

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

March 2007



Welcome to the first edition of the ICAP news. This newsletter will be produced on a quarterly basis and aims to provide brief highlights of statewide initiatives and details of other strategic activity associated with implementing the ICAP reform across Victoria.

## Rural Rumblings

### Grampians

- Working relationships between Ballarat Health Services (BHS) and the Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative (BADAC) have flourished following the development and launch of their partnership agreement last year.
- A Koori Health Taskforce is established to implement the Agreement.
- Wimmera Health Care Group (WHCG) employs two staff under the ICAP program. Last year, in response to community need, WHCG employed an Aboriginal female AHLO to provide specific support for Koori women who present to the hospital or who are admitted to the wards.

### Loddon-Mallee

- Mildura Hospital has established an Aboriginal Health Team that combines the Aboriginal Mental Health Liaison role. The team comprises three full time staff (including a Team Leader).
- Bendigo Hospital Executive has endorsed their ICAP plan and has moved to implementation phase.
- Bendigo Hospital kindly hosted the regional Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's Indigenous data focus group discussions.

### Hume Region

- Goulburn Valley Health (GVH) is completing the final draft of their 3<sup>rd</sup> Health Outcomes Agreement with Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative.
- GVH is also in the initial stages of establishing a second Aboriginal Hospital Liaison position and are reviewing current models and relationships between programs to enhance systems and processes.
- Wodonga Hospital and Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation launched a Memorandum of Understanding last year. This document outlines their joint commitment to improving Aboriginal health outcomes for Aboriginal people within the North East of Victoria and the Greater Southern area of New South Wales.

### Barwon South-West Region

- Barwon Health continues to conduct business as usual with the Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer playing a lead role in all aspects of Aboriginal health related issues.
- The AHLO has suggested that it might be valuable to establish an Aboriginal advisory/steering committee within Barwon Health.
- The AHLO also commented that there are some thoughts from Barwon health to establish a formal partnership agreement with Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative.

## Gippsland

- Several newly funded positions have been established in the Gippsland region since the inception of ICAP for example: AHLO position at Central Gippsland Health Service, Aboriginal Community Development Worker at Orbost Regional Health, Koori HARP Liaison Officer at Bairnsdale Regional Health Service.
- Bairnsdale Regional Health Service Board of Management has adopted their Koori Engagement Plan and signed a formal MOU with the Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative.
- With the assistance of the Gippsland regional office, the Dhuna Nalu Aboriginal Health Liaison Network is in operation.
- In a similar fashion to the Mildura model, Latrobe Regional Hospital has expanded their Aboriginal Liaison services by consolidating the ICAP and the Koori Mental Health Liaison role and reconfigured the service structure.

## Metro Mumblings

There have been a number of developments from metropolitan health services during 2006 focusing across the ICAP key result areas including:

- how they have developed relationships with the Aboriginal community
- continually implement policy to improve services for Aboriginal patients
- activities that improve the awareness of staff of Aboriginal culture
- initiatives that examine and improve the discharge planning and primary care referral of Aboriginal patients to ongoing care.

In 2006 there have been several new initiatives in metropolitan health services that previously had minimal recognition of the specific needs of Aboriginal patients. There has also been continuing development and consolidation of programs in health services that already have a long history of strategic involvement with Aboriginal patients. The number of staff taking part in cultural awareness training has increased which will help ensure that programs or initiatives targeting Aboriginal patients will be locally driven and specific to local needs.

## Metro Best Practice Forum

- On the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2006 65 people attended the ICAP Metro Best Practice Forum. The feedback received indicated that the event was informative and useful in promoting improved services for Aboriginal patients. The forum included keynote presentations from Jill Gallagher, CEO Victorian Aboriginal Community Control Health Organisation (VACCHO), Gill Callister, Executive Director, Office of Children and Muriel Bamblett, CEO Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Association (VACCA). These presentations and a panel discussion gave people the opportunity to discuss new developments with key health service staff. An update of statewide projects and interactive workshops gave health service staff from across the metropolitan area an opportunity to hear of positive developments to assist in implementing and promoting the ICAP reform within their own health service.

## VACCHO Vibes

Marg Clarke has resigned from her position as ICAP Project Officer at VACCHO. We thank Marg for valued contributions and wish her well in the future.

## Training Needs Analysis

- The VACCHO ICAP role currently has a training and development component for AHLOs and other Aboriginal health service staff. A training needs analysis has been developed and although responses were slow to return, most are now complete. This data is now in the analysis phase, the outcomes of which will inform future training opportunities and career development support offered by the VACCHO ICAP Project Officer.

#### Newsletter

- A newsletter for AHLOs and other Aboriginal health service staff has been established as a communication and networking tool. It's intended that this newsletter is 'owned' by the AHLOs and Aboriginal health staff but co-ordinated by VACCHO.

#### 2007 ICAP Statewide Workshop

- An ICAP Statewide Workshop for AHLOs and other Aboriginal health service staff was held on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2007 in Melbourne. The theme for this workshop was 'discharge planning'. Overall the workshop was a success and the participants put forth draft guidelines for culturally appropriate discharge planning procedures. Members of this workshop proposed that a discharge planning working group be established to progress this work.

## Additional Activity

#### ICAP Calendar 2007

- The development of a calendar was completed and launched on the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2006 at the ICAP Metro Best Practice Forum in Preston. The calendar highlights the effective partnerships between health services and Aboriginal organisations across Victoria. The aim of the calendar is to promote effective partnerships and to build awareness across health services. Copies of the calendar have been sent to CEO's of health services and Aboriginal organisations across Victoria, and to Aboriginal staff and their supervisors in health services.

#### Aboriginal identity posters

- The Aboriginal identity posters are aimed at improving Aboriginal patient identification process at admission. This project, made available to health services across Victoria, involved the creation of a general template with the wording: "Are you Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander? If you are, please let us know so we can use this information to plan and deliver improved service." Health services then add photos and contact details to the template such as; members of the local Aboriginal community and Aboriginal staff within that health service.

For those health services that have completed a poster, they are currently displayed within emergency departments, admission areas and outpatient clinics and are considered to be a significant improvement on the previous generic posters.

#### Publications and Conference presentations

- An article entitled, 'Mixing Oil and Water: Practical Implementation of Policy to Improve Health Outcomes for Aboriginal Consumers' was published in the Spring 2006 edition of the Health Issues Journal. The article outlined the ICAP reform and detailed how the Koori Hospital Liaison Officer review conducted by St.Vincent's aligned with the reforms.
- An ICAP paper was presented to the "Better State of Hospitals" conference in April 2006 entitled, "Rewriting the story: Building partnerships and getting things done between mainstream health services and the Aboriginal community". The paper highlighted the partnership outcomes that have been achieved between St.Vincent's and the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service.
- A further paper was submitted to the "4<sup>th</sup> Australasian Conference on Safety and Quality in Health Care" in August 2006, entitled, "They mean well but they haven't got a clue: From good intentions to solid achievements in Aboriginal health". The submission was accepted as a poster presentation and outlined how Aboriginal patients felt about the services they received at St.Vincent's and the practical responses made by the health service to improve their performance.

Publications and Conference presentations (cont.)

- As part of the DHS 'Doing it with us not for us' consumer and carer participation policy, a workshop focusing on Aboriginal involvement in health services was organised and delivered as part of the 'Participate in health conference – making it work' in February 2007. Presentations were given by an Aboriginal carer, Aboriginal Liaison Officer from the Health Commissioners Office, CEO Ballarat and district Aboriginal Cooperative and the Metro and Rural ICAP project officers. The workshop highlighted the importance of health services creating an effective partnership with their local Aboriginal community, what are some of challenges to be aware of and also examples of success.

Aboriginal Patient Transport - quality improvement project

- In July 2006 four metropolitan health services commenced a pilot to improve Aboriginal access to the existing program known as the Victorian Patient Transport and Assistance Scheme (VPTAS). The pilot project has provided up front funding for health services for Aboriginal patients who are eligible to travel home from specialist appointments. Project data will be reviewed in March 2007 and recommendations will be made to DHS for potential expansion of the project.

Quality of Care Reports

- All Victorian hospitals are required to report on ICAP activity in their annual quality of care reports. Recent reports indicated that for many hospitals this did not occur or was inadequately documented. However there were a few good examples. Given this inconsistent result the ICAP Steering Committee recommended that the quality branch provide greater emphasis on ICAP as a key reportable area.

Regional DHS Office Support

- The value of good DHS regional office support for ICAP cannot be underestimated in progression of the reform across Victoria. In keeping with the ICAP philosophy, it's imperative to the success of the program that it becomes everyone's responsibility and that it becomes embedded in to all associated regional activity. The support from regions is greatly appreciated and it's pleasing to see that the ICAP program is now included in some Health and Aged Care work plans, individual PPDs, key hospital strategic plans and other department/hospital related activity. This is an area that could be greatly improved, but we're off to a good start.

There's a great deal more ICAP activity happening around Victoria and many more initiatives in the pipeline so stay tuned. In the meanwhile, 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:

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