



Newsletter

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Network Dates:

DHS meeting –
4/9/2006

Reference group
meeting – 2/10/2006

Newsletter submissions:

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

NEWS FROM THE NETWORK

In April Kim Hall finished in the position of Coordinator of the Allied Health Network. Kim has been a tireless worker for the network since it began in 2003 and will be missed. We thank Kim for her exceptional efforts in the coordinator role and wish her well in her private practice endeavors.

Casey James stepped into the position in an interim arrangement, just one month before the conference and ably kept the network ticking and completed all the final preparations for the conference (more on the conference to follow). Thanks Casey.

I have just commenced in the position and am keen to work towards the aims of the network - assisting communication, co-ordination of professional development and support for Allied Health within the region.

I am keen to hear what people find best about the network and any potential areas where we could improve. I am planning trips to each of the regions in the near future but in the mean time can be contacted Mondays and Tuesdays on 5454 9058 or sharris@bendigohealth.org.au

This edition of the newsletter will concentrate on describing some of the key services offered by the network. This will allow a review for those staff familiar with the network and an introduction for new staff. We also have an article on the Region of Choice project being carried out in the Loddon Mallee region.

Sally Harris
Coordinator
Allied Health Network: Loddon Mallee Region

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is produced bimonthly and includes information from the network and a range of other information relevant to allied health professionals within the Loddon Mallee Region.

This newsletter is for members, so if there is anything you would like to see included please forwards ideas and/or submissions to sharris@bendigohealth.org.au. This could include information on:

- a particular allied health professional who has been doing great things,
- a service provided or a project at your workplace, or
- feedback from a course or conference you have attended.

WEBSITE

www.alliedhealthnetwork.org.au

The website has been developed with the aim to provide allied health professionals with accessible information about professional development opportunities, positions vacant and other information relevant to allied health professionals. The message board allows members to post clinical or professional questions and receive replies. The aim is to assist knowledge sharing and problem solving. Some areas are password protected to prevent the misuse of these facilities by others. An online search of an allied health database is also password protected and available to members.

Unfortunately difficulties have been experienced with the website. These have now been rectified by the developer of the website and we are currently working on updating the information included. Apologies for any inconvenience caused. Please register as a member and fill out your details. Members can then log-in and access member's only areas of the website. Don't forget to add the website (www.alliedhealthnetwork.org.au) to your internet favourites list as it provides the above information as well as links to useful websites.

If you have information you would like included on the website (for example advertisement for positions vacant or a professional development session you are planning), please follow the prompts or contact me on 54549058 (Mon & Tues) / sharris@bendigohealth.org.au

CONFERENCE

One aim of the network is to improve access to professional development activities for allied health professionals in the Loddon Mallee region. One aspect of this is the coordination of an annual conference which is held within the region. While bringing new information into the region this conference also gives regional allied health the opportunity to showcase their service.

The network's 'The Way Forward Excellence in Care and Co-ordination' Conference was held on May 29th at the Bendigo Exhibition Centre. Overall the day ran smoothly with many excellent presentations made by a variety of speakers. Topics covered evidence based practice, palliative care, strategies for recruitment and retention of staff, and innovative clinical services and programs. Fifty people attended and the feedback given was very positive with 19 out of 20 people rating the conference as very good. Particular mention was made of the variety and range of topics and presenters. Many thanks to those who did such a fantastic job of presenting papers and providing posters.

Congratulations to Kim Hall and Casey James who organised a fantastic day. Thanks to Nikki Butcher, Pamela Reeves, Brett Toy and Danielle Major for their assistance in the planning of the event and for providing assistance on the day.

HELPERS WANTED:

Planning will soon commence for the 2007 conference. 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 via email, sharris@bendigohealth.org.au or via phone 5454 9058

Australian Rural and Remote Health Professional Scholarship Scheme (Postgraduate)

Applications for the Australian Rural and Remote Health Professional Scholarship Scheme (Postgraduate) for 2007 are now open. The closing date for applications is 15 September 2006. These scholarships support qualified allied health professionals living and working in rural and remote Australia to undertake a range of continuing professional development activities. More information can be found at www.sarrah.org.au/scholarship

REGION OF CHOICE: ALLIED HEALTH RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION SERVICE

Bendigo Health's Collaborative Health Education and Research Centre (CHERC) has been selected by the Department of Human Services (DHS) to undertake a project titled, "Region of Choice: Allied Health Recruitment and Retention Service". The project will be implemented over the next two and a half years. Each of the DHS regions across Victoria is undertaking a similar project.

The aim of this project is to develop a service that improves the recruitment and retention of allied health practitioners working in the Loddon Mallee Region (LMR) of Victoria. The project will extend and build on existing initiatives of the LM Allied Health Network and will target the range of specific outcomes outlined in the tender document.

Objectives of the project include development and implementation of:

- A collaborative regional allied health workforce strategic plan;
- A case management strategy for assisting allied health workers who express an interest in taking up employment within the LMR, and to assist health services within the region to recruit appropriate staff to vacant positions;
- A marketing strategy for the promotion of the LMR to allied health professionals;
- An orientation program for allied health workers recruited to the LMR;
- A guide for overseas trained allied health recruits seeking to relocate to rural Victoria;
- Resources for regional allied health workforce planning;
- A guide on local resources including facilities and services such as schools, accommodation, clubs etc; and
- A platform for future local implementation of DHS workforce projects

Additionally, collaboration with other Allied Health Services from across Victoria to implement the centralised components of the service, including:

- A centralised allied health vacancy register;
- A system for managing the vacancy register in a timely and responsive manner; and
- A centralised website that provides information about allied health recruitment and retention initiatives and support.

During phase one of the project a needs analysis will be conducted to collect baseline data regarding allied health professionals in the LMR. Needs analysis data will be collected through stakeholder consultation and a purpose designed questionnaire. The questionnaire was circulated late in July and during August members of the project team will conduct site visits to meet with key stakeholders and to collect the surveys.

The information collected in Stage 1 of the project will be developed into a service plan that incorporates a strategic plan and business plan that will define how the Loddon Mallee Allied Health Recruitment and Retention Service will work. The service plan will be developed into a list of specific actions that will be undertaken in Stage 2 of the project.

*Meet the Region of Choice Project team.
(Kevin Masman, Jenny Ham, Kate Hyett)*

