

January 2011

DHAC Newsletter

Health Consumers' Council WA Inc, Unit 13/14 Wellington Fair, 40 Lord Street, East Perth
www.hconc.org.au , Ph: 08 9221 3422 or Freecall (country): 1800 620 780



Highlights in this Issue

- New Year Resolutions for 2011
- Rural Health Conference seeks blueprint for Health Reform
- Update on the Aboriginal Consumer Participation Programme
- Opportunity for you to join our Speakers' Bureau Program
- Discussion Forum for the Young People (aged 13-25) on Facebook

Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does~
William James



Letter from the Editor

Dear DHACs

Welcome!

We hope that you are having a great start to the New Year and are geared up for exciting times ahead!

The anticipation is building up with less than a month to go before the launch of the 11th National Rural Health Conference. With the promise of answers to many of the health challenges faced by remote and rural parts of Australia, this conference is one not to be missed! Topics covered at the conference include the engagement of consumers in policy development, state of oral health, closures of rural hospitals, lack of aged care and mental health facilities and much much more. Further details on this Conference can be found on page 3 of this DHAC E-Newsletter.

On the HCC Homefront, we welcome you in on the action with Bill Fox's 2011 New Year Resolutions and aspirations for oral health. Also in this edition are

- Update on Laura Elkin and William Trott's Broome trip (Aboriginal Consumers' Participation Program) and their meeting with the members of the Kullarri Health Issues Group.
- More on how you can join our Speaker's Bureau Program and
- An invitation to young people to join our Discussion Forum on Facebook

Enjoy!

Yours Sincerely,
Caroline Rugdee



The Health Consumers' Council

Advocacy Corner – New Year Resolutions

Number 1 – Oral Health Provision

What follows is a suggested starting point for 2011. The goal to be achieved is the more effective and equitable provision of oral health care in WA. These points were first put to attendees in a five minute speech I gave on behalf of the Health Consumers' Council at "the Day" – which was an event organised by the Senior Alliance, COTA (WA) and WACOSS on the 31st of August 2010.

The points are repeated here in the hope that improving oral health provision, particularly for those most in need, stays on the Agenda for a healthier WA in 2011. So here goes:

1. We believe that the provision of good dental and related services should be recognised as essential to the physical, social and emotional well being of all
2. These services should be universally available and accessible
3. Prevention should be encouraged
4. For those who cannot afford private services a reduction in the co-payment required to access public dental facilities especially for the more complex problems should be considered
5. PATS should cover dental related travel
6. GPs should be encouraged to better understand the cross connection between oral health and other significant health issues – and to use the Medicare Chronic Disease Dental Scheme
7. Efforts must be made to remove any stigma associated with the use of public dental services

To reach these goals we need greater dental practitioner participation in public dental provision. Ways of doing this, particularly in the less attractive locations should be investigated.

Happy Oral Health to all.

Bill Fox
Advocate

Speakers' Bureau Expression of Interest

Interested in promoting health rights to groups?



The Health Consumers' Council is forming a Speakers' Bureau to equip interested individuals with skills to promote health rights to consumers in Western Australia

We will provide:

- * Training * Support
- *Promotion
- * Print Resources

If you are interested to become a speaker for health rights, please contact

Caroline Rugdee
Speakers' Bureau Project
Coordinator

Tel: (08) 9221 3422
Fax: (08) 9221 5435
Freecall: 1800 620 780 (country)
Email: caroline.rugdee@hconc.org.au

We look forward to hearing from you soon!

"The words you choose to say something are just as important as the decision to speak."

Anonymous

Rural health conference seeks blueprint for national reform

With 'action' a key word for the sector in 2011, delegates attending the 11th National Rural Health Conference in Perth can look forward to a program that provides answers to many of the health challenges faced by rural and remote communities in every State.

Under the theme *Rural and Remote Australia: the heart of a healthy nation*, this biennial event to be held at the Perth Exhibition Convention Centre from 13-16 March, will benefit from the knowledge of many of the country's most experienced and innovative minds.

Tom Calma will speak about the health and wellbeing of Australia's first peoples; Colleen Hayward will talk about the importance of the social determinants of good health and Sam Prince will report on his aspirations for improving rural and remote health by eradicating one disease at a time – beginning with scabies. Delegates will learn lessons from overseas experiences: Amanda Sheedy from the People's Food Project Canada will speak on Engaging Citizens in Policy Development and there will be speakers from Papua New Guinea and Timor L'Este on health in the Pacific Region.

Other issues of importance include recurring natural disasters, the ongoing closure of rural hospitals, the long term sustainability of rural communities, the sorry state of oral health..

..and the lack of aged care and mental health facilities in the Bush. "Because health remains at the forefront of the national reform agenda, in 2011 we are hopeful that the time has come for action," said NRHA Executive Director, Gordon Gregory.

"The conference themes will help to solicit answers to health-related challenges that continue to affect the lives of the seven million people who live in country Australia." Inter-professional learning, multi-disciplinary care and workforce redesign are also due for discussion at a time when attracting qualified health staff to the bush – and retaining them – is proving difficult.

Conference details, including a detailed program, are at www.ruralhealth.org.au

Further contact

Leanne Coleman, Conference Manager: 02 6285 4660

Marshall Wilson, Media: 0425 624 100

Useful Links

Check these links out for further services and assistance to your needs

WA Country Health Service
<http://wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/>

Health Consumers of Rural and Remote Australia
<http://hcr.ra.ruralhealth.org.au>

Update on the Aboriginal Consumer Participation Program – Laura Elkin



The Aboriginal Consumer Participation Program travelled to Broome late last year and met with members of the Kullarri Health Issues Group. We were joined by staff from the Kimberley Mental Health and Drug Service, who were there to update the group on the progress of the new Mental Health Unit currently being built within the grounds of Broome Hospital and the outcomes of the community consultations they held in 2009. It is expected that the facility will be built by November 2011 and will be open for clinical operation by February 2012. The unit when fully operational will have 14 Adult beds available for patients from the Kimberley and Pilbara regions.

The group also asked about: community education about the new unit and how people can access help there; about the importance of Interpreters; the importance of building trust between patients and their nurses, doctors and even the police (when they are involved); and about needing Aboriginal employees from across the Kimberley. They also think employing an Aboriginal Consumer Consultant is important.

We screened “Mary G’s Big Check Up” which everyone agreed is a great resource to assist country patients who are feeling scared about travelling to Perth for health treatment. It uses humour to highlight some of the challenges Aboriginal country patients can have orienting their way through the city as well as their appointments. It also highlights some of the services that are there to support them through this.

Join the Health Consumers’ Council Today!

The Health Consumers’ Council would like to encourage you to become a member. There are many benefits to becoming a member, besides the fact that it is totally free!

As a member of the Health Consumers’ Council you will:

- Be kept up to date about health issues
- Be able to have your say on health policy and on the way that health services are delivered
- Receive free *Health Matters* magazines
- Be able to go on our distribution list so you can find out about all the events involving HCC and other consumers!

If you would like to become a member, please call Caroline Rugdee on (08) 9221 3422 or Free Call 1800 620 780 and we’ll help you out!

The Health Consumers Council also has a website: www.hconc.org.au

Visit the website today to find up to date health issues, relevant links and lots of interesting information.

Unsung Hero Award 2011 - entries now open

Many people work tirelessly for their community and make enormous contributions on local issues. Communities in rural and remote areas are much the richer for their contribution, yet often we don’t know who these people are.

For this reason we call them Unsung Heroes - local people who work hard and expect little reward. The 2011 Unsung Hero Award round is now open and the winner will be announced at the 11th National Rural Health Conference.

Further information is available at:
<http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/friends/?IntContId=14738&IntCatId=4>

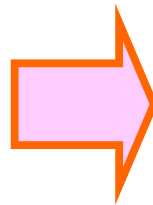
**HEALTH CONSUMERS' COUNCIL
DISCUSSION FORUM
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (FACEBOOK)**



We are seeking young people aged 13-25 to join our Facebook Discussion Forum on WA Health. The objectives of this Forum are

1. To encourage you to discuss what the key issues are in relation to WA health and the health system;
2. To help you understand health issues; and
3. To encourage your involvement in designing solutions.

If you are aged 13-25 or know someone in this age group, we would love to hear from you! For more information regarding this opportunity, contact Caroline at the Health Consumers' Council at 9221 3422 or caroline.rugdee@hconc.org.au.



Come join the Discussion!

What is the most important health issue to you as a young person aged 13-25 years and why?

E-health – Have your Say



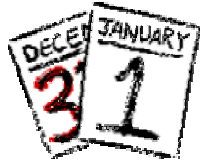
The World Health Organisation defines e-health as “the combined use of electronic communication and information technology in the health sector”. Further information on E-health, including the National Rural Health Alliance's Position Paper on the rural and remote implications on a national e-health strategy, can be found by clicking on the following link: <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/e-health/?IntCatId=45>

People living in rural and remote areas stand to benefit from e-health with its potential to help in overcoming the effects of distance....and there will be greater benefit if we share our knowledge and experiences.

We invite you to:

1. comment on how well our networks are equipped to connect and communicate through e-health, to promote opportunities and minimise gaps in health care delivery in rural and remote Australia;
2. share information about e-health solutions that are working in rural and remote Australia, including strengths and weaknesses;
3. provide relevant links such as newsletters, websites and conference presentations;
4. submit case studies of e-health applications being used by you or your organisation.

Please send your comments or input to e-health@ruralhealth.org.au / the Health Consumers' Council at info@hconc.org.au



Dates for your Diary

Day	Occasion/Note	Time	Address	Contact for Information
Friday 18/2/11	CAC Roundtable Meeting	12pm - 2pm	Health Consumers' Council Cnr Lord and Wellington St, East Perth	Caroline Rugdee Ph: 9221 3422 Email: caroline.rugdee@hconc.org.au
Wednesday 23/2/11	Consumer Rep Skills Training	9.30am - 3pm	Rockingham	Caroline Rugdee Ph: 9221 3422 Email: caroline.rugdee@hconc.org.au
Friday 4/3/11	Health Professionals Roundtable	12pm-2pm	Health Consumers' Council Cnr Lord and Wellington St, East Perth	Caroline Rugdee Ph: 9221 3422 Email: caroline.rugdee@hconc.org.au
Friday 18/3/11	Community Forum: Environmental Health	9.30am-12.30pm	Grace Vaughan House- 227 Stubbs Terrace, Shenton Park	Rosemary Caithness Ph:9221 3422 Email: Rosemary.caithness@hconc.org.au
Friday 1/4/11	Consumer Rep Skills Training	9.30am-3pm	Health Consumers' Council Cnr Lord and Wellington St, East Perth	Rosemary Caithness Ph:9221 3422 Email: info@hconc.org.au
Saturday 2/4/11	Health Consumers' Council - Members Open Day	10am-2.30pm	Health Consumers' Council Cnr Lord and Wellington St, East Perth	Rosemary Caithness Ph:9221 3422 Email: info@hconc.org.au
Wednesday 13/4/11 & 20/4/11	Speakers' Bureau Training	TBC	Health Consumers' Council Cnr Lord and Wellington St, East Perth	Caroline Rugdee Ph:9221 3422 Email: info@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