

NCAHA NEWS

Your monthly communication from the
North Coast Allied Health Association



Message from the Board



Nick Neville,
Occupational Therapist,
Director NCAHA

The Australian Federal Budget 2017-18 was handed down earlier this month. The Budget includes some welcome measures for Allied Health, however we will have to wait a further two years before they are implemented. The unfreezing of Allied Health service items on the Medicare Benefits Schedule and for veterans is good news and should be applauded ... in 2019!

If two years is a long time in politics, it is an eon in the life of someone living with chronic and complex health conditions. We are pleased to hear that Allied Health Professions Australia (AHPA) is actively engaged in lobbying the government so that these measures are not lost.

Commitment to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) funding has been given, and the NDIS roll out continues, creating a multitude of opportunities for health service providers. If you haven't registered yet, but want to work with NDIS clients, it is important to start the registration process. We should all be grateful to the trial sites whose experiences and feedback have helped to iron out some of the glitches in the scheme. However, based on feedback from members of the NDIS, the system has some way to travel before it could be considered to be 100% sorted.

In other news, pharmacists are being urged to sign up to My Health Record. The Australian Digital Health Agency says that out of 5,587 community pharmacies across Australia only about 1,200 are signed up (compared to nearly 6,000 general practices registered with the system). Included in this edition are the steps pharmacists can take to utilise My Health Record (p. 6).

There have been exciting developments in the roll out of the Allied Health Rural Generalist Training Program. The program has now commenced with Allied Health Professionals from seven professions commencing Level 1 training through James Cook University/QUT. This will lead to skill sharing between Allied Health professions and the implementation of new service delivery models such as telehealth. More information can be obtained through googling 'Rural Generalist Program'.

And don't forget the free online training and professional development that is available via the PHN- details on p. 3.

I hope you enjoy this month's newsletter.



North Coast
Allied Health Association

NCAHA receives support from North Coast Primary Health Network in developing this newsletter.



Sarah Miles, Occupational Therapist and Clinical Educator at UCRH, Lismore

Before attending an Open Day at the University of Sydney, Sarah Miles had ideas of becoming a teacher or a nurse, or pursuing international studies. But a friend suggested she investigate the university's Occupational Therapy (OT) course, and an international placement to India sealed her decision.



Sarah qualified as an OT in 2005. Her first role was a part-time position as an adult community OT in Merrylands in western Sydney. This role became full-time when it merged with a paediatric OT role in Auburn.

"Being a sole practitioner in my first professional position was challenging and interesting. I was working with anyone over 18 with a long term disability or illness doing a lot of home modifications and equipment to enable people to stay at home. I was also involved in some community work around falls prevention but there were long waiting lists to see an OT which I found frustrating.

"I worked with many people who had English as a second language – a lot of Italians and Afghani refugees as well as Maltese and Arabic speaking clients. It was fascinating to work with so many different community groups."

After her first job in western Sydney, Sarah took the opportunity to work overseas and went to the UK. Here she spent 18 months working in Scotland in the Yorkhill Children's Hospital. This work involved clinics for prescription of equipment such as wheelchairs and seating systems as well as running groups around developing fine motor skills such as handwriting.

"After this role, I worked for another year out of Glasgow in a Developmental Coordination Disorder Clinic working with kids with coordination difficulties. And for two years I worked for Nottingham County Council in their social work department on their disabled children's team. This was mainly organising major home modifications for children with muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy or severe autism. The modifications involved hoists and high-low baths, unique equipment we don't much use in Australia."

Around this time Sarah did short stints in Romanian orphanages. She describes her work in Romania as 'very challenging'. It's unusual for the authorities to allow foreigners to work in Romanian orphanages, but Sarah was linked in through a Romanian organisation and the Children's Hospital in Brasov in central Romania.

"I began working with the girls in these orphanages teaching them life skills, such as how to get a job, how to cook, all the things they'd never been taught to do."

In Romania Sarah also had the opportunity to discuss with a social worker and speech pathologist the particular effects on children who'd been neglected and lacked touch or attention. She would have loved to have continued this research and education but had to return to Australia.

Back home, Sarah worked for Lismore Community Health as an adults' OT and then worked at the Jumbunna Community Pre-School and Early Intervention Centre for some months before going into private practice. For Sarah, private practice proved too isolating and confronting with complex medico-legal issues and she was happy to return to community work.

As a result of two OT student placement projects she managed at Southern Cross University in primary school and aged care, Sarah connected with UCRH and started in her current role in August last year. She is now one of the supervisors supervising the UCRH OT students in placements across seven pre-schools/schools and two aged care facilities in Ballina, Kyogle and Casino. These students are filling a big gap for Kyogle and Casino in particular, which have not had any paediatric OT services for years.

"I love this work, I love the mentoring and supporting the students. I have found that they consider their placements the most challenging they've experienced, but also the most rewarding. This is because they don't have access to me as their supervisor all the time and have to think on their feet. It's also wonderful that the school is getting an important service they'd otherwise miss out on."

As well as the placements giving the students valuable experience, Sarah sees the placements working to upskill teachers.

"The students are able to give the teachers some OT training and demonstrate how they work in improving self-regulation among pupils. This is training that the teachers can use in the classroom to improve attention and concentration."

Sarah has a life motto which is about her desire to see people reach their full potential. Her OT work gives her great satisfaction in seeing people make big improvements in their daily lives.

"I love it when you see a child's face light up when they master a new skill. We had a little boy in the UK who wanted to be able to ride a bike with his siblings and we worked with him on that and being able to ride his bike was a huge step for him. It's so rewarding to watch kids who don't think they'll ever master a skill be able to do it, or to improve their handwriting markedly. It's great to see their confidence blossom."

Contact Sarah at UCRH in Lismore on 6620 7570.

Practice Makes Perfect

Allied Health students making a difference in our communities.



Students Chris Zachary and Corrina Moore working with residents at Crowley Village in Ballina.



Student Alex Roberts working with a group of residents from Feros Care in Byron Bay.

Student Mike Hosseini working with a resident in the pool at Byron Bay.



Students Dom Dague and Chelsea Clark working with residents from Feros Care in Kingscliff.

Photos by Robin Osbourne, UCRH.

Speed Networking in Port Macquarie

Getting Allied Health Professionals and GPs together is a key aim for NCAHA. The success of our recent Speed Networking events shows that clinicians can see the value in this, too.

Here is a snapshot of our Speed Networking event in Port Macquarie on 30 March:

Total attendees: 46

Number AH: 35 (strong show of private practice)

Number GPs: 11

What happened:

There were three networking styles incorporated into the evening:

1. Arrival. As people arrived they had something to eat and drink and mingled informally – a great way to start, as many people had come from work and needed the time to get comfortable in the space.
2. Speed networking. Based loosely on the concept of a cycle chain, the room was set up in a circle and people sat four to a table (two inside and two outside the circle). Every two minutes they were given a signal (1980s pop music) and everyone moved one seat to the right, so that each person was sitting in front of a different person. After 50-60 minutes the group took a break and then moved into the third networking phase.

3. Wind down. This involved more informal mingling and people catching up with anyone they had missed or wanted to ask more questions. More food was on offer.

Overall, this was a successful and relaxed event that left some attendees a little hoarse, which must be a good sign for a networking event.

The feedback afterwards was positive and any suggestions made in the evaluation will be taken on board for next time.

MyHealth Record

Also at this Speed Networking event, we conducted a straw poll of MyHealth Record and this is what we heard:

- 41/46 clinicians had heard of MyHeath Record
- 3/46 clinicians were using MyHeath Record
- 20 clinicians were using another clinical software system for digital patient records
- 3 clinicians were interested in being a model site

Thanks must go to NCPHN for co-organising this event, especially Siobhan, Jenny and Fiona.

Free Professional Development Courses

North Coast Allied Health Professionals can access free online professional development training thanks to a partnership between NCPHN and NCAHA. The courses, which are delivered through the TAFE Now website, take around an hour to complete and are worth one CPD (Continuing Professional Development) point per hour.

Get free access to:

- Allied Health course topics for Allied Health Professionals
- Healnet course topics for nurses and other similar medical professionals
- Generic short course topics for small businesses and self interest

Access the NCPHN enrolment key and full course instructions at:

www.healthynorthcoast.org.au/cpd

Webinars for Allied Health Providers

Allied Health Professions Australia (AHPA) and its members are working to support Allied Health practices to better understand practice software and digital health technology.

A series of webinars has been developed to help practices know more about software options, what benefits they might get from using practice systems, and how they might integrate different elements of digital technology into their practice.

The webinars will be held over the next months and are available free to any Allied Health Practitioner. Additional resources and webinar recordings will be made available as part of the project.

Visit <http://bit.ly/2qTKdpK> to learn more.

Working Together To Become NDIS-Ready

Develop practical steps to ready the region for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The Centre for Healthcare, Knowledge & Innovation invites you to a community and cross-agency workshop to best prepare the region for the roll out of the NDIS.

Participants will work together in groups with a range of NDIS experts to design a region-ready plan that will ensure the best outcomes for North Coast communities. Discuss strategy and design, engage in cross-agency conversation, and learn how to work collaboratively to reach the promise of the NDIS.

Following a brief introduction to the NDIS and what it means for the North Coast, participants will be grouped strategically to discuss how the scheme should work. NDIS experts will work the floor to encourage discussion, learning and practical next steps.

This co-design workshop aims to develop practical steps to prepare, collaborate, and achieve the best outcomes for communities on the North Coast.

Centre for Healthcare Knowledge & Innovation is a partnership with the aim of increasing knowledge, innovation and integration in health and social services. Find out more at www.ncphn.org.au/the-centre.

There are limited spaces available, so book early.

Register at www.region-ready-ndis.eventbrite.com.au.

Enquiries can be made to bthirkell@ncphn.org.au.

National oral health study

Australia's oral health will go under scrutiny in the first national study of its kind in more than a decade.

The University of Adelaide study will examine the gums and teeth of 15,000 Australians over the next 12 months.

The \$5.8 million study will be conducted by researchers at the Australian Research Centre for Population Oral Health (ARCPOH).

"It's critical that we understand the changes in dental health among adult Australians, and the quality, prevalence and accessibility of services they receive," said chief investigator Professor Marco Peres.

Poor dental hygiene has been linked to cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

Regular check ups at the dentists also dramatically decrease the risk of pneumonia.

Members of the community will be selected at random to take part and will be interviewed over the phone or via a web-based survey, and will be invited to have a free dental examination to assess their dental health.

Researchers will also track the 5,500 participants from the previous national study 10 years ago, also conducted at the University of Adelaide.

Health workforce scholarships slashed

Allied Health has been dealt a \$72.5 million blow, with the Federal Government slashing its funding for health workforce scholarships over four years.

SARRAH, the peak body for rural and remote Allied Health professionals, has called on the government to reverse the funding cuts which it fears poses a major risk to undergraduate and postgraduate students wanting to pursue education from 2018 onwards.

In a letter to parliamentarians, SARRAH CEO Rod Wellington said the cut in funding for the 2017 cohort of students would have a longer term adverse impact on the rural and remote health workforce."

"At a minimum, successful scholars should be afforded a mechanism through which they can maintain their financial support beyond 2017.

"This will ensure that a cohort of Allied Health Professionals is not lost in the transition to the new Health Workforce Scholarship Program to be rolled out during 2017," he added.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Allied Health Working Group - Patient Centred Medical Home Project

The North Coast Primary Health Network (NCPHN) is seeking expressions of interest from allied health professionals wishing to be part of a small working group to assist with the development of a quality improvement handbook for allied health as part of NCPHN's Patient Centred Medical Home Project.

In response to changes announced by the Australian Government in March 2016, new models for chronic care packaging are shortly to be trialled across Australia using the medical home model.

NCPHN is in the process of developing handbooks for use by allied health practitioners to outline the concept of integrated patient centred care and the use of the medical home model for the delivery of care to prepare and equip practices for these potential changes. Continuous quality improvement methodology will form an important part of these changes.

NCPHN is establishing a small working group made up of a diverse mix of allied health professionals to assist with the development of the allied health handbook.

Participation in the working group would require attendance at two (2) meetings during the months of May and June 2017. It is anticipated meetings will be held on a Wednesday evening in Coffs Harbour and via video/teleconference.

The first meeting will explain and outline the concepts of patient centred care, the patient centred medical home model and continuous quality improvement. The second meeting will be used to share and capture quality improvement ideas from the group for improving patient centred care within this model for inclusion in the handbook.

As a working group member it is expected you will:

- Be funded to attend meetings in line with NCPHN policy (it is anticipated that meetings will be held in the evenings with dinner provided).
- Provide support and guidance to the project team

The first meeting of the Patient Centred Medical Home Allied Health Working Group will be held as soon as membership can be arranged and an acceptable date can be found.



**If you are interested
please contact:**

Fiona O'Meara
NCPHN Clinical Adviser Allied Health.
Email: fomeara@ncphn.org.au
Phone: 02 66591800 ext 827
Working Days: Wed and Thurs

My Health Record offers benefits for pharmacy

The Australian Digital Health Agency is urging pharmacists to sign up to My Health Record.

Information accessible through My Health Record:

- Prescription and dispensing information
- Hospital discharge summaries
- GP health summaries
- Consumer entered information
- Shared summaries with other healthcare providers

Steps to using My Health Record:

Register your pharmacy for access. If you want to use it through your clinical software, currently you will need to be using either Fred or Aquarius software to access the system. They can modify the software to ensure your access.

Link up the health professionals within your organisation. The pharmacists working within your pharmacy need to be added to the organisation certificate you will receive.

Access patients' My Health Record. You will need their first name and last name, gender, Medicare number and date of birth. With these identifiers you can search for a patient's individual healthcare identifier and access their My Health Record.

Record dispensing information. Pharmacists are encouraged to add dispensing information to patients' My Health Records. Doing so will help to create a wider picture of a patient's healthcare profile.

Visit www.myhealthrecord.gov.au to learn more.

North Coast Primary Health network is supporting Pharmacists to register and start using the My Health Record platform. Contact Tony Browne, Senior Project Officer for Digital Health on 6618 5405 or email tbrowne@ncphn.org.au.

Upcoming Events

Monday 29 May

NDIS Regional Workshop – Coffs Harbour

Tuesday 30 May

Webinar: Common Foot Problems Experienced by People with Musculoskeletal Conditions and Related Management Approaches

Tuesday 30 May - Thursday 1 June

National Mental Health Forum - Sydney

Tuesday 6 June

Cultural Awareness Training – Port Macquarie

Wednesday 7 June

Clinical skills for working with people with personality disorder (Project Air) – Kempsey

Wednesday 7 June

Breast Cancer Treatment and Ongoing Surveillance – Coffs Harbour

Monday 5 June - Friday 9 June

Mindful Self-Compassion Skills – Byron Bay

Tuesday 13 June

Mental Health Symposium – Whole Person Mental Health Care Model – Coffs Harbour

Thursday 15 June

Social Connections Breakfast – Lismore

Thursday 29 June

Cultural Awareness Training – Kempsey

Thursday 20 July - Friday 21 July

North Coast Aged Care Symposium – Ballina

More Events

Visit www.ncphn.org.au/events to view the North Coast Primary Health Network Events Calendar.

NCAHA is proudly supported by



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