

DHAC/LHAG Newsletter

JULY/AUGUST 2011

Health Consumers' Council WA Inc, Unit 13/14 Wellington Fair, 40 Lord Street, East Perth
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Letter from the Editor

Welcome to our July/August 2011 edition of our new DHAC/LHAC e-newsletter.

In this edition, our Senior Advocate, Gio Terni reports on the Community Conversations Workshop in Albany and Katanning. We also welcome our new advocate, Pieter De Marco who joined us this June. More information about Pieter, his background and his passion for assisting health consumers can be found on page 2 of this newsletter. Laura Elkin, our Aboriginal Consumer Participation Programme Coordinator also shares with us news on the opening of the Wheatbelt Aboriginal Health Service and the Wheatbelt DHAC and LHAG Conference (see page 4).

We would like to congratulate all participants of the July Speakers' Bureau (Country) Training Programme on completing the 2 day public speaking training. All participants did a great job with their presentations and the feedback regarding the workshop has been very positive evidencing its great success. Many thanks go to all who were involved in the sessions.

We have speakers available to provide presentations to groups in country areas regarding health rights and the Health Consumers' Council. If you know of anyone who may be interested in hosting a presentation, please do not hesitate to contact Caroline Rugdee at 9221 3422 or caroline.rugdee@hconc.org.au. For more information on the presentations see page 9.

The Health Consumers' Council Consumer Representative Skills Training will also be held this coming Friday 19 August 2011 from 9.30am-3pm at Room 18, Wellington Fair, 40 Lord Street, EAST PERTH. If you are interested in attending, we encourage you to register your interest with Caroline at 9221 3422 or caroline.rugdee@hconc.org.au.

Enjoy the rest of your DHAC/LHAG e-news.

Kind regards
Caroline Rugdee
Speakers' bureau Coordinator





Advocacy Corner

DHAC NEWSLETTER, OCTOBER 2010

Report on Community Conversations in Albany and Katanning

By **Gio Terni**
Senior Advocate

24 – 27 May 2011 Albany Great Southern Health Region,
Western Australian Country Health Service (WACHS)

Gio Terni, the Senior Advocate at the Health Consumers' Council, attended a series of Community Conversations and had the opportunity to engage with the Health Services in the Great Southern Region of Western Australia from 24th to the 26th May. On the 27th a Speak Out for Patient Safety Forum was held in Albany. These events were arranged through the collaboration of a number of agencies and Stephanie Newell, a WHO Patients for Patient Safety Champion, from South Australia also attended.

The Community Conversations held in Albany and Katanning gave community members the chance to come along and talk about what was happening in the health services in their region. They were able to raise any issues or concerns they wanted to as well as how they could work in partnership with health providers to become more involved in driving their own health care.

There were also members of the District Health Advisory Councils (DHAC) in attendance. They were able to give their experiences as DHAC members as well as the various initiatives their health services have undertaken to promote patient-centred care.

Overall, the Community Conversations were very successful and while some changes to the format would most likely increase community involvement, the importance of such conversations highlights the need to hold them in all regional areas of Western Australia.

Meet our new advocate – Pieter De Marco

My name is Pieter Di Marco and I am new to the team of advocates at the Health Consumers' Council (HCC). My interest in the health service industry stems from a Bachelor of Health Science Degree I completed a number of years ago. Joining the team at the (HCC) enables me to pursue a passion of mine which is assisting people to have more autonomy over their health.

I have a diverse background which has involved working in various areas including telecommunications, sales, the airlines and a project officer for a Division of General Practice. I believe this wide range of positions has given me a good grounding and skill base to assist in my work as an advocate at the (HCC). I endeavour to bring my best to the position of advocate and look forward to the challenges that lie ahead.

Health Consumers' Council Advocacy Services

The Health Consumers' Council is an independent community based organisation representing the consumer's voice in health policy, planning, research and service delivery.

The Health Consumers' Council provides free assistance to consumers in Western Australia in order to resolve recent grievances related to health care. The Council will provide general advice, information, referral options and advocacy services in a manner that is helpful, timely and efficient. The Council has a toll free phone line for consumers who live in regional areas.

Our advocacy service consists of three advocates who are able to assist consumers who have a range of problems or challenges within the health system: The principal aim of the Advocacy service is to ensure that health consumers are always treated with dignity and fairness. Advocates may provide assistance to consumers in accessing health services to meet their needs, as well as assisting in making complaints. For example, advocates will assist consumers draft letters or complaints to address their concerns within the health care system, or will attend meetings or consultations with health consumers acting as an advocate or independent third party.

The Council also undertakes more systemic advocacy which involves action designed to achieve changes in policy, practice and attitudes towards health consumers in the WA health system.

Our goal is the improvement of health care systems leading to better health outcomes for consumers. We are ready to assist you in your dealings with consumers and we would be pleased if you would encourage consumers to contact us.

Accordingly, our advocacy brochures are available for your information and can be accessed by clicking on the following link: http://www.hconc.org.au/ourservices/Advocacy_brochure/Advocacy1.pdf . We have a toll free number for regional consumers which is 1800 620 780.

If you have any questions with regard to any of the above, please feel free to contact Michele Kosky at 9221 3422 or michele.kosky@hconc.org.au .

Southern Inland Health Initiative

By Government of Western Australia, Department of Health

The State Government has announced \$565 million to reform and improve access to health care for all residents of the Southern Inland area of Western Australia. To be funded from July 2011, this will include:

- \$240 million investment in health workforce and services over four years
- \$325 million in capital works over five years

The Southern Inland Health Initiative is the centrepiece of the State Government's spending on Health in 2011–2012 and is funded under the Royalties for Regions program (external site).

This initiative will dramatically improve medical resources and 24 hour emergency coverage in the area. It will:

- deliver safe and effective emergency services and good access to general practice
- put private GPs back into country towns, supported by visiting specialists and health practitioners backed up by "e-technology" such as telehealth
- mean better support to nurses who, due to the lack of doctors in this region, carry greater responsibilities

Providing sustainable private general practice is the cornerstone of this initiative. GPs in the country provide care in their surgeries, emergency care and inpatient care in hospitals. The State will work with the Commonwealth to support a new medical model in these district centres.

The package will fund the equivalent work value of 44 extra doctors to secure emergency department services and GP services across eight districts.

For further information regarding the Southern Inland Health Initiative, see the following link: <http://www.health.wa.gov.au/southerninland/home/index.cfm>



DHAC NEWSLETTER, OCTOBER 2010

CONSUMERS REFORMING HEALTH CONFERENCE 2011

Health Issues Centre recently hosted the 2011 Consumers Reforming Health Conference, the inaugural international conference for community engagement in health care. The conference was an outstanding success with almost 400 delegates attending from all over Australia and beyond.

Conference presentations and other information about the conference are soon expected to be posted on the Health Issues Centre website

Aboriginal Consumer Participation Programme – by Laura Elkin

The past few months have been busy as ever for the Aboriginal Consumer programs at HCC. We have travelled to Esperance, Kalgoorlie, Geraldton, Bunbury, Broome, Newman and across the Wheatbelt.

On 14th June I travelled to Northam for the official opening of the Wheatbelt Aboriginal Health Service. As well as being a fantastic day it is wonderful to celebrate the achievement of establishing the service which is employing a significant number of local Aboriginal people as health workers and in other roles. WAHS provides child health immunisation clinics, GP services, specialist medical and allied health services; healthy lifestyle support groups and education sessions.

The building itself is covered by a unique mural created by four talented local artists. The design on the front of the building is by Yvonne Kickett and shows the whole Wheatbelt community coming to a meeting place for health care. The south west wall was designed by Janet Kickett and depicts people travelling to meeting places in Northam. The front door design by Tommy Garlett shows a journey of reconciliation with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people working together. These three themes are joined by an undulating Wheatbelt landscape created by Russell Fitzgerald.

On the 7th July Caroline Rugdee and I were delighted to attend the Wheatbelt District Health Advisory Council and Local Health Advisory Group Conference. It was a very informative day and a great opportunity to meet more members of the council and catch up with others we have met over the years. Caroline and I were given the opportunity to present to all about our Aboriginal Consumer program; our Speakers' Bureau Program; our Consumer Representative Training and about how our organisation can support the work of DHACs. For more information:

laura.elkin@hconc.org.au or caroline.rugdee@hconc.org.au

To view the 13 priority recommendations made at the Conference, click on the following link:

<http://11nrhc.ruralhealth.org.au/recommendations>



Health Consumers' Council of Remote and Rural Australia (HCCRA): Telehealth – Coming to a Location Near You

This month marked the beginning of a new era for rural patients who need to consult with a specialist. For the first time many will be able to have Medicare funded consultations via a video conference at their local GP clinic or health care facility with a specialist in another location. No longer will they have to travel long distances or wait for a specialist locum visit. This is good news indeed.

Medicare funded Telehealth services will also be available to residents of eligible aged care facilities and the patients at Aboriginal Medical Services anywhere in Australia.

Participating health practitioners around the country will receive Medicare rebates from 1 July to compensate them for their time invested in the consultation, and to support some of the technology required. Payments are applicable for both the specialist and the GP, nurse, midwife or Aboriginal health worker assisting the patient during the consultation.

Minister Roxon was justifiably up beat about the whole thing:

- It is unacceptable that if you live in rural and regional Australia, you are up to three times more likely to die within five years if you are diagnosed with cancer than other Australians.**
- Improving access to services and health care professionals through initiatives like Medicare funded Telehealth services will help change these outcomes.**
- The Gillard Government has set a goal.... 495,000 Telehealth consultations will have been delivered by July 2015.**

HCCRA expects there will also be considerable positive flow - on effects once the video conferencing system is up and running. For example, it seems likely that fewer rural patients will be forced to navigate the convoluted bureaucratic pathway to access travel assistance payments from their State governments. Big sigh of relief all around. With their budget costs reduced, maybe the States could even think about making some much needed improvements to the schemes at some stage. In addition, it seems to us that health professionals working in the bush will be under less pressure having the support of a specialist just a mouse click away.



...But Not Everyone is Happy

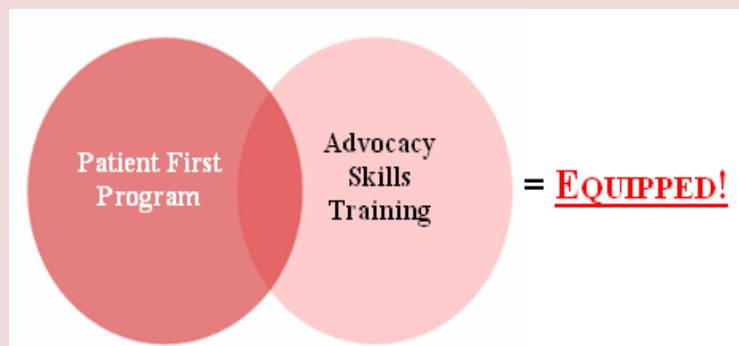
Although the telehealth initiative has received a warm reception from most, there are those who still feel hard done by. Dietitians, for example, were apparently 'fuming' after the launch of the new scheme which, they say, pays doctors and nurses for consultations with rural and regional patients but largely ignores the role of other health professionals (such as dietitians) in providing health services. The CEO of the Dietitians Association of Australia, Claire Hewat, is obviously a bit peeved:

'Any initiatives aimed at improving the health of rural and regional Australians must involve all the health disciplines, including allied health, along with nurses and doctors, to reflect the reality of health care in Australia.'

She correctly points out that conditions like obesity and type 2 diabetes are major issues in rural and regional Australia and dietitians have an important role to play in combating them. According to Ms Hewat, dietetic services are well suited to telehealth solutions and, by only giving telehealth rights to selected health professionals, disadvantaged groups, like Indigenous Australians, will miss out on crucial health services.

Advanced Healthcare directives – Frequently asked questions

<http://www.health.wa.gov.au/advancehealthdirective/home/faqs.cfm>



How well equipped is your country health service?

To find out more about advocacy and how your DHAC can implement the Patient First Program, email **Caroline** at caroline.rugdee@hconc.org.au or **Natalie** at natalie.delborrello@hconc.org.au

National Health Reform Finalised

The Australian Government has signed off on the final details of national health reforms with all states and territories to secure the future of health in Australia

Joint release

The Hon Julia Gillard
Prime Minister

The Hon Nicola Roxon MP
Minister for Health and Ageing

2 August 2011

The Gillard Government today signed off on the final details of national health reforms with all States and Territories to secure the future of health in Australia.

This historic agreement will deliver the funding public hospitals need, with unprecedented levels of transparency and accountability, less waste and significantly less waiting for patients.

The reforms, agreed to by COAG in February and finalised today, will see the Australian Government invest an extra \$19.8 billion in public hospitals through to 2019-20, rising to a total extra \$175 billion to 2029-30.

This extra Commonwealth funding will mean our hospitals will be able to take on millions of extra services that would never have been possible under the old arrangements including:

- 2.9 million extra cases in our emergency departments
- 2 million additional in-patient services, such as major surgery or treatment for severe conditions such as kidney failure or a heart attack
- 19 million more outpatient consultations, such as minor surgery or physiotherapy.

Over the last decade the Commonwealth's share of This means the Commonwealth and States and Territories will share future funding growth for hospitals in an equal partnership.

Today's agreement permanently puts an end to the uncertainty of public hospital funding. It is money the States – and Australian patients - can depend on.

Specifically, the agreement will deliver:

- Faster access to emergency department and elective surgery procedures, through the establishment of:
 - A 4-hour target for emergency waiting times, with the aim that 90 per cent of patients across all triage categories are seen within four hours.
 - A 100 per cent elective surgery target, aimed at ensuring all patients waiting for elective surgery are treated within clinically recommended times.
- Less waste with hospitals funded for what they actually deliver.
- Greater local control of hospitals.
- Unprecedented new levels of public reporting on health services and expenditure for every hospital in Australia.

The Australian Government will step up to permanently pay for 45 per cent of growth in hospital services in 2014-15, increasing to 50 per cent in 2017-18.



This means the Commonwealth and States and Territories will share future funding growth for hospitals in an equal partnership.

In fundamentally changing the way that governments pay for hospital services, the final agreement is the biggest change to public hospital financing since the introduction of Medibank and its successor Medicare.

Less Waiting and Millions of Extra Patient Services
Under the final agreement reached today the Commonwealth will provide at least an additional \$19.8 billion to 2019-20, supporting millions of additional hospital services.

Over \$1 billion of this has already been provided to States and Territories – resulting in new beds and services already being rolled out around the country.

States and Territories have agreed to open new hospital beds and work towards tough new national targets for elective surgery and emergency departments.

In 2009-10, 16 per cent of the 606,255 elective surgeries performed in Australia were not carried out within clinically recommended times. Under the final deal reached today, the States and Territories will work to ensure that by 2016 everyone needing surgery will have their operation within a clinically appropriate time.

Similarly, in emergency departments, 36 per cent wait more than four hours. In this final agreement, the States and Territories will work to ensure that 90 per cent of all patients presenting to an Emergency Department in a major public hospital will receive all necessary care or have been admitted to hospital within four hours by 2015.

Less waste and increased transparency and accountability

In exchange for improved funding arrangements, states and territories have agreed to unprecedented transparency in our health care system.

The new National Health Performance Authority (NHPA) will ensure that Australians can access accurate and up to date information on the MyHospitals website about how their hospitals perform so they can choose the best care.

Australians will also have access to greater information about their primary health care system through healthy community reports.

To improve the transparency of public hospital funding a single National Health Funding Pool will be established.

The Administrator of the pool will report on Commonwealth and State funding flowing through the pool and the services delivered by this funding.

This will ensure that all hospitals are funded under the same arrangements, allowing all Australians to clearly see where and how their tax dollars are being spent.

A new Independent Hospital Pricing Authority will set the national price for public hospital services and will develop a national activity-based funding system.

This will ensure that public hospitals are properly funded for each and every service that they provide, based on a fair price. It will also mean much greater efficiency in hospital funding than ever before – no more blank cheques.

New Local Hospital Networks will ensure decisions about hospital management are devolved to the local level. In addition, local clinicians will be engaged to advise about patient pathways which best meet the needs of the local community.

Improving GP, Primary Health Care and Aged Care
The Gillard Government's new investments in hospitals are being supported by significant Commonwealth investments in primary health care services – including after hours services, new GP training places, and new GP Super Clinics – to help take pressure off public hospitals.

New Medicare Locals will support the day-to-day delivery of better integrated GP and primary health care services in the community ensuring more patients can get the care that they need in the right settings.

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Reforms to aged care will see the Commonwealth becoming directly responsible for funding basic community care in most States and Territories for people aged 65 and over, in addition to its existing responsibility for community aged care packages and residential aged care.

This will enable simplified access to a wider range of care for older people. The reforms also ensure clearer lines of accountability for care of younger people with disabilities and older people requiring care.

More information on this announcement is available at www.yourhealth.gov.au

For more information, contact the Minister's Office on (02) 6277 7220

We've Got Something to Hoot About!

The Health Consumers' Council is an Independent Community based organisation representing the Consumers' voice in health policy, planning, research & service delivery

Our wise team of Volunteer speakers are keen to get on their perch and present to your group!

Talks last 30 minutes with the opportunity for questions. The topics covered include:

- The WA health system
- Health consumer's rights
- Emerging issues for patients & families
- Health Consumers' Council services & activities
- Health System Literacy



Knowledge is power. If you're interested in hosting a talk & improving community health through increased health literacy contact Caroline on 9221 3422 or caroline.rugdee@hconc.org.au



Your Voice on Health

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HEALTH CONSUMERS' COUNCIL

ADVOCACY & PATIENT FIRST TRAINING PROGRAMME

Interested in Advocacy and Patient First?

The Health Consumers' Council provides this workshop to all DHAC members at **no cost**. With this information, DHAC members are in a better position to advocate for changes in the health system, ensuring the needs of consumers are met. Topics covered include the **rights of health consumers**, as well as different types of **advocacy**, like **systemic advocacy**.

We also provide information and training on implementing the **Patient First Programme** in your Health District.

Contact Caroline Rugdee on 9221 3422 or email caroline.rugdee@hconc.org.au if you would like to:

- ★ Arrange for this training to be provided **at your health district area**; or
- ★ If your community is interested in a **brief overview** of this training: this can be delivered **face to face** or via a **video conference**.

For more information, please contact:

Caroline Rugdee

Consumer Participation Project Coordinator

Health Consumers' Council WA

Phone: (08) 9221 3422 Freecall: 1800 620 780

Fax: (08) 9221 5435

Email: caroline.rugdee@hconc.org.au

Website: www.hconc.org.au

NRHA:Karratha GP Super Clinic to Provide Better Health Services

Residents of the West Pilbara will soon have better access to GPs and allied health professionals following the signing of a \$7 million agreement with the Pilbara Health Network for a GP Super Clinic to operate in Karratha.

29 July 2011

Residents of the West Pilbara will soon have better access to GPs and allied health professionals following the signing of a \$7 million agreement with the Pilbara Health Network for a GP Super Clinic to operate in Karratha.

Acting Minister for Health and Ageing, Mark Butler, today welcomed the signing of the \$7 million agreement as a welcome boost to health care in West Pilbara.

"This GP Super Clinic will deliver better access to health services for locals in a single, convenient location," Mr Butler said.

"The Gillard Government wants to make it easier for all Australians to see and contact a doctor and GP Super Clinics around the country are making this happen.

"Karratha GP Super Clinic will provide a new level of integrated, multidisciplinary, team-based, patient-centred healthcare all under one roof"

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"Karratha GP Super Clinic will provide a new level of integrated, multidisciplinary, team-based, patient-centred healthcare all under one roof"

Senator for Western Australia Louise Pratt commended Pilbara Health for getting the agreement to finalisation stage. The Karratha Super Clinic will bring new and innovative models of health care together for the people of Karratha and the region.

"Pilbara Health has done a great job collaborating with local communities and health providers in the region. As a result patients will be able to access care from GPs, nurses, allied health professionals and visiting medical specialists.

"It is expected that the Karratha clinic will include general practice, physiotherapy, dieticians, social workers, podiatry, speech therapy and occupational therapy.

"It is also expected to offer community midwifery, child health nursing, mental health nursing, regional health workers and mental health counselling for children and adolescents.

"Services for young people and families, including the local Indigenous population, will include ante and post-natal care, child development and family wellbeing.

Senator Pratt said that the expansion of services provided by Aboriginal health workers, with an emphasis on chronic disease care and preventative activities, will improve health outcomes for the people of the Pilbara.

"The clinic will also offer education and training which will help to boost the primary healthcare workforce in the West Pilbara.

"GP Super Clinics are providing better access to health care for local communities across the country," Senator Pratt said.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DHAC NEWSLETTER, OCTOBER 2010

Day	OCCASION/NOTE	TIME	ADDRESS*	Contact for Information
Friday 19 August 2011	Consumer Representative Skills Training	9.30am - 3.00pm	Health Consumers' Council Crn Lord & Wellington Streets East Perth	Caroline Rugdee Ph: 9221 3422 Email: caroline.rugdee@hconc.org.au
Saturday 20/27 August 2011	HCC Speakers' Bureau Training	10.00am - 3.00pm	Health Consumers' Council Crn Lord & Wellington Streets East Perth	Caroline Rugdee Ph: 9221 3422 Email: caroline.rugdee@hconc.org.au
Thursday 1 September 2011	HIG Community Forum	9.30am- 2.00pm	St Catherine's College - The University of Western Australia 2 Park Road, Nedlands WA 6009	Rosemary Caithness Ph: 9221 3422 Email: info@hconc.org.au
Thursday 6 October 2011	Health Issues Group	1.00pm - 3.00pm	Health Consumers' Council Crn Lord & Wellington Streets East Perth	Caroline Rugdee Ph: 9221 3422 Email: caroline.rugdee@hconc.org.au

If your DHAC would like to contribute information and articles for the next issue of this e-Newsletter, please send them through to us via email: info@hconc.org.au or by post: Reply Paid, GPO Box C134 Perth WA 6839

Please circulate this bi-monthly newsletter to those who might be interested. For an online copy: www.hconc.org.au/ourservices/DHAC.html