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North Coast
Allied Health Association

July Newsletter 2021

Welcome to all NCAHA members

I note with sadness the return of the COVID virus, more virulent than ever. I have been travelling throughout the North Coast over the past week, and found myself in the midst of rapidly evolving pandemic restrictions and the threat of lock-downs. The situation is very unsettling and I could see many people in the North Coast townships I visited seemed a bit freaked out too – I just wanted to get home to my bush block and stay out of trouble. I am thinking of you all and wishing you good health.

Managing pandemics is surely no easy task. However, these circumstances have thrown up some serious flaws in our system of governance, with contrasting views and actions between the Commonwealth level and the states and territories. There are seriously opposing views on quarantining and recourse to community lock-downs, and from where I sit it seems that the left and the right hands are not coming together in a productive way. We probably should not be surprised. The Australian primary health care system is not well integrated between Commonwealth and State services provision, as allied health professionals are well aware - it is therefore little wonder that getting organised on something like national vaccination is a challenge for our system.

Our role at the NCAHA is to remain positive and make our best contribution to improving the situation – step by step.

Professional Development Zoom Events

Independent Ageing – the essential role of AHPs: We had an excellent PD Zoom event on Tuesday June 29. The focus was transition care for the elderly between hospital and home, and we had two excellent presenters. Craig Gilmore is a private practitioner with a multi-disciplinary business on the North Coast focused on aged care. He gave a detailed account of the current organisation and provision of services for transition care, including:

- complexity of current care
- challenges of effective integration of care for both patients and practitioners,
- lack of timeliness of some services in the community predisposing to risk.

Professor Susan Nancarrow presented on a range of issues of relevance to transition care:

- lack of overall coordination in the Australian healthcare system
- challenge of severe AHP workforce shortages to meet needs
- potential of care-finding roles to support patient-centred approaches, and
- need for models of care to focus on independent living capacity for the elderly as a priority.

She raised the question if it is now an opportune time to seek to develop a model of better integrated transition care here on the North Coast.

Note: Our NCAHA PD Zoom events will now run on a 2-monthly basis, on the last Tuesday of every second month. The next one is scheduled for Tuesday August 31.

Working with Healthy North Coast (HNC)

Allied Health Workforce Data: The NCAHA and HNC will work together to produce more detailed workforce data to better describe the allied health workforce on the North Coast across all sectors – public, private and NGO. We hope to produce a report by the end of 2021 which will assist a range of stakeholders in planning allied health workforce, recruitment and projects.

Waiting Lists for Psychology Services: Our members have recently highlighted concerns about long waiting times for children and young people to access psychology services. This issue has been noted principally for the Coffs

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patients and their families in need. NCAHA has approached HNC to see if we can work together to reduce these waiting lists and improve access to care in mental health.

Any suggestions for other supports/services/information you need as an AHP would be gratefully received at rob.curry1@outlook.com or NCAHAExecutive@hotmail.com

Director's Rap

Sarah Miles



Profiling NCAHA Director, Sarah Miles

Sarah is an Occupational Therapist who has lived and worked in the Northern Rivers for last 11 years. She has worked as a community therapist in both paediatrics and with adults, and in both the public and private sectors. Having worked in Australia and the United Kingdom, as well as undertaking international development work, Sarah is passionate about ensuring health service access for sections of the community that struggle to get the services they need to maintain their health.

Sarah currently works as the Team Leader in Clinical Education at the University Centre for Rural Health, University of Sydney. As well as managing a vital team and community of practice, Sarah also supervises occupational therapy students and provides interprofessional education in schools and aged

From her work with students and mentoring early-career allied health professionals within the region, Sarah has become passionate about how we can better prepare students and new graduates for the challenges of the workforce, especially rurally. To consolidate her knowledge in this area, she is currently undertaking a PhD focused on work-readiness in the OT profession.

"With the increase of the allied health workforce working in the private or non-government sectors such as Aged Care and NDIS, most early-career professionals are graduating into and working in jobs that are complex, broad in scope with limited access to supervision. They report increased stress, isolation, excessive workloads and anxiety about the skills required to navigate the broad range of conditions and clients they are expected to see."

Sarah notes that many early-career AHPs have chosen to leave the North Coast or have taken up jobs in non-health fields. With long waiting lists to see many allied health professionals on the North Coast, she feels something needs to be done to reverse this trend and loss of professional resources. She comments further:

"Employing new graduates is challenging for employers in the private sector. There needs to be more support to help businesses and organisations to take on and retain early-career people. Providing tailored mentoring and boosting supervisory support will be key to ensuring new grads are able to confidently transition into the professional workforce."

When she is not working, Sarah enjoys long walks on the beach, pilates and a good coffee, especially with friends. Pre-COVID Sarah spent a lot of time travelling and loves exploring new cultures and countries.

SARRAH Update

- **Rural Allied Health Service & Learning Consortia:** The concept of Rural Allied Health Service and Learning Consortia proposed by former

month. The concept is still live and has support, although is yet to garner any specific funding. SARRAH will continue to advocate for funding to be put behind the development of allied health consortia in regions of Australia where allied health workforce is in short supply and many rural residents are going without. It must also be noted here that following an initial meeting at UCRH to garner local interest, the NCAHA will join other partner health organisations to push for an Allied Health Consortia project here on the North Coast should the opportunity arise.

- **NDIS Workforce:** SARRAH has been engaging the NDIA and stakeholders on NDIS workforce, and the NDIS National Workforce Plan: 2021-25 has just been released. The Plan highlights the need for better access to allied health services for NDIS participants, but disappointingly offers no strategies for achieving necessary increases in allied health workforce in this sector. SARRAH will argue in national forums for a stronger response from the Commonwealth on improving allied health access.
- **Allied Health Assistant Workforce:** SARRAH has had strong engagement in furthering the development of an Allied Health Assistant (AHA) workforce in rural Australia, and notes the release of the Allied Health Assistants Training Package Review. SARRAH will continue to advocate for a boost to the AHA workforce within appropriate models of care, and will continue to promote allied health assistants in its project to develop the Rural Allied Health Generalist Pathway model.
- **National Primary Health Care 10-year Plan:** The Primary Health Reform Steering Group has released its draft recommendations for comment on the Australian Government's Primary Health Care 10-Year Plan. The Plan makes excellent recommendations regarding the need for increased focus on preventative care and promoting health, on the requirement for improved access to allied health services for under-served groups in the Australian community, and for better coordination of the multi-disciplinary team in primary health care for better integrated patient care. Unfortunately, the key mechanism proposed for achieving better performing integrated care is centred around general practices and the Hospital in the Home model which was recently trialled. There are concerns about the capacity of the general practice sector to play this over-arching coordinating role. SARRAH will engage strongly to ensure that the Plan meets the needs of the Australian community and the multi-disciplinary PHC team in the most efficient and effective ways.

CPD Alert

Improving Health Outcomes and Experiences of People with Intellectual Disability

Approximately 1.3% of people in NSW have an intellectual disability (ID), with an estimated 7500 people with ID living in the MNC and Northern NSW districts. People with ID often experience multiple and chronic physical and mental health conditions and lower life expectancy.

Northern Sydney Intellectual Disability Health Service (NSIDHS) is a consultative health service that provides outreach services to the MNC and Northern NSW LHDs, in collaboration with each district's local Specialist Intellectual Disability Clinicians. The service is part of a state-wide NSW Health initiative that aims to reduce the health disparities experienced by people with ID.

NSIDHS is comprised of: an Adult Disability Physician, Paediatrician, Clinical Nurse Consultant (CNC), Social Worker, Psychologist, Manager and Administrator.

This consultative service works in collaboration with the treating doctor to provide comprehensive health assessments, case discussions and clinical advice (via telehealth, and face to face) for children and adults with an ID diagnosis and complex and chronic health issues. The service can also offer education to health staff and GP practice teams.

NSIDHS will be running face-to-face paediatric and adult clinics and education sessions in Northern NSW and Mid North Coast in **July 2021**.

Northern NSW: 5th – 9th July

Mid North Coast: 19th – 24th July

Referrals for the July face to face clinics or telehealth services can be made by contacting your local Specialist ID Clinician in MNCLHD and NNSWLHD:

- **MNC Local Health District**

Helen Maclean

e: helen.maclean@health.nsw.gov.au Ph: 02 66911922 or 0481529093

- **Northern NSW Local Health District**

Michelle Gray

e: Michelle.Gray@health.nsw.gov.au Ph: 02 66230586 or 0447627391

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Community Conversations - Climate Change and Mental Health

Are you concerned about the impact of climate change on the mental health of our community?

Would you like to connect with like-minded people to be part of the solution?

Join us for a guided conversation about the mental health impacts of climate change and help us build the capacity of our community to respond to them together.

When: Sat 24th Jul 2021, 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm AEST

Where: Port Macquarie Library - Meeting Room, Grant St. Port Macquarie

Cost: Free

Convenor: Port Macquarie Hastings Sustainability Network

Contact: headheartandhandsportmac@gmail.com

This session will be facilitated by Richa Ekka, a graduate of the Spiritual Ecology Leadership program run by CERES and Change Australia

Community members, health care workers, support workers and organisational representatives are invited to join us in this inaugural community conversation.

This event is supported by the Head, Heart and Hands (HHH) project, which seeks to increase community knowledge, skills, experience and connections in order to be better prepared to adapt and respond to the adverse conditions driven by climate change. HHH is a project of the Port Macquarie Hastings Sustainability Network, and is auspiced by Port Macquarie Community Gardens.

Tickets are available [here](#).

National Allied Health Conference (10-12th August, 2021)

The 14th National Allied Health Conference, to be held ONLINE for the first time, will give us the opportunity to explore and discuss the many factors that contribute to the overall success of Allied Health in Australia. There will be an exciting program of speakers, workshops, virtual exhibitors and lots of networking opportunities.

The online format allows unlimited attendee numbers and a much higher capacity for presenters to participate in the program. In addition, the virtual format allows sessions to be easily recorded for on-demand viewing post-conference, so attendees can revisit missed presentations at their leisure and in the comfort of their own home or office. The live conference days will be held on Tuesday 10th to Thursday 12th August, with pre-conference workshops available to book on Monday 9th.

Key note speakers will include:-

- Dr Anne-Marie Boxall: Chief Allied Health Officer

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- Robert Griew: NDIS Complaints Commissioner
- Dr Louise Schaper: CEO, Aust Institute of Digital Health
- Martin Chadwick: Chief Allied Health Professional Officer, New Zealand

When: 10 - 12 August 2021

Where: Virtual on-line Conference

Cost: Standard registration of \$320

Convenor: Australian Council of Deans of Health Services

Registration: Go to www.nahc.com.au

Dealing with diabetes

An informal get together in a relaxed social setting to learn:

- The role of new medications
- Injectable Glucagon-like-Peptides
- An update on the use of insulin degludec/insulin aspart.
- About the devices used to measure blood glucose levels
- About diabetes medication delivery
- Medications that cannot be prescribed together
- About the diabetes services delivered by the hospital, who are they good for?
- Making the most of CHHC diabetes clinic referrals

Venue: Cnr Pacific Hwy and, Bay Dr, Coffs Harbour NSW 2450

Date/Time: Thu 22 Jul 2021, 06:00 pm - 08:30 pm AEST

Event Organiser: Mid North Coast Division of General Practice

Contact: Lucinda Starr Phone: [0409831829](tel:0409831829) Email: [Click here](#)

Speakers:

- Dr Ian Arthur, GP (Toormina) who also lectures in Diabetes at the UNSW Rural Clinical School and is a Specialist Member of the Australian Diabetes Society
- Del Oliver, Diabetes Educator Mid North Coast Local Health District
- Alicia Rees, Diabetes Dietitian Mid North Coast Local Health District

Other Resources

This Sunday marks the start of NAIDOC WEEK 2021.

Every year from 4–11 July, NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. NAIDOC is celebrated not only in Indigenous communities, it welcomes everyone to participate in a range of activities and to support their local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

While the current COVID situation has impacted some planned activities and events, some will still go ahead and others will be live-streamed. Get involved as much as you can while adhering to safety measures put in place by event organisers. Keep an eye out on our socials and in our other publications for more information about NAIDOC Week and to find out what is happening in your local area and online.

If you aren't able to get out and about this NAIDOC Week there are opportunities to get involved in NAIDOC-themed webinars and other online activities. You could learn more about your local Aboriginal community's history and culture, watch an Indigenous movie, tune into NITV or check out some of the talented Indigenous musicians or artists from our region.

Also, stay tuned as we introduce you to inspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are making a huge contribution to their communities across the region.

Child sexual abuse: therapy rates and factors affecting use

These companion resources summarise key findings of a rapid review of the evidence for professionals engaging with children who have experienced sexual abuse, from the point of disclosure through to treatment.

[Rates of therapy use following a disclosure of child sexual abuse](#) looks at the utilisation of therapy for child sexual abuse, and [Factors influencing therapy use following a disclosure of child sexual abuse](#) summarises the key factors influencing therapy use for child sexual abuse.

Access the paper via the [CFCA website](#) and register for [CFCA News](#) for other information resources and events we produce.

MORE INFORMATION

If you want to

- know more about NCAHA
- be on our newsletter mailing list or
- offer some suggestions

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