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# HEALTH REFORM UPDATE

## Council of Australian Governments

The latest Council of Australian Governments meeting was held on 13 February where every Australian government signed a Heads of Agreement on National Health Reform and a revised National Partnership Agreement on Improving Public Hospital Services and committed to signing a full National Health Reform Agreement by 1 July 2011. Two excerpts from the Heads of Agreement are provided below:

*“In addition to its contribution to base funding, the Commonwealth will increase its contribution to efficient growth funding for hospitals to 45 per cent from 1 July 2014, increasing to .50 per cent from 1 July 2017.*

a. *The Commonwealth guarantees that this contribution will be no less than \$16.4 billion between 2014-15 and 2019-20.*

b. *If this contribution is less than \$16.4 billion, the residual funds under the guarantee will be paid into the national funding body for distribution to States:*

i. *these residual funds will be spent by the States as funding for any health service that will assist in ameliorating the growth in demand for hospital services, including:*

1. *chronic disease management programs;*
2. *preventive health programs;*
3. *mental health programs;*
4. *hospital admission avoidance programs; and*
5. *hospital early discharge programs;*

*as jointly agreed by the Commonwealth and States. Funding will be additional to and not replace existing spending on these programs.”*

*“The parties agree that Medicare Locals – primary health care organisations to be established by the Commonwealth – will be responsible for coordinating and better integrating primary health care services in their local communities and regions. The parties agree that both Medicare Locals and State-funded health and community services will work cooperatively to achieve these objectives in each local community.”*

More information on the roles of Medicare Locals can be found in the [Heads of Agreement](#). Also see [COAG meeting outcomes](#).



## POLICY

### 85 Aboriginal Health Organisations Receive Accreditation Support

More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will have access to best-practice health care, with the Australian Government announcing \$5.6 million to help Aboriginal Health Organisations achieve accreditation under Australian quality standards. The accreditation funding will be used for a variety of activities to help overcome barriers, including the purchase of medical equipment, minor capital works, IT infrastructure, and staff training.

Media release available on [Department of Health and Ageing website](#).

### Report on Government services 2011

This report is produced by senior officials from Australian, State and Territory governments for the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). It shows Governments across the country spent over \$150.5 billion over the period covered in this year's report, equivalent to around 12.3 per cent of Australia's national income'.

The report and accompanying factsheets including one covering general practice and other primary healthcare services are available on the [Australian Government Productivity Commission website](#).

### Extra \$16.1 million for Home and Community Care in NSW

An additional \$16.1 million has been provided for Home and Community Care (HACC) services across NSW. HACC is a joint Australian Government and state government initiative that delivers care to help meet the individual needs of older people, people with a disability and their carers. The program helps seniors, people with a disability and their carers by providing services such as help with home maintenance and modification, transport, meals, personal care and allied health and nursing care.

See the [NSW Government Human Services website](#) for more information.

### National tobacco campaign – General Practice Impact

The new advertising campaign that links smoking with lung cancer which hit the airwaves and TV screens recently alongside the Australian Government's plain packaging plans, increase in tobacco excise and subsidised nicotine patches will potentially drive more Australians to their GPs for quit smoking support and counselling.

The Quitline can be a useful resource for GPs – call them on 13 7848 or provide patients with the [Quit Now website](#) details.

## CONSULTATION & SUPPORT

### Justice Health is seeking General Practice support

Justice Health provides health care to adults and adolescents involved with the criminal justice system and people in Mental Health Facilities. It wants to ensure people with chronic and complex health conditions have access to health care when returning to the community. Justice Health's new program, the Care Navigation Support Program aims to reduce the burden of chronic disease through good case management and improving patient self-management - two of the most cost effective and beneficial ways to improve health management of chronic conditions. Upon release efforts are made to find a GP and support in the community by Justice Health



Care Navigators. Release (discharge) summaries are forwarded to GPs. Patients requiring mental health support or pharmacotherapies for opioid dependence are also linked to local health providers.

Justice health is seeking GPs willing to provide health care to people being released from custody. If they have a preferred speciality area, such as mental health, Aboriginal health, addiction medicine, gastroenterology, youth health, women's health etc. they would like to know.

More Information contact: Ms Sonya Nicholl. Ph: 0409 441782 or [cnspp@justicehealth.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cnspp@justicehealth.nsw.gov.au).

## Invitation to review: Draft Referral Guides for Gynaecological cancers

The NSW Cancer Institute invites interested parties to review three draft referral guides for cervical, vulval and vaginal cancers, developed by the Cancer Institute NSW, with expert guidance, including GP input. These documents were designed to assist in the assessment and referral of these gynaecological cancers, particularly in the primary care setting.

Feedback is required by 11 March 2011.

For further information, see the [Cancer institute website](#).

## RESOURCES

### Directory of services – a good guide for older Australians

A concise and user-friendly information directory that outlines the many Government services available for older people and their families has been launched. Minister for Mental Health and Ageing Mark Butler said the *Australian Government Directory of Services for Older People 2011* is more comprehensive than those of previous years and provides easily accessible information on the numerous Government programs and services available to older people. The directory is now available free of charge by contacting the Aged Care Information Line on 1800 500 853 and online at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au). Copies are also available through Centrelink offices. The media release is available at the [Department of Health & Ageing website](#).

### Changes to the Extended Medicare Safety Net

A new fact sheet on changes to the Extended Medicare Safety Net has been issued. Detailed information regarding changes to the Extended Medicare Safety Net effective from 1 January 2011 is now available in the fact sheet: [Changes to the Extended Medicare Safety Net](#).

### Extension of the listing of nicotine patches

Fact Sheet for the [extension of the listing of nicotine patches on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme from 1 February 2011](#) is now available. The fact sheet contains information for consumers and Health professionals concerning nicotine replacement therapies available on the PBS.

### PBS Website Update

The Schedule of Pharmaceutical Benefits was updated on 1 February 2011 and the Summary of Changes can be found on the [New amended and deleted items page](#). Detailed information regarding additions and alterations of restrictions is now available in the fact sheet, [New Listings and Changes 1 February 2011](#).



## Australian Diabetes Council Community Relationship Managers

For over 70 years, Australian Diabetes Council has provided care and support for people in the diabetes community. Alongside offices in Sydney, Newcastle, Wagga Wagga and Wollongong, Australian Diabetes Council Community Relationship Managers provide a key connection between the work the charity does and the local community in both metropolitan and regional areas of NSW. They are available to meet with Divisions of General Practice, GP practices and Practice nurses in their area about ways in which Australian Diabetes Council can support people living with or at risk of diabetes. These include NDSS pharmacy support, membership queries as well as contacts for support groups and allied health professionals. For more information on how Australian Diabetes Council supports people living with and at risk of diabetes, visit [www.australiandiabetescouncil.com](http://www.australiandiabetescouncil.com) or call **1300 DIABETES** (1300 342 238).

## Medicinewise Choices

According to a recent NPS survey Australian consumers tend to forgo asking questions about their medicines, with 60% of respondents telling the NPS that they did not ask any questions of their doctor or pharmacist the last time they received or purchased a drug. According to the NPS, the results (based on the survey responses of 1500 Australian consumers), highlight the need for Australians to start asking more questions about their medicines. NPS clinical adviser, Dr Danielle Stowasser comments that "Because medicines generally improve our health, often people take them with little consideration, but just as medicines have benefits, they also come with risks. "These risks are heightened when people don't understand what a medicine is, what they're taking it for and how it could affect them," she added. Twenty three percent of respondents also said that they did not consider over the counter hay fever nasal spray as a drug, whilst 22% reported that they were unaware that cough syrup was a medicine. To help people make the best decisions about their medicines NPS has developed a series of free online learning modules for consumers. The Medicinewise Choices modules are available for free at [www.nps.org.au/medicinewisechoices](http://www.nps.org.au/medicinewisechoices). For more info see [www.nps.org.au](http://www.nps.org.au)

## Anti-tobacco programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

This resource sheet discusses the harms resulting from tobacco use in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and evidence-based approaches to reducing this harm. To be effective, strategies to reduce tobacco use need to acknowledge the historical context for its use, as well as the many socioeconomic influences. Tobacco interventions that have been developed by and/or for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and interventions that may be suitable for translation for use in such communities are considered. To ensure that program delivery meets the highest standard it should involve the community in design, delivery and evaluation. Access this resource at [AIHW and AIFS for Closing the Gap Clearinghouse](#).

## EDUCATION & TRAINING

### Healthy Kids Check - FREE Training

Karitane and NSW Health are holding Healthy Kids Check Training to encompass various components of the check, development, vision, hearing, oral health, using the PHR, height and weight, and BMI for children. The session for Practice Nurses and GPs will be held on Tuesday 29 March at 5.00pm at Karitane – corner The Horsley Drive and Mitchell Street, Carramar NSW 2163.



## NPS activities for health professionals

GPs, pharmacists, nurses and other health professionals can participate in the free educational and quality improvement activities including case studies, clinical audits and pharmacy practice reviews on various therapeutic topics. All the educational and quality improvement activities qualify for continuing professional development (CPD) points or qualify as an activity for the Quality Prescribing Initiative (QPI) of the Practice Incentives Program (PIP). To find out more see the [NPS website](#).

## RESEARCH

### Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report: Premature mortality from chronic disease

*Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare; 2010*

This bulletin uses potential years of life lost to describe mortality patterns for deaths due to chronic disease. It shows that most premature deaths were due to chronic disease. The leading cause of premature mortality among females was breast cancer and among males it was coronary heart disease. Further, the bulletin highlights that a large proportion of premature chronic disease deaths were also potentially avoidable.

The publication is available at: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/aus/bulletin84/11897.pdf>

### Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report: Pathways in Aged Care

Analysis of care pathways provides information that is useful to both policy planners and service providers alike. The Pathways in Aged Care cohort study linked aged care assessment data for a cohort of 105,100 people to data sets showing use of five main aged care programs and deaths over 4 years.

To view the report: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10810>

### Worldwide burden of disease from exposure to second-hand smoke

The World Health Organisation study is the first to assess the global impact of inhaling other people's smoke. Based on 2004 data from 192 countries, the figures show smoking in that year killed almost six million people, either actively or passively by claiming the lives of non-smokers. Second-hand smoke was believed to have caused 379,000 deaths from heart disease, 165,000 from respiratory infections, 36,900 from asthma and 21,400 from lung cancer. In addition 10.9 million years of disability-free life were lost globally because of passive smoking.

The Lancet: [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(10\)61388-8/abstract](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(10)61388-8/abstract)

### Pneumonia rates improve in Aboriginal children

New research from the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research shows that the pneumococcal vaccine program has contributed to closing of the gap in serious infections in Aboriginal children.

To view the report go to: <http://www.ichr.uwa.edu.au/media/1261>



## Alcohol and other drug treatment services in New South Wales 2008-09: findings from the National Minimum Data Set (NMDS)

Main findings from the 2008-09 Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services National Minimum Data Set (AODTS-NMDS). View the report at: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/12645>.

## POSITIONS VACANT

### Research Officer (GP and STI Research Grant)

The primary responsibility of the Research Officer is to assist with research activities related to the GP and Sexually Transmissible Infections (STI) Research Grant. The challenges of this role will include working with multiple stakeholders to complete the project within time and within budget. This position is for 60 weeks at 0.6FTE. Contact Carolyn Murray 02 9382 7458 [carolyn.murray@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:carolyn.murray@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au) or go to the website: <http://www.stipu.nsw.gov.au/>



## WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES 2011

February	
<p><b>22</b></p>	<p><b>GP NSW eHealth Webinar - New Canning Extraction &amp; Aggregation Tools</b>                      GP NSW                      Tuesday 22 February 2011                      Time: 2:00 – 2.30pm                      Presenter: Ian Peters, Canning Division                      Target Audience: Canning Tool users                      Calendar link: <a href="#">GP NSW website calendar</a></p> <p>The webinar will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An overview of the main changes and new features of the latest Canning Tool, version 4.7</li> <li>• An overview of the new Aggregation Tool, version 4.0, due out this month</li> <li>• Repeated on 3 March 2011</li> </ul> <p>Please RSVP to <a href="mailto:jacquelineowens@gpnsw.com.au">jacquelineowens@gpnsw.com.au</a> by Monday 21 February to register.</p>
March	
<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>GP NSW eHealth Webinar - Secure Messaging 101</b>                      GP NSW                      Wednesday 2 March 2011                      Time: 2:00 – 2:30pm                      Presenter: Paul Bruce                      Target Audience: Those with limited knowledge of secure messaging - new eHealth staff, non-eHealth program staff, managers, CEOs                      Calendar link: <a href="#">GP NSW website calendar</a></p> <p>The webinar will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of secure messaging</li> <li>• Discussion of what a clinician wants from secure messaging</li> <li>• A Vendor overview</li> <li>• Open discussion on what is happening in NSW and across Australia</li> <li>• The direction that NEHTA initiatives are sending secure messaging</li> </ul> <p>Please RSVP to <a href="mailto:paulbruce@gpnsw.com.au">paulbruce@gpnsw.com.au</a> by Tuesday 1st March 2011 to register.</p>
<p><b>5 – 6</b></p>	<p><b>Future of General Practice: conference</b>                      New England Division of General Practice                      Armidale                      5 &amp; 6 March 2011</p> <p>The New England Division of General Practice invites General Practitioners, Practice Managers, Practice Nurses and Practice Staff to attend this conference, which aims to support practices to run the business more efficiently; get more out of the practice; work with staff effectually; plan for the financial sustainability; manage risk better and understand the changing environment of the healthcare sector and its impact. Registrations close 20 February. To find out more or secure your place go to <a href="http://www.nedgp.org.au">www.nedgp.org.au</a> or contact Kyra Moss on 02 6771 1146</p>



<p><b>25 – 27</b></p>	<p><b>NSW RDN / RDA (NSW) 2011 Summer Refresher Conference</b>                  Novotel Pacific Bay Resort, Coffs Harbour                  25 - 27 March 2011</p> <p>To register for the conference download the program from the NSW RDN website at <a href="http://www.nswrdn.com.au">www.nswrdn.com.au</a> under 'Conferences/CPD Events'.</p> <p>For more information contact the NSW Rural Doctors Network on 02 8337 8100 or <a href="mailto:conferences@nswrdn.com.au">conferences@nswrdn.com.au</a></p>
<p><b>April</b></p>	
<p><b>4 – 6</b></p>	<p><b>Communicable Disease Control Conference 2011</b>                  Public Health Association of Australia Inc (PHAA)                  Location: Hotel Realm, Canberra                  4 – 6 April 2011</p> <p>Sponsorship and Exhibition packages available upon requests. Please contact Janine Turnbull, <a href="mailto:marketing@phaa.net.au">marketing@phaa.net.au</a> or 02 62852373.</p>
<p><b>7 – 9</b></p>	<p><b>APNA National Conference 2011 - Roadmap for the Future – Great Expectations</b>                  APNA                  Location: Hilton Hotel Sydney – 488 George Street, Sydney, NSW 2000                  7 – 9 April 2011</p> <p>After the outstanding success of its first two conferences (<i>The Right Stuff</i> and <i>Golden Opportunities</i>), APNA will be holding a third, inspiring conference in 2011. The conference, 'Roadmap for the Future - Great Expectations' will feature renowned keynote speakers, interactive master classes, extensive opportunities to network with practice nurses from around Australia, and much more. Registrations are now open for the conference.</p> <p>For more information, and to view the full program and submit a registration, please visit <a href="http://www.apna.asn.au/conference">www.apna.asn.au/conference</a>.</p> <p>If you have any queries please contact the conference organisers Baldwin Consulting Group on (03) 9645 9858 or <a href="mailto:liz@baldwinconsulting.com.au">liz@baldwinconsulting.com.au</a>.</p>
<p><b>May</b></p>	
<p><b>5 – 6</b></p>	<p><b>Aboriginal Health Research Conference-‘Research for a better Future’</b>                  5 - 6 May 2011</p> <p>This conference will showcase Aboriginal Health Research and promote community, research and policy engagement and exchange in Aboriginal health, to allow communities to describe their health and research priorities and to provide opportunities for sharing information and establishing collaborations among Aboriginal community members, researchers and policy makers. The conference will be held on 5 - 6 May 2011 in Sydney.</p> <p>Further information contact Julie McGraw <a href="mailto:jmcgraw@gemspl.com.au">jmcgraw@gemspl.com.au</a>.</p>
<p><b>July</b></p>	
	<p><b>Naidoc Week 2011 - Change: the Next Step is Ours</b>                  3 – 10 July</p> <p>For entry forms and information on NAIDOC Week, visit <a href="http://www.naidoc.org.au/">http://www.naidoc.org.au/</a>.</p>



## GENERAL PRACTICE NSW CONTACTS

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### Contractor

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