

IMPROVING CARE FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PATIENTS (ICAP) NEWS

Edition 3, September 2007



Another quarter has whizzed by yet again - where does the time go?!

This quarter has seen a significant focus on the recent ICAP Rural Best Practice Forum and VACCHO professional development day. Chaired by Keith Hamilton, a previous Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and current board member for Latrobe Regional Health Service, the Forum and VACCHO professional development day were held in Warragul on 25 & 26 July 2007. With 45 participants in attendance on day one and 20 at the VACCHO professional development on day two, both days were viewed as "a great networking opportunity", "very informative - really valuable", "well worth making the trip for".

The keynote address provided by Justin Mohamed, Chairperson, VACCHO set the scene for day one with a thought provoking presentation on Aboriginal health since the 1967 Referendum. With Justin's engaging style the audience were provided with insightful facts, some personal reflections and interesting analogies. Importantly though, Justin's key message was: "improving Aboriginal health is a long term commitment".



The ICAP Rural Best Practice Forum was also an excellent opportunity to formally acknowledge the Gippsland KHLO network as recipients of the recent Regional Reconciliation Recognition Award. Again, congratulations to all involved!

Workshops in the afternoon on sustaining Aboriginal programs/discharge planning and improving data proved to be very informative for all and provided an excellent opportunity for future progression.



The VACCHO professional development day provided an opportunity for Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officers, Aboriginal Mental Health Liaison Officers and other Aboriginal hospital staff to focus on their personal development and training needs.

The scene was set for the VACCHO professional development day with an inspiring panel that kindly shared their personal career paths and achievements in Aboriginal health. This was then aptly followed by an opportunity for those present to reflect on shared and individual training and development requirements and aspirations.

This day also provided information on the latest training programs to be offered by VACCHO including the Certificate III and Diploma in Aboriginal Health - both aligned to national competency standards.

So from the ICAP Team we thank everyone for their involvement on the day from panel members, presenters, and course, the participants. We appreciate that many traveled long distances to be involved over the two days but feedback suggests participants thought it was well worth the effort.

To find out more about the world of ICAP, here's a quick whip around the state.

Rural Rumblings

- **Goulburn Valley Health** have signed-off on their 3rd Partnership Agreement with Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative.
- **Wodonga Base Hospital** has reinvigorated their relationship with Mungabareena by establishing an Aboriginal health reference group to implement their Partnership Agreement that was signed-off over 12mths ago.
- **Wodonga Base Hospital** has also established an Aboriginal Services Development Officer position to oversee the implementation of the Partnership Agreement and other Aboriginal health programs.
- **Mildura Base Hospital** has developed a draft ICAP Plan.
- Sue Thornton, Director of Nursing at **Mildura Base Hospital** and valued champion of the ICAP program has resigned.
- **Bendigo Base Hospital** officially launched their ICAP plan during NAIDOC week.
- Discussions are underway for the possible development of an Aboriginal patient focused VPTAS pilot in the **Gippsland region**.

Metro Mumbblings

- Preparations are now underway for the Metropolitan ICAP Best Practice Forum and VACCHO Professional Development day. To be held on 13 and 14 November 2007, this event will be held at the Metropole Hotel Apartments and Conference Centre 44 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy.
- **Austin Health** have not filled the vacancy left by the departure of their Aboriginal Health Development Officer. They are looking at reviewing the Ngarra Jarra program and seeing how the program can be more supported by Social Work.
- **Bayside Health** has recruited to a two day per week role at the Alfred and has also just established an internal working party to support the position.
- **Eastern Health** are in the process of creating a new position but have already established a working party and an advisory committee that has representatives from across Eastern Health, Aboriginal organisations and government departments.

- **Melbourne Health** is in the middle of budget deliberations so it will be soon known whether a new position has been successful in gaining funding. Melbourne Health has hosted two significant events in the last quarter including Professor Ian Anderson speaking at a Grand Round and also Dennis McDermott speaking on mental health issues facing the Aboriginal community.
- **Mercy Health and Aged Care** has a 12-month vacancy at the time of writing. One staff member has taken 12 months leave to commence a PhD and the other staff member is undertaking Div 2 Nursing.
- **Northern Health** also is recruiting to a vacancy and looks likely to fill their role fairly quickly.
- **Peter MacCallum Hospital** has joined the 'Health Services Aboriginal Health Advisory Committee' (HSAHAC), which is chaired by the Senior ICAP Project officer and VACCHO. This committee has senior Aboriginal staff from VACCHO, ACES and VAHS attending and is intended to streamline the involvement of the Aboriginal community with inner city health services. There have been several issues facing Peter Mac due to a large intake of Aboriginal patients in recent times and these issues are due to be tabled at the next meeting of this committee.
- **St Vincent's** has created an Aboriginal task force to review the direction of the program. They have also sent one of the Aboriginal staff to Garma to present on the program that was supported by the CEO.
- The **Royal Children's Hospital** continues to develop a new model of care for a paediatric service for Aboriginal children. This should be finalised soon and then funding will be sought to establish the program. The other significant development is the resignation of the Chief Social Worker who has been a significant supporter for many years of Aboriginal program developments at RCH.
- The **Royal Women's Hospital** is progressing well with many cultural events being supported, including Sorry Day and NAIDOC week, by staff across the health service and also strong Aboriginal community support.

VACCHO Vibes

- Andrew Morrison has been busy immersing himself in the VACCHO ICAP role.
- Among a range of tasks ahead, Andrew will be assisting Leanne with the development of the 2008 ICAP Calendar.
- VACCHO has recently appointed Nicole Cassar to the Mental Health Worker position.
- Given some of the direct correlations, it's proposed that the ICAP Project Officer and Mental Health Worker roles will be more closely aligned and will connect on a number of key initiatives and tasks in the future.

Additional Activity

Resource Material

Onemda has been engaged as the successful consultants to develop a set of resources to assist health services in implementing the ICAP program successfully. These resources will be relevant to the current health service environment and will be embedded within the principles of cultural safety. The development of specific ICAP resources will assist in the effective establishment and ongoing operation of Aboriginal programs and improve the service provision to Aboriginal patients and their families.

ICAP Evaluation

DHS are in the process of developing a formal evaluation of the ICAP program to determine:

- o The extent to which the policy has been implemented across Victorian health services
- o The effectiveness of strategies implemented under the program in addressing the health care needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Victoria.

It is anticipated that a selection of appropriate consultants will be invited to tender for the evaluation.

Data Collection Training Program

The Koori Human Services Unit is currently developing a Data Collection Training Program for Victorian hospitals. This is a generic training program focusing on the importance of data collection across a wide range of fields including, religion, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, insurance, country of origin etc. The program explores why collecting reliable registration data is so important, who uses the information, problematic data items and strategies for dealing with difficult situations. The program is being piloted at Melbourne and Ballarat Health Services.

ICAP Calendar 2008

Preparations are underway for the development of next year’s ICAP calendar. The theme for this calendar, “acknowledging success” will provide an opportunity to highlight initiatives and activities that have been generated in Victorian hospitals as a direct result of the ICAP reform.



If you require further information on any of the items contained in this newsletter or wish to find out how you can be involved in ICAP in your region, please contact any of the ICAP team members listed below.

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