Health Check (CHC) under the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) between July 2007 and June 2009.

Media statement at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/mediacentre/2009/mr20091204.cfm>

Report summary at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/ihw/ihw-28-10793/ihw-28-10793-sum.html>

Full report at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10793>

GPs managing more problems at patient visits

General practitioners are managing increasing numbers of newly diagnosed problems and chronic conditions, according to a report by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) and the University of Sydney "*General practice activity in Australia 2008-09*".

Media statement at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/mediacentre/2009/mr20091202.cfm>

Report summary at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/gep/gep-25-11013/gep-25-11013-sum.html>

Full report at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/11013>

Hospital care-public or private, the Australian government contribution is the same

Whether you are a public patient in a public hospital or a patient using private insurance in a private hospital, the Australian Government ends up contributing around the same amount of funding, according to a report by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) "*Funding sources for admitted patients in Australian hospitals, 2005-06*".

Media statement at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/mediacentre/2009/mr20091201.cfm>

Report summary at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/hwe/hwe-44-10705/hwe-44-10705-sum.html>

Full report at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10705>

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The Australian Journal of Rural Health is a multidisciplinary journal, which aims to facilitate the formation of interdisciplinary networks to build and advance rural practice for all health professionals. Get published in the *Australian Journal of Rural Health*! The Journal welcomes short reports and letters to the editor as well as review articles, original research articles and clinical perspectives. For useful tips on submitting your manuscript, read the

FREE editorial, *How to get published in the Australian Journal of Rural Health*.

Manuscripts can be submitted online at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ajrh> Manuscript Central or posted to AJRH. The Australian Journal of Rural Health is published on behalf of the National Rural Health Alliance by Blackwell Publishing Asia Pty Ltd 155 Cremorne Street Richmond Vic. 3121 Tel: +61 (0)3 9274 3100 Fax: +61 (0)3 9274 3101 E-mail: melbourne@johnwiley.com.au

December 2009 issue now available. Contents include:

Editorial - Small rural emergency departments are not simply cut-down large urban emergency departments

Original Articles

Emergency department performance at a small rural hospital: An independent in-depth review

Does routine psychological screening of newly diagnosed rural cancer patients lead to better patient outcomes? Results of a pilot study

Pharmacy students' intention to practise in a rural setting: Measuring the impact of a rural curriculum, rural campus and rural placement on a predominantly metropolitan student cohort

Secondary prevention of osteoporosis post minimal trauma fracture in an Australian regional and rural population

A seven-year retrospective analysis of students entering medicine via a Rural Student Recruitment program in Western Australia

Mapping oncology services in regional and rural Australia

Factors associated with population risk perceptions of continuing drought in Australia

Promoting positive coping skills for rural youth: Benefits for at-risk young people

Book Review - Enhancing Patient Care - A Practical Guide to Improving Quality and Safety in Hospitals

From the Journal Associates

National Rural Health Alliance meets with Minister for Rural Health

Combined voice: Royal College of Nursing, *Australia's* rural nursing and midwifery faculty

Further information at <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/loi/ajr>

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Indigenous medical students urged to apply for AMA scholarship

AMA President Dr Andrew Pesce today urged Indigenous medical students to apply for the 2010 AMA Indigenous Peoples' Medical Scholarship. The scholarship was established in 1995 to help increase the number of Indigenous doctors in Australia.

"The AMA believes that an essential part of closing the gap in Indigenous health is to build an adequate workforce for Indigenous health. This importantly includes doctors and health professionals who are Indigenous," Dr Pesce said. "There is evidence that there is a greater chance of improved health outcomes when Indigenous people are treated by Indigenous doctors and health workers.

<http://www.ama.com.au/node/5212>

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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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FEDERAL GOVERNMENT NEWS

Digital projects aid regional communities

The Government will invest \$26.5 million in Digital Regions projects to deliver more connected health, education and emergency services in regional, rural and remote communities across Australia.

<http://www.alp.org.au/media/1209/mscoitpm100.php>

New Dental School in Orange

The Charles Sturt University's Community Dental and Oral Health Clinic at Orange was officially opened by the Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Mark Butler. The Orange clinical school facilities include two dental clinics with 24 chairs, a dental simulation and anatomy laboratory, specialist dental teaching and research facilities and two IT lecture theatres. This funding is part of a broader Commonwealth Government investment of more than \$58 million for Charles Sturt University's dental school project with sites in Wagga Wagga, Albury, Bathurst, Dubbo and Orange that will support 60 commencing places each year for dental and oral health students.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr09-mb-mb038.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2009&mth=12>

E-Health Takes Important Step Forward

The Rudd Government released exposure draft legislation that will assign a unique healthcare identifier number to health care providers and consumers - an important step in building a secure e-health system in Australia. The exposure draft Healthcare Identifiers Bill 2010 sets out the functions of the new Healthcare Identifiers Service, the assignment of healthcare identifiers and the purposes for which identifiers may be used or disclosed.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr09-nr-nr230.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2009&mth=12>

Working with families to protect children

Early intervention services, which draw on kinship ties of Aboriginal people to build strong families and protect children, are being established in the Alice Springs town camps and surrounding areas under the Alice Springs Transformation Plan.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr09-ws-ws061.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2009&mth=12>

COAG - Renegotiation of National Partnership on Remote Indigenous Housing

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to the renegotiation of the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing. COAG agreed to the renegotiation

following consideration of progress by the States and the Northern Territory on the implementation of the National Partnership. COAG noted that the Prime Minister has written to Premier's and the Chief Ministers outlining in detail the terms of the negotiation.
<http://www.pm.gov.au/node/6373>

6000 km regional broadband backbone

'This priority \$250 million investment will directly benefit more than 395,000 people in 100 regional locations and create new jobs across five states and the Northern Territory,' said the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy.
http://www.minister.dbcde.gov.au/media/media_releases/2009/109

Reforming Health For All Australians

The Prime Minister met with Premiers and Chief Ministers to discuss future directions for national health reform. The Australian health system faces huge pressures, including: An ageing population A growing chronic disease burden Health workforce shortages Escalating costs of medicines and medical technology. As a result of these combined pressures, the health system has reached a tipping point.
<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr09-nr-nr226.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2009&mt=12>

First report into Remote Indigenous Service Delivery

The Australian Government today released the first six monthly report from the Coordinator General for Remote Indigenous Services on the progress being made in delivering essential services to people living in 29 priority Indigenous locations across Australia.
http://www.jennymacklin.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/jennymacklin.nsf/content/remot_indig_ser_vices_4dec2009.htm

Everybody's business: remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait community stores

House Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
The remote community store has the potential to play a pivotal role in improving the social, economic and health outcomes of remote Indigenous communities.
<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/atsia/index.htm>

New Incentives to Provide Better Health Care To Indigenous Australians

A new incentive program to help provide better health care to Indigenous Australians was announced in Melbourne on 10 December.
<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr09-ws-ws062.htm>

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NACCHO NEWS

3 December 2009

CIS report doesn't Close the Accountability Gap
<http://www.naccho.org.au/Files/Documents/09-12-3%20CIS%20report%20NACCHO%20Media%20Response%20JM.pdf>

30 November 2009

Peak Aboriginal Health Body commemorates World AIDS Day
<http://www.naccho.org.au/Files/Documents/09-12->

[1%20World%20AIDS%20Day%20%20Aboriginal%20Health%20Media%20Release.pdf](#)

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AUSTRALIAN ORGAN DONOR REGISTER ONLINE

The Australian Organ Donor Register is Australia's only national organ and tissue donor register and serves as a lifeline to the people on the organ transplant waiting lists. Register online at <http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/public/services/aodr/register.jsp> to be an Australian Organ Donor now!

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Rural Health on Croakey - the Crikey Health Blog

Bushfire season: lessons from Victoria for health and health services
December 8, 2009 - 9:49 am, by [Croakey](#)

With the bushfire threat high on many peoples' minds (including Croakey's), it is timely to consider some of the health issues involved. One of many lessons from the Victorian experience is that health services, especially in areas under-served at the best of times, require extra support for the long-term after such a disaster.

<http://blogs.crikey.com.au/croakey/2009/12/08/bushfire-season-lessons-from-victoria-for-health-and-health-services/>

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BUSH SUPPORT SERVICES (formerly Bush Crisis Line) - 1800 805 391

The Bush Support Services Line is a 24 hour confidential telephone support service for workers, and their families, who work in health related services in remote and isolated situations. 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.bss.crana.org.au>

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RURAL HEALTH ON THE ABC

(See <http://www.abc.net.au/health/healthyliving/yourhealth/ruralregionalhealth/>)

Cancer rates on the rise for farmers

The cancer rate in Australian farmers in on the rise because of their exposure to dangerous chemicals. That's what the Australian National University's Doctor Liz Hanna told a Cancer Council of Australia forum.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/200912/s2768583.htm>

INDIGENOUS DOCTORS CELEBRATED (AM: 04/12/2009)

<http://abcmail.net.au/t/738571/614869/14640/0/>

Qld Health considers rural health models

Queensland Health says it is looking at new ways to deliver improved health services to rural and remote communities across the state.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/12/08/2764787.htm>

Intervention: kids miss out on health follow-ups

The latest update on the progress of child health checks under the Northern Territory Emergency Response shows a large proportion of children have not had follow-up treatment. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/12/04/2762099.htm>

Indigenous health scheme getting results

A preventative health program in Kimberley communities is being credited with bucking national trends in Indigenous obesity and diabetes. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/11/30/2757312.htm>

Rural families get helping hand

Hundreds of volunteers and grey nomads have signed up to be part of a national program to lend a hand on rural properties and isolated stations. The welfare organisation Frontier Services runs a program where it links volunteers with rural families needing help. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/11/30/2757081.htm>

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RDAA NEWS

Submission to the Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee's inquiry into suicide in Australia

10 December 2009
http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/Response%20to%20Senate%20Inquiry%20Suicide%20in%20Aust%202009%20--%20online%20version.pdf

Rural doctors warn COAG there can be no health reform without a health workforce

5 December 2009
http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/RDAA%20-%20COAG%20media%20release%20-%206%20Dec%202009.pdf

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ARTICLES IN 'RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH'

'Expectations and experiences associated with rural GP placements'
Placement experiences have the potential to influence medical career decision-making. What, then, are the pre-placement expectations and actual experiences associated with rural GP placement. This unique, small South Australian study will make thought-provoking reading for those interested in the rural GP workforce. <http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=1264>

'A new model to understand the career choice and practice location decisions of medical graduates'
The one-year Flinders University program for undergraduate education located in rural general practices has set the standard for medical education in Australia and internationally. This results of this study suggest that half of these graduates are on a rural pathway. The article considers why the other half is not, applying unique typology that includes 'The Frustrated' and 'The Metro Docs'.

<http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=1245>

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CURRENT ISSUE OF eMJA

(Available at <http://www.mja.com.au/>)

Rapid Online Publication

The new "Indigenous health" incentive payment: issues and challenges - 7 December 2009

The rational clinician in a pandemic setting - 30 November 2009

Current issue: 16 November 2009

From the Editor's Desk: Daylight saving: a dark side?

Editorials

The role of general practitioners in managing and treating hepatitis C

Building health literacy in Australia

Optimising the therapeutic use of oxygen in Australia

Conference Report - Grasping the initiative in health policy research and reform

Research

Risks associated with low functional health literacy in an Australian population

Screening for hepatitis C virus infection in methadone-maintained mothers and their infants

Treatment disparities and effect on late mortality in patients with diabetes presenting with acute myocardial infarction: observations from the ACACIA registry

A classification of hospital-acquired diagnoses for use with routine hospital data

Health Care

Variability in the rate of prescription and cost of domiciliary oxygen therapy in Australia

Tobacco use and measuring nicotine dependence among urban Indigenous pregnant women

Clinical Update - Bridging the communication gap between public and private radiology services

Viewpoint - Whole-of-hospital response to admission access block: the need for a clinical revolution

Notable Cases - "Paradoxical" immune-mediated reactions to *Mycobacterium ulcerans* during antibiotic treatment: a result of treatment success, not failure

Lessons from Practice - A disastrous sequela of a missed ureteric stent

Letters

Rates of hospitalisation for acute respiratory illness and the emergence of pandemic (H1N1) 2009 virus in the Hunter New England Area Health Service

Timing of bronchiolitis hospitalisations and respiratory syncytial virus immunoprophylaxis in non-metropolitan Western Australia

Impact of Australian celebrity diagnoses on prostate cancer screening

Who is responsible for the care of patients treated with warfarin therapy?

Stop taking warfarin? No way!

Adverse outcomes of labour in public and private hospitals in Australia

Timing of transfer for pregnant women from Queensland Cape York communities to Cairns for birthing

Patterns of mortality in Indigenous adults in the Northern Territory, 1998-2003

Close the Gap: ask the experts

Why health reform?

Obituary - Charles Ronald Lucas

Book Reviews

Ethics and law revisited
Preventing cardiovascular disease

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From: Elisia Dowling edowling@parks.vic.gov.au
Subject: International *Healthy Parks Healthy People* Congress

With the increasing recognition of the value of nature to human health and wellbeing worldwide, Parks Victoria will host the inaugural International *Healthy Parks Healthy People Congress* at the new Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, Australia from 11-16 April 2010.

This will be a unique opportunity to bring together delegates from all relevant sectors (i.e. planning, community development, physical and mental health, tourism, climate change, education, recreation, ecology and park management) to explore how we can take better advantage of the way nature significantly contributes to our wellbeing and broader societal benefits.

We are seeking proposals under the following themes: Healthy Communities, HealthyPlaceName> Parks, Healthy Participation, Healthy People and subthemes.

In addition to the partners displayed on the website, the support of the World Health Organisation, United Nations World Tourism Organisation, US Federal Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and the Australian Federal Government Department of Health & Ageing is being sought.

<http://www.healthyparkshealthypeoplecongress.org>

Elisia Dowling
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International Healthy Parks Healthy People Congress April 11-16, 2010
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Healing Our Spirit 2010

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers and researchers are advised to start planning now for Healing Our Spirit Worldwide The Sixth Gathering, which is due to take place on the island of Honolulu in Hawaii from 3 to 10 September 2010. The goal of Healing Our Spirit Worldwide (HOSW) is to celebrate the diverse and unique cultural strengths, knowledge and talents of Indigenous peoples around the world, with a particular focus on successes, best practices and common issues in health, healing and addictions.

The Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health is a proud supporter of and committed participant in the gathering, which will be hosted by native Hawaiian healthcare organisation Papa Ola Lōkahi

<http://www.papaolalokahi.org>).

For more information:

Maria Halkitis - Contract Manager, 08 8943 5020

Mick Gooda - CEO, 0409 688 403

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Rural Medicine Australia 2010

Scientific Forum: Call for abstracts

The 2010 national conference and scientific forum of ACRRM and RDAA will be in Perth in October. The scientific forum is a significant part of the conference and is held every second year. There will be a call for abstracts early in the new year. Almost 300 people attended Rural Medicine Australia 2009.

<http://www.acrrm.org.au/news/rural-medicine-australia-2010>

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The 11th National Rural Health Conference will be held in Perth on 13-16 March 2011.

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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 views 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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Media Release

9 December 2009

Delays in reform 'blueprint' put rural health at risk

People in rural and remote areas are concerned that specific improvements in rural and remote health might be put on hold pending agreement by the Commonwealth and States about their respective roles and responsibilities in the wider reform picture.

"It is vital that initiatives already agreed as important for better rural and remote health are not held up by governments failure to agree on a "blueprint" for major health reform," said Dr

Jenny May, Chair of the National Rural Health Alliance.

It is also of concern that such a blueprint continues to be characterised in the media as "a Commonwealth takeover" - a phrase that oversimplifies the issues and seems to run counter to the need for regional and local decision making.

The Minister has referred to the health system reaching "a tipping point". The Alliance believes that point has already been reached in rural and remote areas. This makes it imperative that further improvements targeted to rural and remote areas be included in the Federal Budget in May 2010.

"There are many necessary changes that can be implemented now that are not dependent on overall Commonwealth-State agreement and these should not be held up while a national reform blueprint is being developed," Dr May said.

"These should include extra investment in attracting professionals from all disciplines to the rural and remote health workforce, as well as supporting and retaining those already there. The Commonwealth must also take the lead and invest with the States and Territories in improving Patients? Assisted Travel Schemes. Work to quantify the total rural and remote health deficit should also begin in earnest as a basis for moving soon to make equivalence payments to under-serviced areas."

A welcome measure announced at this week's COAG meeting in Brisbane was the promise to further develop a national e-health system, with commitment to the introduction of national health care identifiers in 2010 - prerequisites for a patient-controlled electronic health record.

"Electronic health records are especially vital for people from rural and remote areas because such people are required to seek health services both locally and in other centres. This initiative must remain on track," said Dr May. 2

While the promise of additional resources from the Commonwealth for elective surgery is welcome, the main concern in rural areas is about potential closure of smaller hospitals. Rural people are entitled to expect specific investment in hospitals in medium-sized towns, not just to provide local services but also so they can act as outreach service hubs to smaller centres for integrated acute, primary and aged care.

"People in rural and remote areas are looking forward to the benefits that will accrue from the national reform blueprint," Dr May said. "But at the same time, much of what needs to be done to improve rural and remote health services is plain to all and should not be postponed."
