



Newsletter

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Network Dates:

Reference group meeting –
4/12/2006

DHS meeting –
11/12/2006

Newsletter submissions:

Submissions to be emailed to
sharris@bendigohealth.org.au

NEWS FROM THE NETWORK

The past few months since the last newsletter have been a busy time as I have endeavoured to get a better understanding of the network and to start visiting the various allied health teams in the region. Trips to Robinvale, Mildura, Ouyen, Kyneton, Swan Hill, Kerang, Castlemaine and within Bendigo have allowed me to meet various allied health staff, better appreciate the travel time for those in the northern most region of the Loddon Mallee, and see some great efforts to provide support for allied health staff and students and to provide the best possible allied health services to communities. With dates booked or to be confirmed for some other teams I look forward to hearing more about the work being completed by Loddon Mallee allied health professionals. If I haven't yet booked a visit to your workplace please contact me (details below).

Issues discussed during the visits have included:

- what are the best ways to assist communication and sharing of information/resources between allied health professionals in the region;
- feedback and planning regarding the conference and other PD opportunities;
- IT issues – including the advantages and disadvantages of videoconferencing;
- students;
- A&EP funding issues;
- workload issues.

Where appropriate these issues will be followed up and feedback provided.

Don't forget the benefits of sharing information with other allied health professionals. Imagine saving time on tasks like quality projects or policy and form development. If you have completed a project such as this and would like to share it with others, or are about to and would like to find out what others have already done, send me an email and information can be shared.

Sally Harris

Coordinator - Allied Health Network: Loddon Mallee Region

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E: sharris@bendigohealth.org.au

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is for the use of allied health professionals within the Loddon Mallee region to communicate what is happening within the area. If you wish to contribute or have a suggestion of a topic you would like to see covered please contact me (details above).

WEBSITE

www.alliedhealthnetwork.org.au

The network website has been running well for the past couple of months with no reported problems. Don't forget to add the website to your internet favorites list and to register on the website. Registering will assist colleagues and others to know who to refer to and who to contact re a specialty area of practice.

The **LINKS** page is a useful page of the website. It allows you to quickly access the websites of a range of support, health care and professional development organisations.

The **WHAT'S ON** page includes information on upcoming events. Professional events currently advertised include the following workshops:

- **Botox Seminar for Allied Health and Medical Staff**
to be held in Bendigo on 20/11/2006
- **Professional Mentoring Programme**
to be held in Mildura on 21/11/2006

If you have information you would like included on the website (for example regarding vacant positions or an upcoming event), please follow the prompts or contact me (details on p1).

2007 CONFERENCE

Thanks to those who took the time to provide feedback regarding the preferred format for the 2007 conference/ professional development program. The feedback has been compiled and the general consensus is that people report the networking opportunities of the one-day conference to be beneficial, however would like to trial videoconference sessions as well.

Planning has now commenced with the conference likely to be held in March. Please forward suggestions of topics or speakers to sharris@bendigohealth.org.au. A number of topics have been suggested to date including:

- management and leadership skills/issues
- recruitment and retention of staff
- affect of the drought on health care
- discipline specific topics.
- supervision and mentoring
- service delivery models
- sexuality

A small number of staff have volunteered to be part of the conference committee to help with planning for next year's conference however more volunteers are wanted. If you would like to be a part of the conference planning committee or have suggestions about the format, topics or potential speakers for the 2007 conference, please contact me.

LODDON MALLEE ALLIED HEALTH NETWORK DATABASE

If you know of any other allied health professionals (that includes public, private, and those not currently working) who may like to receive information from the network please forward the network details to them. They can contact the coordinator and be added to the database to receive future information.



Looking for some financial assistance to complete a course or professional development activity?

The Victorian Healthcare Association (VHA) coordinates the Allied Health CPD Subsidy program. This subsidy scheme is available to assist allied health practitioners (including Dietitians, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Podiatrists and Speech Pathologists) involved in rural health in Victoria to participate in conferences and skill development opportunities relevant to the development and provision of rural health services.

This fund is not available to assist with formal tertiary qualifications. It applies to qualified allied health practitioners in rural and remote areas of Victoria, working in the public sector/agencies only. The total level of subsidy is capped at \$1,000 per person per financial year. Subsidies are restricted to course fees, accommodation, travel and childcare expenses.

Applications need to be lodged 2 months prior to the event or conference

For further information including the guidelines and application form go to the Awards/Scholarship information at www.vha.org.au or contact Sara Duncan (03) 8606 4600 or sara.duncan@vha.org.au

VHA will also soon be advertising for applications for the Rural Allied Health Postgraduate Scholarship Program. Information will be forwarded when available.

If you know of other funding/scholarship programs please notify Sally and your information can be shared.

USEFUL WEBSITE

www.connectingcare.com

Want to know where to refer your clients?

Want to know whether there is a physio service in Boort? Or a podiatrist in Ouyen?

Have you tried the Connecting Care Service Directory?

The Connecting Care website can be accessed at the above address or via the links page of

www.alliedhealthnetwork.org.au

UPDATE: REGION OF CHOICE: ALLIED HEALTH RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION SERVICE

Region of Choice is an initiative of the Victorian State Government Department of Human Services, Service and Workforce Division. The purpose of the project is to develop and implement an allied health recruitment and retention strategy in each of Victoria's five non-metropolitan regions.

The CHERC project team has been meeting with allied health service managers from across the Loddon Mallee region to introduce the project. The CHERC team is responsible for the State-wide needs analysis and has developed a questionnaire to collect information on the current status of the allied health workforce. We have also been working with the other project teams to develop a marketing and communication strategy and a case management strategy. The project teams are collaborating with the Department of Human Services to develop a centralised website that will link with the Loddon Mallee Allied Health Network Website. We are also working with the Department for Victorian Communities Regional Migration Incentive Fund (RMIF) Officers from across Victoria.



Nutrition session and resource package for Bendigo helps to improve the health of children

With all the interest in childhood obesity and how to curb it, workshops and resource packages for teachers on children's nutrition and physical activity could be part of the Bendigo solution.

This project was developed by the Nutrition and Dietetics Department of Bendigo Health after extensive consultation and a series of child nutrition surveys sent to local children's services, children's education services (eg primary schools) as well as parents.

Bendigo Health Community Dietitian Kerin Barnard recently presented 'Nutrition and Physical Activity for Children (5-12 years)' to Bendigo primary school teachers. The schools represented were given a resource package titled 'Healthy Habits for Children', which included nutrition and physical activity resources for staff, children & families; health promoting school program information and a CD of recommended websites & resources (including eg lesson plans, school activities & healthy canteens information). Nikki Greenway (public health student from La Trobe University) also assisted to plan & develop this project.

The workshop covered nutritional and physical activity recommendations for 5-12 year olds; ideas on incorporating information on nutrition and physical activity into the curriculum and health promoting school programs; information on how to select healthy foods; how to help children develop healthier habits and how schools can play a role, along with many other services & groups in the community.

Engaging teachers & promotional strategies:

To reach the primary school teachers, initial questionnaires to obtain views about this planned nutrition and physical activity presentation were emailed to a number of staff from various schools. We used this information to assist to plan the workshop.

The local Department of Education and Training assisted to provide information about cluster meetings & ways to promote information to local schools. One month prior to the event, our invitations were emailed to all local principals & assistant principals and also a hard copy was mailed to principals (invitations included an introduction letter, flyer & registration form). Two weeks prior to the workshop, a follow up email to all local principals & assistant principals was sent (with the previous invitation information). Many began registering after this second email invitation.

Other promotional strategies included the provision of supper, no cost for attendance & each school represented at the workshop received a resource package. These packages assist to give easy access to relevant nutrition and physical activity information, resources and websites.

Outcomes

Over 30 attended the workshop, and the evaluation showed **all** teachers either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' the workshop content would assist their 'school to promote & teach healthy eating & physical activity' as well as assist to 'inform parents'. Many were grateful and had very positive comments about the presentations and the resource packages. There was also strong interest for future workshops targeting specific topics for staff (eg nutrition policy development, & programs of other schools) and for parents (eg healthy eating and physical activity for children, healthy choices & reading labels information).

For more information please contact Kerin Barnard Community Dietitian Bendigo Health ph:5454 8059.