

NCAHA NEWS

Your monthly communication from the
North Coast Allied Health Association



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Message from the Board

The most recent Northern NSW Clinical Council meeting was held in Lismore on 8 September 2015. The Council was established to provide North Coast Primary Health Network (NCPHN) with advice and input regarding local health care needs, service gaps and the implementation of pathways to improve health outcomes. I was in attendance at this meeting, representing Allied Health for Northern NSW.

Vahid Saberi, Chief Executive of NCPHN, provided a brief overview of the transition from Medicare Local to Primary Health Network (PHN). A key difference between the two models is that the PHN will become a commissioner of health services, rather than a direct provider of services. This means that the PHN will purchase services on behalf of patients and the community from existing service

providers, rather than delivering those services themselves. Most health care practitioners in Australia have not worked in a commissioning environment before, so this is a change for all of us.

Jenni Johnson, from the Pain Management Network at the Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI), and David Beveridge, Nurse Practitioner in Pain Management, presented a new community-based chronic pain management program. This program has been developed to reflect the fact that one in five people have chronic pain, and that the formal hospital-based pain clinic can only ever see the tip of the iceberg.

It is a multidisciplinary, group-based program which is ultimately designed to support patients with lower severity pain to self-manage their condition. They have

a 'medium intensity' group program for 10 people that can be delivered by an appropriately-trained psychologist and exercise/physiologist. This program takes three hours a week for six weeks. Training to run the program is available via a course of webinars which run regularly.

The Clinical Council is committed to building capacity in pain management in practitioners across the region. A small group will meet shortly to develop a model and roll out this approach in order to make it widely available to patients across the region.

Dr Tony Lembke discussed progress with the Integrated Care Collaborative. They have adopted a patient-centred approach to understanding integrated care, and are proposing to hold a series of workshops involving patients (with chronic disease) and their health care practitioners to help work together to develop pathways to enhance integrated care. These workshops are likely to be held in November.



**Professor Susan Nancarrow,
Chair, NCAHA Board**

SCU Mental Health Action Plan

A 2013 Southern Cross University (SCU) study on the health and wellbeing of its students highlighted the significant mental health issues suffered by university students. SCU data suggests that around 50% of students exhibit high/very high levels of distress and either couldn't work or reduced their workload for at least eight days during the previous month due to stress (Mulder, Munro, Bradbury and Cashin, 2013). In contrast, only 10% of the Australian population exhibit similar levels of distress.

A Statement of Intent for the Northern NSW Integration Strategy 2013-2015 was signed by Northern NSW Local Health District and North Coast Medicare Local in 2013. As part of the integration strategy, NCML agreed to facilitate the development of the Northern NSW Mental Health Integration Plan (MHIP). The MHIP will focus on the system outcomes, priorities and cross-network infrastructure for organisations across the region to 'act as one' in delivering against mental health priorities. Individual agencies would still carry out their own planning concordant with these priorities.

In response to the findings of the 2013 SCU study and the MHIP, the Counselling and Disability Support Department

of the School of Health and Human Sciences, under the direction of Dr Jonathan Munro and Dr Ann Mulder, are developing a Mental Health Action Plan (MHAP) for students and staff of SCU. The MHAP is based on the four pillar approach of the World Health Organisation's Mental Health Action Plan:

- 1) strengthening leadership, planning, policy and governance for good mental health at SCU;
- 2) providing comprehensive, integrated and responsive primary mental health and social care services at SCU for students and staff;
- 3) implementation of strategies for the promotion of optimal mental health and the prevention of mental health issues;
- 4) the establishment of the SCU Health Clinic as a centre of excellence in mental health research.

It is anticipated the plan will be implemented towards the latter half of 2015.

Free Professional Development Courses

North Coast Allied Health professionals will continue to have access to free online professional development training thanks to a partnership between North Coast Primary Health Network (NCPHN) and North Coast Allied Health Association.

The short courses, which will be delivered through the TAFE Now website, take around an hour to complete and are worth one CPD (Continuing Professional Development) point per hour. North Coast health professionals will have 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

All topics are peer reviewed by industry professionals and endorsed by industry associations. Regular topic reviews are also conducted to ensure they incorporate current policies, legislation and Australia-wide guidelines.

North Coast health professionals can access the NCPHN enrolment key and full course instructions at:

www.healthynorthcoast.org.au/cpd

SARRAH and the NCAHA

SARRAH and the NCAHA: Do we need both?

SARRAH – What is it?

Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health (SARRAH) is a not-for-profit organisation with an office based in Canberra. SARRAH members are individual Allied Health professionals, students and corporate organisations who support SARRAH's objectives. SARRAH corporate members include some Primary Health Networks.

SARRAH - History

During 1994, at the second National Rural Health Conference at Mount Beauty in Victoria, Federal Health Minister Carmen Lawrence made a presentation and fielded many questions about doctor services. Some Allied Health professionals stood up and asked, "What about Allied Health services, don't we count?"

Minister Lawrence complained that it was hard dealing with Allied Health professions, that there are too many and she didn't have time to talk to all the

individual associations. She challenged the Allied Health professions to work out effective representation with government. So began SARRAH, representing the full range of Allied Health professions working in rural and remote Australia.

SARRAH – Objectives and Role

32% of Australia's population live outside major cities. SARRAH exists so that rural and remote Australian communities have Allied Health services that support equitable and sustainable health and wellbeing.

SARRAH advocates for, and provides support and networking opportunities to, Allied Health practitioners and students wishing to work in rural and remote Australia.

SARRAH administers the Allied Health stream of the Nursing and Allied Health Scholarship and Support Scheme on behalf of the Commonwealth Department of Health. Approximately \$12 million was awarded last year to scholars assisting them in education, professional development and work placements.

What is the difference between SARRAH and the NCAHA?

SARRAH works nationally on behalf of its members, providing support and advocating on issues such as Allied Health workforce, Medicare reforms supportive of Allied Health practice, the possibilities of rural generalism, and many other issues relevant to Allied Health professionals.

The North Coast Allied Health Association works on the North Coast of NSW to bring local Allied Health professionals together to address challenges in the region.

In effect there are strong similarities in the goals of both organisations: one working at the national level and the other regionally. There are great opportunities for the two organisations to work hand-in-hand to improve Allied Health services for rural Australians, and there are currently plans to develop a memorandum of understanding to formalise a collaborative approach on issues.



Healthy North Coast Practitioner Events

Healthy North Coast is the central hub for all health professionals to access information on learning and development events on the North Coast.

You can search for a particular event, or register and upload your own event for free.

Visit www.healthynorthcoast.org.au/practitioner-events

Healthy North Coast....It's all about health



Upcoming Events

Click the event titles to learn more.

24 September

Richmond Valley Clinical Society, Lismore

8 October

Falls Prevention Forum, Lismore

12-14 October

ACT with Compassion, Byron Bay

14 October

Mental Health Workplace Support Skills for Practice Managers, Practice Staff, Pharmacists and Pharmacy Staff, Tweed Heads

15 October

2015 Innovations in Cancer Treatment and Care Conference, Sydney

15 October

Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction, Coffs Harbour

October 15-17

Pharmacy Assistant National Conference 2015, Gold Coast

22 October

Better Questions Workshop, Coffs Harbour

22 October

Richmond Valley Clinical Society, Lismore

28 October

Unique challenges for sufferers of family and domestic violence, Coffs Harbour

30 October

Bipolar Disorder: the Essential Psychological Toolkit, Brisbane

6 November

Pedorthic Bracing and Prefabricated AFO Fitting, Gold Coast

9-11 November

National Allied Health Conference, Melbourne

9-14 November

Eating Disorders Essentials Course, Brisbane

10-11 November

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training, Wauchope

11 November

Smoking Cessation Workshop for GPs and Pharmacists, Coffs Harbour

12 November

Smoking Cessation Workshop for General Practitioners and Pharmacists, Port Macquarie

16-18 November

Improving Healthcare Convention, Melbourne

17 November

Women and Suicide, Ballina

3 December

The Future of Health is in Your Hands: Research Driving Better Outcomes, Port Macquarie

More Events

Visit www.healthynorthcoast.org.au/events to view the Healthy North Coast Practitioner Events Calendar.

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