



Newsletter

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Network Dates:

Meeting with DHS –
03/09/2007

Reference group
meeting –
10/09/2007

Newsletter submissions:

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

NEWS FROM THE NETWORK

Work continues to complete an evaluation of the Loddon Mallee Allied Health Network. A small number of interviews have been conducted, resulting in some very useful suggestions. However, I would like to get further feedback and would appreciate some volunteers. I am keen to speak with allied health professionals from a range of disciplines and a range of healthcare services. Please email me if you are able to participate.

Through completing the evaluation to date it has become apparent that some of the roles of the network are not well known. For this reason I have included a flyer about the network in this newsletter. Few people seemed aware of the representative role of the network. This includes highlighting issues affecting allied health at regular meetings with DHS. If you have an issue you would like followed up please let me know.

One aim of the network is to share information amongst allied health professionals in the Loddon Mallee region. The newsletter is one way to do this. If you would like to provide a quick report on a CPD event, a service you provide, a recent project, etc – please contact me.

Sally Harris

Coordinator - Allied Health Network: Loddon Mallee Region

T: 5454 9058 (Mon/Wed)

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

EVENTS

The events page of the website includes information on a range of events which may be of interest for Loddon Mallee allied health professionals. These can be professional or social. Currently included are sessions from the Statewide Allied Health Workforce Education Program and Tai Chi for Arthritis Leader Training Course in Mildura and Bendigo.

If you would like an upcoming event or job vacancy advertised on the website please follow the prompts on the website or contact Sally.



NATIONAL ALLIED HEALTH CONFERENCE

The 7th National Allied Health Conference was held in Hobart from July 18-20 and attended by over 300 delegates. I attended, along with a small number of other Loddon Mallee allied health professionals. Titled "Allied Health – No discipline is an island" the conference focused on breaking down barriers, not just between disciplines but also between the different states, between metropolitan and rural areas; public and private; and between healthcare services and universities.

With statements such as "the 21st century is the century for allied health" (Dr Jane Tolman, Geriatrician), it was a very stimulating program and highlighted the growing demand for allied health services and the diverse role that allied health professionals play.

Main themes of the conference included:

- **Recruitment and retention** – issues are wide spread; value in accepting undergraduate students as they may return to work in the area;
- **Interprofessional practice and education** – The importance of interprofessional practice and education for all allied health professionals, not just students, was highlighted. Focusing on the client rather than the professions can assist to breakdown old stereotypes of allied health disciplines
- **Technology** – the use of technology in allied health is expanding to include improved data collection and management; using tablet PCs which has been shown to decrease documentation time; delivering CPD sessions by a range of methods; linking rural therapists with specialist services
- **Models of service delivery** – numerous sessions related to different models of service delivery including seating, case conference models and demand management
- **Allied Health Research** – the need to build capacity for allied health research and provide appropriate support, as well as methods to overcome barriers to research were discussed.

The next National Allied Health Conference is being organised for 13-15 August 2009 in Canberra

For more information please see the conference website

<http://www.cdesign.com.au/nahc2007/pages/program.pdf> which still includes the conference program or contact me

Sally Harris

LODDON MALLEE ALLIED HEALTH NETWORK DATABASE

If you know of an allied health professional 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.

Don't forget to tell new staff about the network.



UPCOMING EVENTS

THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS: PARTNERSHIPS IN REHABILITATION CONFERENCE

Hosted by Epworth Rehabilitation and Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre, 14-16 November 2007, Melbourne

www.rehab2007.com

Includes pre-conference workshops on a range of topics on Wednesday Nov 14th

WORLD CONGRESS OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS – THE FUTURE NOW: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN HEALTH - 26-29 March 2008

www.worldhealthcongress.org

ARTHRITIS VIC – TAI CHI FOR ARTHRITIS LEADER TRAINING COURSE

Mildura: 8-9 September, 2007

Bendigo: 10-11 November, 2007

Further information available from

<http://www.arthritisvic.org.au/pages.asp?d=5A4C5A717251477C7008060B030606>

STATEWIDE ALLIED HEALTH WORKFORCE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Loddon Mallee sessions: Echuca, 3/10/07: Appreciative Inquiry

Bendigo 27/11/07: Multidisciplinary management of wound care

For further information and the entire August – December 2007 program go to

<http://cpdforalliedhealth.org>

Please note objectives for each session will be included on the website outlining the areas to be covered during the presentation

USEFUL WEBSITES

HealthInsite website - <http://www.healthinsite.gov.au>

HealthInsite is an Australian Government initiative that offers a wide range of up-to-date and quality assessed information on important health topics such as diabetes, cancer, mental health and asthma.

HealthInsite provides reliable, high quality health information by linking users to information on the sites of its approved information partners. These information partners include some of Australia's most authoritative health organization including hospitals and health departments, non-government organization and self-help groups. Each HealthInsite information partner goes through an independent quality assessment process to ensure that their site is of the highest standard and provides reliable and relevant information.

CareSearch - <http://www.caresearch.com.au>

CareSearch is an online resource consolidating evidence based and quality information for various groups within the palliative care community. It is the result of a project funded by the Australian Government to improve the evidence available to palliative care clinical practitioners, researchers and educators nationally.



Update on the Region of Choice Allied Health Recruitment and Retention Project

The Region of Choice project has now been in existence for one year with one more year to run. Our brochures, flyers and quick screen are all now in existence so we will be attending conferences, student careers expos and school expos trying to spread the word that we need allied health professionals to come and work in regional Victoria. Our quarterly data collections continue to show many and varied position vacancies all over Victoria. If you are interested in seeing what is available either check the employment section on the Allied Health Network website at www.alliedhealthnetwork.org.au or the Department of Human Services website at www.health.vic.gov.au/jobs.

Currently I am trying to make appointments with different allied health professionals all over the Loddon Mallee region to have a short discussion with you about your professional life here in regional Victoria. Is there anything that would make your position better? What already works really well for you? If you would like to make an appointment to meet with me I would appreciate hearing from you and can be contacted by email cparker@bendigohealth.org.au or by phone on 5454 6413.

Recently I attended one day of the Mentorworks training in Mildura. This was an excellent experience and is free. I would thoroughly recommend the course as it is based around a way of thinking called Appreciative Inquiry which is a totally different way of thinking for the average allied health person who tends to be a problem solver. At the end of the course the aim is to match people up to become mentors or mentees and there is an ongoing process of contact between the two and Mentorworks themselves. If you would like further information about their courses or being a mentor/mentee the website is www.mentoringworks.com.au and the email address is admin@mentoringworks.com.au. Dr Tricia Szirom, the founding director of the company is coming to the Loddon Mallee area to speak at the Echuca Regional Hospital on 3rd October from 12.00 to 1.30pm about Appreciative Inquiry. If you are interested, there will be more information on the Statewide Allied Health Workforce Education Program website at www.cpdforalliedhealth.org

In May I visited many of the hospitals in the Loddon Mallee region. One of the issues I discovered was that access to journal articles was difficult in some of the rural areas. If this is a problem for you please feel free to contact either Sally Harris at the Allied Health Network or me (see above contact details) for further assistance.

Finally, if any of you have friends that potentially want to make the move as allied health professionals to regional Victoria and would like any assistance please put them in contact with me. One of the activities for the Region of Choice project manager is to enthusiastically help anyone in this position. As we have quarterly information regarding positions available in regional Victoria we may be able to lend a hand.

Australian Rural and Remote Health Professional Scholarship Scheme

A reminder about the Australian Rural & Remote Health Professional Scholarship scheme.

Scholarships are available for continuing professional development activities to be completed after 1/1/08

The scholarships provide a contribution towards:

- individual clinical placements
- short courses
- postgraduate qualifications
- conferences

Closing date is Friday 07/09/07

Further information available from <http://www.sarrah.org.au/site/index.cfm?display=74994>



The Allied Health Network - Loddon Mallee Region was established in March 2003 and is funded by the Loddon Mallee Office of the Department of Human Services (DHS).

The Allied Health Network members include allied health professionals (AHPs) from the disciplines of dietetics, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, podiatry and speech pathology, working in the public and private health sectors. However, the information produced by the network is also made available to other allied health professions.

The aim of the Allied Health Network is to assist with the coordination of professional development (PD) and to provide opportunities for AHPs to discuss sectorial and service issues. The Allied Health Network liaises with many other organisations that can assist the practice of rural AHPs.

The primary goals of the network are to assist with:

1) communication; 2) co-ordination of PD opportunities; and 3) provide support for AHPs within the region.

Services provided by the Allied Health Network include:

1. **Website:** A website has been developed to assist with achieving the above goals. It includes information about professional development opportunities, positions vacant, an allied health database, links to useful websites, copies of the network newsletter (see below) and message boards. The message boards allow AHPs to post clinical or professional questions and receive replies. The aim is to assist knowledge sharing and problem solving.

www.alliedhealthnetwork.org.au

2. **Conference:** Four allied health conferences have been coordinated within the region to date. While bringing new information into the region this conference also gives regional allied health the opportunity to showcase their services.

3. **PD opportunities:** A database of AHPs who wish to receive group emails about PD opportunities has been developed. Information about PD opportunities that the coordinator is advised of is emailed regularly to all those on the database. The coordinator is able to assist with coordinating PD opportunities as appropriate.

4. **Newsletter:** A bimonthly newsletter is produced which includes information about the network, courses attended, local and external services and a range of other information relevant to AHPs within the Loddon Mallee Region. AHPs are encouraged to submit articles for publication.

5. **Forums for identifying and resolving issues effecting allied health professionals**

- o Initially subregional group meetings were organised however as AHPs identified attending these meetings as problematic due to travel and time issues, the network moved to IT solutions such as email and the website.
- o Reference group meetings are held bimonthly to discuss issues affecting AHPs. The reference group is comprised of members representing the allied health disciplines, health care organisations from the region, as well as the universities offering allied health courses.
- o Regular meetings have also been established with DHS to highlight relevant issues for AHPs. This led to the purchase of additional computers for AHPs in the region with limited access.

If you wish to identify an issue for discussion please contact the coordinator (see below) or a reference group member.

How else could we assist?

This is really up to the AHPs of the Loddon Mallee region. We welcome any suggestions of ways to improve the Allied Health Network - Loddon Mallee Region. Please forward suggestions to the coordinator - see below.

The coordinator of the network is Sally Harris (Contact on 5454 9058 or sharris@bendigohealth.org.au)

If you wish to be added to the email list or have any suggestions or feedback about the network please contact Sally.