

NCAHA NEWS

Your monthly communication from the North Coast Allied Health Association



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Message from NCAHA Board Chair

It is with great pleasure that we bring you the first edition of *North Coast Allied Health Association News*.

NCAHA was established, with support from North Coast Medicare Local, to address a gap in the local system and give our professions an active, single voice to represent our views across the region and farther afield.

The Association’s vision is that the North Coast community has

equitable access to the best health services. We will work towards this by focusing on four priority areas:

- Improving access to allied health services
- Improving health care coordination and integration
- Building capacity to ensure that patients in our region receive the best quality Allied Health care
- Building a strong Association

Since September last year, we have been busy building our foundations – electing and orientating a Board of Directors, drafting strategic, operational and risk management plans, thinking deeply about what

we can offer local Allied Health professionals and getting our financial matters in order.

All Association Directors were inspired by meeting and talking with those of you who attended the breakfast events last December (see page 2 for article). The biggest theme I noted from the morning in Murwillumbah was your desire to have opportunities to network with each other. We are planning more events accordingly.

I trust you find this first edition informative and will share it with your colleagues. If you have any feedback or suggestions for future newsletters, please email enquiries@ncaha.org.au, or visit www.ncaha.org.au for more information.

Best wishes,

Susan



Professor Susan Nancarrow, Chair, North Coast Allied Health Association Board

NCAHA Breakfast Events

North Coast Allied Health Association Directors met with local Allied Health professionals during a series of breakfasts held across the North Coast in December 2014. Susan Nancarrow in Murwillumbah, Luisa Eckhardt in Coffs Harbour and Rob Curry in Port Macquarie joined over 100 attendees to discuss the strategic issues facing the Allied Health community and the role for the Association.

The key themes identified at the breakfasts included:

- Need for networking opportunities
- Advocating and lobbying regarding clinical priorities
- Better access to general practitioners
- Funding models that value Allied Health professionals
- Improving local care pathways, particularly patients' journeys from hospital to home
- Supporting Allied Health professionals in the areas of quality improvement and research
- Concern around imminent changes in the primary health sector, including the National Disability Insurance Scheme and Primary Health Networks

Attendees' feedback will influence the Association's activities and direction.

Additional Allied Health Breakfast events are also being planned for the Lismore and Grafton areas. The Directors are looking forward to meeting with more local Allied Health professionals at these events.



(L:R) Kim Fenner, Nikki Cogle and Ann Drew at the Coffs Harbour Allied Health Breakfast event



(L:R) Professor Ev Innes and Lynne Pfister at the Murwillumbah Allied Health Breakfast event



(L:R) Chris Boss-Walker, Jillian Burns, Jeannie Bennett and Kristen O'Brien at the Port Macquarie Allied Health Breakfast event



(L:R) Ian Curnow and Brent Verco at the Murwillumbah Allied Health Breakfast event

Free Online Professional Development

NCAHA is excited to announce that local Allied Health professionals have free access to online professional development through TAFE.

As a result of a partnership with North Coast Medicare Local, members of the Association and local professionals can access short courses that take about an hour to complete and are worth one Continuing Professional Development point per hour.

Users will have free and unlimited access to:

1. Allied Health course topics for Allied Health professionals
2. Healnet course topics for nurses and other similar health professionals
3. Generic short course topics for small businesses and self interest

All topics are peer reviewed by industry professionals and endorsed by nationally recognised industry associations.

Regular topic reviews are also conducted to ensure they incorporate current policies, legislation and Australia-wide guidelines.

Local health professionals can find out how to enrol and start undertaking free online courses by visiting:

www.ncaha.org.au/online-training

Allied Health Workforce Growing

The allied health workforce, which makes up about 25% of the national health workforce, is growing, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

“Nearly 154,000 Allied Health practitioners were registered in 2013, compared to just over 146,000 in 2012,” said AIHW spokesman Dr Adrian Webster.

There are 16 Allied Health professions registered through the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme including psychologists, pharmacists, physiotherapists, dentists, dental hygienists, dental prosthetists, dental therapists, oral health therapists, occupational therapists, medical radiation practitioners, chiropractors, optometrists, Chinese medicine practitioners, podiatrists, osteopaths and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners.

Psychologists made up the largest proportion of registered Allied Health practitioners (19.8%), followed by pharmacists (18.2%), physiotherapists (16.6%) and dentists (10.1%).

“The field of physiotherapy grew the most, with a full-time equivalent (FTE) rate of 83.3 employed physiotherapists per 100,000 people, up from 78.3 in 2011,” Dr Webster said.

Increases in supply were seen across most fields, including pharmacists (90.1 FTE per 100,000 people, up from 87.1 in 2011) psychologists (86.2 FTE, up from 84.2 in 2011), and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners (1.3 FTE, up from 1.1 in 2012). Average hours worked per week ranged from 29 hours for dental hygienists and dental therapists to 41 hours for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners.

Declines were seen in dental therapists (3.2 FTE, down from 3.8 in 2012), dental prosthetists (5.0 FTE, down from 5.4 in 2012), and Chinese medicine practitioners (12.8 FTE, down from 13.2 in 2012).

The information, published online at <http://ow.ly/KboqG>, details the demographic and employment characteristics of Australia’s allied health workforce.

Team Approach to Musculoskeletal Care

The Australian Musculoskeletal Network (AMSN) provides quality inter-professional development and networking opportunities for practitioners, researchers and academics engaged in musculoskeletal care.

AMSN is a professional network that caters for practitioners with a clinical emphasis on musculoskeletal care such as general practitioners, chiropractors, osteopaths, physiotherapists, radiologists, radiographers, occupational therapists, podiatrists, exercise physiologists and other interested health providers.

Upcoming events

- March 28 – Anatomy Wet Lab: Head and neck MS clinicians' Anatomy and Assessment Review with cadaver specimens on the Gold Coast
- March 28 – Anatomy Wet Lab: Head and neck anatomy for massage therapists and body workers' Anatomy and Assessment review with cadaver specimens on the Gold Coast
- April 18 Disc lesion management using Stand Up MRI, Brisbane
- April 19 Managing Vertigo, Brisbane

Visit www.amsn.com.au to find out more.

Introducing Luisa Eckhardt, Director, NCAHA

Luisa holds a Bachelor of Applied Science in Occupational Therapy (OT) from the University of Western Sydney. She didn't know what she wanted to do when she left school and it wasn't until she opened the University Admissions Centre's Guide to Health and read the OT career description that she applied to study this profession.

Luisa has never regretted her career choice and has had many and varied experiences within OT. "I have Level 1 and 2 training in Lymphoedema Management, a Diploma in Frontline Management, and more recently I completed my Cert IV in Training and Assessment," she said.

Luisa worked in Occupational Rehabilitation when she finished university, but felt the pull towards acute hospital OT.

"I moved into a rotational position at Liverpool Hospital where I provided

acute OT services to clients with respiratory, surgical (amputees and fractures), renal, and general medical conditions. I really found my passion for OT when I moved into the clinical area of Oncology, Palliative Care and Lymphoedema at Nepean Cancer Care Centre.

"There I learned what truly holistic client care means, what effective teamwork is, and how a multidisciplinary care process leads to better outcomes. As an OT you work so intimately with people at their most challenging times, to be accepted and involved is very humbling," said Luisa.

Since that time she's gained extensive experience working across a couple of different health services in Sydney. Luisa also relieved as a Head of Department for 12 months. She found she really enjoyed managing staff and pursued departmental management. Luisa took on a Deputy

Head of Department role at Sydney's Liverpool Hospital, now the biggest OT department in NSW.

Luisa re-located to Coffs Harbour in 2012 where she juggles her role with the Association with her work for Feros Care providing community-based aged care services, which she finds very rewarding, and teaching the Allied Health Assistant program with TAFE NSW.

Luisa brings a lot of enthusiasm to the Association Board. She is a Director and Company Secretary.



Luisa (middle) with Alana Croucher (left) and Tanya Maloney at the Coffs Harbour Allied Health Breakfast

Become a Member

Benefits:

- Improved profile of Allied Health in the community and referral sources, such as GPs
- Opportunities to connect with best practice, evidence-based practice and other clinicians
- Access to local clinical professional development
- Access to Clinicians of Excellence
- A united, local voice for Allied Health on regional, state and national levels



Visit www.ncaha.org.au/membership for more information.

Upcoming Events

Click the event title for more details.

15-18 March 2015

Managing Pain: From Mechanism to Policy, Brisbane

17 March 2015

GP NSW Allied Health Alliance Network Forum, Sydney

18 March 2015

The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel – Free Screening, Grafton

24 March 2015

'Sticky Stuff' – Free Sexual Health Training, Lismore

24 March 2015

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Pain, Webinar

24-25 March 2015

Mental Health First Aid, Goonellabah

25-26 March 2015

Communicating mindfully in conflict and difficult situations, Alstonville

27 March 2015

North Coast Cancer Conference 2015, Coffs Harbour

28 March 2015

Anatomy Wetlab Workshop for Primary Care Practitioners: Head and Neck, Gold Coast

29 March 2015

Shared Medical Appointment Facilitator training program, Coffs Harbour

31 March 2015

Working with Young People – Self Harm / Self Injury Behaviours, Port Macquarie

31 March 2015

Blood Pressure: What's changing in how we measure and monitor (for Pharmacists and Pharmacy staff), Tweed Heads

4 April 2015

Shared Medical Appointments: all you wanted to know, Byron Bay

13-16 April 2015

Resolving Vilification Workshop, Sydney

15 April 2015

Diabetes Education for Health Professionals, Kempsey

16 April 2015

Healthy Living w Diabetes – Managing Diabetes in your Health Care Environment (for GPs, Pharmacists, RACF Nurses & Allied Health professionals), Tweed Heads

20 April 2015

Understanding Complex Regional Pain Syndrome, Webinar

22 April 2015

Recipe for Success, Coffs Harbour

23 April 2015

Healthy Living with Diabetes – for Health Professionals, Ballina

More Events

View more practitioner events at www.healthynorthcoast.org.au/events.

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North Coast
Allied Health Association

