

FEBRUARY 2009 ISSUE

DHAC NEWSLETTER

Health Consumers' Council WA Inc, Unit 13/14 Wellington Fair, 40 Lord Street, Perth WA 6000, www.hconc.org.com.au , 08 9221 3422

Welcome

Welcome to the March Issue of the District Health Advisory Councils (DHAC) e-newsletter.

Inside This Issue

Patient First

Patient for Patient Safety

Rural Health Article

CAC chairs meeting update

New Advocate

Feedback

How to Join HCC

Thank you to all who completed and returned the survey to the Health Consumers Council. We have received some great feedback, and ideas on how to improve our organisation.

A report of the findings will be given to the board when they are discussing the strategic planning for the future.

Thanks again from everyone at the Health Consumers' Council!

The role of the Health Consumers Council (HCC):

- HCC enables consumers to have their say in the way that health services, policies and programs are developed.
- We are funded by WACHS (WA Country Health Service) to inform DHACs of current health issues both in rural and metro areas, and how they can contribute to the development of the WA health system.

The monthly DHAC e-newsletters are designed to:

- Provide DHACs with up to date health information
- Inform DHACs on what metropolitan Community Advisory Councils are doing and to advise on how DHACs could look at working on the same issues in their region
- To provide a forum for DHACs to inform other DHACs of the issues they are facing as well as of their current projects and accomplishments.

HCC seeks to enable consumers to have their say in the way that health services, policies and programs are developed.

Join Today!!

It's free and it's easy!

If you have any items of interest that you would like to share with other DHACs, please send them through to Danielle.scott@hconc.org.au

Also, please circulate this newsletter to other members of your DHAC.

Patient First - Progress Report



The Project is still going well at Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital. We have had some devoted patient First Ambassadors who put great effort into ensuring the success of the project.

The project has been expanded and will hopefully soon be starting at Kalgoorlie, Albany, King Edward Memorial Hospital and Fremantle.

Congratulations Anne!

Patient for Patient Safety Workshop

The Health Consumers Council WA, the Office of Safety and Quality in Healthcare – Government of Western Australia Department of Health, Curtin University of Technology and Lotterywest, in collaboration with Patients for Patient Safety will hold the first Australian Patients for Patient Safety Workshop in Perth, Western Australia from July 7-9, 2009.



Attendance at the Australian Patients for Patient Safety Workshop in Perth is available to any patient, family member or professional working with/in healthcare in metropolitan, regional, rural or remote Western Australia/Australia, who cares about patient safety and who is willing to commit the time and who meets the participant requirements and criteria.

For more information about the workshop and information on how to apply, visit the Health Consumers' Councils website, www.hconc.org.au. Click on the bottom blue tab "patient for patient safety", which is on the left hand side of the screen. That will lead you directly to information about the event.

Rural Article One:

National Health and Hospital Reform Commission (NHHRC) Interim Report

Many of us working in the health sector have come to regard the NHHRC as being a little bit like Santa Claus. First because we desperately want to believe in it and secondly because we have all eagerly lined up or written letters at some stage to tell the Commissioners what 'presents' we'd like. Well, Christmas is just around the corner, in producing an Interim Report, the Commission opened up its sack and gave us all a glimpse of what we might expect to get. Understandably, given that the Commission's brief was to 'report on long-term

Reform for the Australian health care system' the report is a fairly lengthy document so we do not propose to try and comment on the whole thing here. Instead, let's concentrate on what the Commission had to say specifically about rural and remote health. In her speech at the National Press Club, Chair of the Commission – Dr. Christine Bennett – talked about delivering better health outcomes for remote and rural communities:

'We believe we can make a real difference to health in remote and rural communities. Nearly one third of Australians live in remote and rural areas. They generally have poorer health status, with shorter life expectancy, and higher rates of accident and injury and some chronic diseases and preventable cancers. We argue that more equitable health care requires more equitable distribution of funding. We therefore propose that where remote and rural communities are under-served by MBS providers, an 'equivalence' payment be made. This would be used flexibly for local health care delivery.'

Just to break that down a bit, the Commission is proposing that, because there are fewer medical services available in rural and remote regions, MBS payments are, as a consequence, lower than in metropolitan areas and that therefore the Government should redistribute funds so that an 'equivalent' amount of money was spent on health in the bush. This money would be spent providing local health services contingent on local needs. To us, that sounds feasible, equitable and quantifiable.

Continued on the next page...



‘Caring for people in remote and rural locations involves either bringing care to the person or bringing the person to the care. To bring more care to people in rural and remote areas we propose expansion of specialist outreach services – covering medical specialists, midwives, allied health, pharmacy, and dental services.’

Again, good idea. Our feedback is that current Medical Specialist Outreach Assistance Programs are working quite well and augmenting them as the Commission suggests would be a welcome initiative. It’s a case of when you’re on a good thing expand it.

We want to encourage greater use of telehealth services including funding to support referral and advice networks for remote and rural practitioners, and on-call 24-hour telephone and internet consultation and advice services.

Providing rural and remote doctors with some much needed back up would be a welcome initiative. Services would include practitioner-to-practitioner consultations, and teleradiology. In addition, there would be referral and advice networks for remote and rural practitioners which would cover things such as maternity care, chronic and complex disease care planning and review, chronic wound management, and palliative care. Giving people the reassuring knowledge that that there is someone they can call 24 hours a day to discuss a medical problem also makes good sense. Both services would probably be relatively inexpensive given the substantial benefits involved.

For the full review of the document by HCRRA contact Danielle Scott at the health Consumers Council and we will be able to send you a copy. Danielle’s email is : Danielle.scott@hconc.org.au.

The full report can be seen on the Commission’s website at www.nhhrc.org.au .

HCRRA Newsletter
February 2009



Issues currently being addressed by CACs

One CAC is currently looking at the possibility of a room for support persons when a woman is in theatre. The possibility of a demountable is not viable. Members raised the question of whether there was existing space in the hospital that was being underutilised. CAC members have requested a tour of Labour and Birth Suite and Theatres to ascertain whether another room could be utilised.

New Armadale Emergency Department Expansion – Official Opening and Open Day

On Wednesday 28 January 2009, Health Minister Kim Haines officially unveiled the new \$9.4 million Armadale Emergency Department Redevelopment. This allows up to 60,000 patients to be treated each year. The redeveloped ED began treating patients from 7 am on the 11 Feb 2009.



Picture: Armadale Health Service
<http://www.ahs.health.wa.gov.au/>

Given the Emergency Department has seen a 90% increase in patients over the past 8 years from 23,000 patients in 2000 to 44,000 in 2008, this new expansion is well justified.

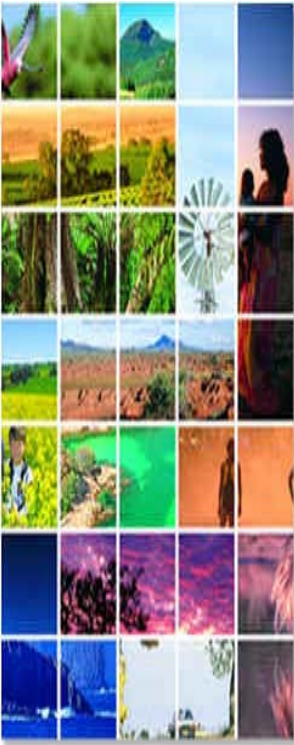
The Armadale CAC is also supporting the Perth Radiology Clinic in acquiring an MRI License for the Armadale Hospital. Letters of support has been sent to the Federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon and local Federal Minister Sharryn Jackson MP.

New Advocate!

The Health Consumers Council has hired a new advocate. Gio Terni has recently started working in recent weeks to help our advocates with their workload. Gio will work three days a week.

You can call Gio if you have an issue,
For a free call: 1800 620 780 (country callers)

DHAC Feedback



Feedback from Naturaliste DHAC (which covers Busselton, Dunsborough and Yallingup)

The main issues for our DHAC are as follows:

- Dental care
- Respite care (mainly for the aged)
- For this year involvement in the development of the new Busselton Hospital.

What's your DHAC up to?

Email Cheryl at cheryl.rudgee@hconc.org.au

We are seeking an update of what is going on in your area so we can see if there is a trend of a problem occurring across the State. Can you send us the top three issues relating to health care faced by consumers in your region, and how you are planning to overcome these issues?

Health Consumers' Council Membership



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 other consumers and the Health Consumers' Council are involved in

If you would like to become a member, please call Cheryl Rudgee on (08) 9221 3422 or Free Call 1800 620 780 and we will send out the appropriate forms.

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.

Our mission
To promote quality
health services in
Western Australia.

Final Note from The Health Consumers' Council for 2009

The Health Consumers' Council is willing and able to help DHAC's in the planning and implementation of any initiatives your DHAC may wish to work on in 2009.

The Health Consumers' Council and WA Country Health Service encourages your DHAC to focus on one main project in 2009 in any of the following areas that will benefit consumers in your region.

- Patient Safety
 - Patient First Program
 - Patient for Patient Safety Workshop.
This workshop will be held in the middle of the year, there are scholarships available to help rural consumer with travel and accommodation costs. Refer to the HCC website for more details:
www.hconc.org.au
- Health Promotion
 - Indetify what the consumers in your region want.

What is the main issue you would like help with in 2009? We are here to support you, so please give us a call or drop us an email.

Email: cheryl.rugdee@hconc.org.au

Phone: 1800 620 780 or (08) 9221 3422

Health Matters, the quarterly HCC newsletter is having a rural edition in a couple of months time. If you or your DHAC would like to contribute anything to this newsletter please send Cheryl your entry by the 25th of April. This is an opportunity to have any issues or activities in your DHAC heard by all HCC members.



The Health Consumers' Council



TELEPHONE: (08) 9221-3422
FREE CALL: 1800 620 780

