



# Public Sector Residential Aged Care Bulletin

This bulletin provides information on current and important issues for Public Sector Residential Aged Care sector. Previous editions are available at: [www.health.vic.gov.au/agedcare/publications/newsletters/index.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/agedcare/publications/newsletters/index.htm)

## 2007 Nursing Excellence Awards

In an exciting development this year's State Nursing Excellence Awards recognised the contribution of aged care nurses with the inclusion of a public sector residential aged care category. The awards have been held since 2003 as an initiative of the Victorian Government to recognise and acknowledge outstanding achievements of nurses within the public health system.

Registered nurses (Div 1 – 5) working in the Victorian public health system are eligible for nomination with award recipients receiving a scholarship up to the value of \$10,000 to allow them to share their best practice with others or to develop their initiative further.



Nominees in the Aged Care category pictured with The Hon Lisa Neville (centre) from left to right were:

- Hazel Saligari – Western District Health Service
- Ronalda Cowcher - Bendigo Health
- Julianne Gould – Western District Health Service
- Irene McKinna – Bendigo Health

The winner was **Ronalda Cowcher**, while Merit Award went to Irene McKinna.

Ronalda is the Nurse Manager of Simpkin House, a residential aged persons mental health facility, and a part of Bendigo Health. In this role, Ronalda initiated the Reduction of Psychotropic Medication program that focuses on reducing the use of psychotropic medication and improving the management of challenging behaviours.

The results speak for themselves. Not only has the use of medications reduced but there have been significant improvements in the quality of life of residents – eight residents have been able to be cared for in a mainstream residential care facility, freeing up the specialised Simpkin House beds for others, fewer falls and improved quality of life as demonstrated by improved sleeping patterns, appetite social interaction and alertness.

Ronalda's approach has engaged all of the staff of Simpkin House and motivated many to undertake further studies. Her Director of Nursing describes her endeavours as heroic and one that epitomises the aged care philosophies and practices, reflecting the true meaning of nursing.

Ronalda is planning to use the \$10,000 awarded to build on the current success of the program at Simpkin House with further development of staff skill and expertise in the area of psychotropic medication and behaviour management.

### Honourable mention: Irene McKinna

Irene is the Coordinator of the Certificate of Gerontological Nursing at Bendigo Health Care Group. In this role she has developed and maintained the course to reflect contemporary practices, informed by international trends and best practice, industry experts and consumers.

More photos can be viewed at:  
<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/nursing/awards/photos>

## Count Us In! Social Inclusion for People Living in Residential Aged Care.

The **Count us in!** initiative is based on the belief that people who live in residential aged care should be **valued citizens**, who are enabled and supported to **maintain their involvement** in the social, recreational, economic and family aspects of life and society.

The initiative funded 16 projects across Victoria, focusing initially on residents of Public Sector Residential Aged Care Services. Examples of projects include development of on-line learning projects accessible to residents, establishment of networks of local organisations, residential aged care services and volunteers to facilitate better access for residents, development of practical guidelines and tools for enabling residents to access community events and activities, theatre workshops and production of a play. Two of the projects have held events to display the outputs of their work.

'**Changing Faces: Across the ages, across the generations**' a photographic exhibition was a collaboration between the La Trobe University School of Nursing and Midwifery, School of Visual Arts & Design and Bendigo Health Care Group's residential facilities Joan Pinder, Stella Anderson and Golden Oaks.

The exhibition consisted of a collection of personal stories of 6 people who live in Bendigo Health Public Sector Residential Aged Care Services (PSRACS). The stories are presented in photographic form and have been developed by La Trobe University photographic and nursing students working with residents, families and staff.



The **Reflections initiative** was a partnership between St Vincent's Cambridge House and Infoxchange Australia. It involved the creation of a digital story of residents of Cambridge House to highlight the valuable contribution that senior Victorian citizens make to our community and their past relationship with community.

*Reflections* documented the stories of five Cambridge House residents. Each resident had the opportunity to speak about their past, their associations with local historical areas, and their associations with their 'contact hub' (family, friends, and carers) to build a full documented version of their life.

St Vincent's Director of Aged Care and Allied Health Neth Hinton said the project was a powerful tool.

"Participants embraced the opportunity to share their experiences," she said.

"They say the process of reflecting on their memories has led to an increased sense of self-worth, and certainly anecdotal evidence from carers and nurses supports this."

In an effort to reach out a younger audience and to promote inter-generational understanding, some of the media content is to be placed on YouTube and will be available at

<http://www.youtube.com/CambridgeHouse>.

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### Kevin J. Kendall Infection Control Consultant

As previously advised, Kevin J Kendall has been appointed as the aged care representative on the Victorian Advisory Committee on Infection Control (VACIC).

Kevin is a registered nurse who has completed both General and Midwifery Nursing, A Certificate in Sterilisation and Infection Control and numerous short courses that complement the areas of infection control practice.

With more than 35 years in the health care field Kevin has gained considerable clinical experience and expertise in both public and private, medical, surgical and aged care facilities. He has worked in clinical, teaching, and administrative positions in nursing, hospital administration and infection control.

Kevin has worked in the area of infection control for over 20 years. During this time he has consulted with hospitals, community health care centres, medical practices, extended care facilities and childcare centres in the area of infection prevention and control. He has also assisted with infection control program assessment, development and review, environmental safety, compliance with standards and education and training programs.

Kevin works part time with a large health care service and also as an independent nurse consultant.

The book "Practical Approaches to Infection Control in Residential Care" was written by Kevin and published by Ausmed Publications in July 1998 with a second edition published in 2003.

Please feel free to contact Kevin if you have any issue to raise at the VACIC by email at [cicm1@bigpond.com.au](mailto:cicm1@bigpond.com.au) with a brief synopsis of your issue. Kevin is also available to assist with infection control & prevention issues relating to guidelines, practices, staff education and training.

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## **Technology Enables Aged Care 'Virtual Visits' from Anywhere in the World**

Western District Health Service (WDHS) has launched an innovative pilot program that reconnects families and friends with their loved ones living in an Aged Care Facility.

The pilot program known as "Virtual Visiting", involved residents of Penshurst and District Health Service and Grange Residential Care Service using videoconferencing technology to visit with family and friends remotely. Volunteers have been trained to facilitate the visits and provide basic technical support as required by participants who may be a little apprehensive when using the technology.

Western District Health Service Chief Executive Officer Mr. Jim Fletcher said "After some initial apprehension residents of the aged care facilities have warmly embraced the opportunity to extend and renew friendships and use the technology to overcome the tyranny of distance. The opportunity to use the technology to communicate with younger family members will hopefully overcome the reluctance by some who otherwise have difficulty visiting an aged care facility."

"Families with broadband internet now have the ability to 'virtually visit' their loved ones from the comfort of their own home. Families wishing to participate are loaned the necessary equipment and provided technical support to enable visits. Families without broadband internet living in South West Victoria can still participate in the program by making arrangements to use the technology available in local health services who are members of the South West Alliance of Rural Health, which operates from Geelong into south-east South Australia" Mr. Fletcher said.

Video conferencing uses a computer, video camera, and network such as the Internet, to conduct a live conference between two or more people. Video conferencing is an extremely beneficial method of communication for aged care residents as it enables

the use of non-verbal communication and the opportunity to see their visitors on suitable large screens. Regular social contact with friends and family is important to enhance residents quality of life and overcome the social isolation often associated with admission to an aged care facility. This program is not only limited to Victoria's South West; simply having broadband internet means that families anywhere in the world can participate. The project team has received expressions of interest from families located as far away as Tasmania, Point Lonsdale and even India.

Mr. Fletcher said "WDHS in conjunction with other members of the South West Alliance of Rural Health is now actively seeking funding support from government to extend the pilot to all Residential Aged Care facilities in the South West of Victoria. The long term vision is to have "virtual visiting" regarded as a basic service provided in every aged care facility, as commonplace as the telephone or television."

Contact: Jim Fletcher  
CEO WDHS  
Ph: (03) 5551 8222

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## **Quality Improvement Seminars**

The end of 2007 wrapped up with the 27<sup>th</sup> in the series of Quality Improvement Seminars that have been held since 2001. Total registrations for seminar days since they started is now in excess of 4500. The seminars remain popular with lots of positive feedback and many participants travelling long distances to attend. The target audience of executive and middle management nurses continue to be well represented and recent comments include:

"The seminar is excellent for the sharing of information and learning from other people's experiences, both from urban and rural facilities."

"These seminars are always worthwhile"

"Quality of speakers and presentations continues to be of high quality".

The final seminar in November entitled 'Breaking the Ice': *Managing sensitive and complex issues in residential aged care* provided a great forum for participants to explore some of the operational complexities around proactively preventing and responding to issues such as the abuse of older people. Key messages from some of the speakers are as follows;

### **Be Prepared for Aged Care Standards Visits**

Julia Currell newly appointed as the Victorian and Tasmanian State Manager of the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency (ACSAA) stressed the importance of understanding the

ACSAA Results and Processes guide; knowing how your service is achieving resident outcomes, recognising that critical systems will be assessed (including continuous improvement) and having the necessary information ready. Julia recommended accessing the ACSAA website [www.accreditation.org.au](http://www.accreditation.org.au) to view available resources.

### **Compliance with the NBV Code of Guidance by 31 March 2008**

Petrina Halloran, from the Nurses Board of Victoria reinforced the need for services to be either compliant or have applied to the Board for exceptional circumstances by 31 March 2008 with the supervisory requirements of the Code for Guidance **July 2007, MANAGEMENT OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS FOR HIGH CARE RESIDENTS IN AN AGED CARE SERVICE**. The supervisory requirements mean that where a personal care worker is delegated the responsibility for the administration of medication to a high care resident, there must be a Registered Nurse Division 1, 3 or 4, endorsed Division 2 or Division 2 providing supervision on the premises.

Further information may be obtained from the nurses board (03) 8635 1200, 1300 362 309 or [www.nbv.org.au](http://www.nbv.org.au).

### **Open Reporting and Continuous Quality Improvement**

Dr Heather Wellington, a leading expert on safety and quality in health care, highlighted the conflicting interests regarding an open and transparent organisation; the ethical duty to disclose information about quality to clients and community and the potential for unfair blame and reprisal. Despite the tension between openness and quality versus professional fears and reprisals, the gradual move towards openness and a just culture (reflected by a system-wide policy commitment to open disclosure) is a progressive step within health care organisations.

### **Reducing Restraint Usage**

David McMillan (Clinical Nurse educator, Aged Persons Mental Health) from Southern Health and Ken Pfukwa (Nurse Unit Manager) from Yarraman Nursing Home demonstrated how they successfully reduced the use of physical restraints within their organisation and decreased the incidence of falls and aggression. They emphasised the need for strong and committed leadership combined with staff training and engagement to make practice changes sustainable.

### **Preventing Abuse of Older People**

Associate Professor Gerry Naughtin challenged the audience to explore the issue of abuse of older people beyond serious physical and sexual assault as defined by Commonwealth reporting processes. He stressed the need for creating a culture of awareness where it is recognised that abuse can happen in any organisation. He emphasised the need for good processes around staff recruitment

and training and the need for clear policy and practice frameworks.

### **Reportable Assault and Working with the Police**

Laurel Sutton and Senior Sergeant Dagmar Andersen from Victoria Police gave an insight into some of the issues regarding working with residential aged care services in response to notification of alleged assault. In the case of an alleged sexual assault they reminded participants that they should;

- minimise interviewing of the victim
- avoid bathing the victim,
- avoid disturbing the scene,
- complete a verbatim written recording of all conversations in note form, and
- avoid discussions with unrelated parties.

### **Proactive Organisational Risk Management**

Paul Sadler, Chief Executive Officer of Presbyterian Aged Care NSW & ACT reinforced the need for a proactive organisational response to preventing and managing allegations of abuse. He stressed the importance of management responding appropriately to incidents and they be taken seriously. Managing the fallout in the case of an allegation of assault included being prepared for potential negative media coverage, managing employment relationships and government inspections

### **Communication - When Things Go Wrong**

Jane Fenton, former Telstra business woman of the year stressed that the most important aspects for effective internal and external organisational communication is to understand your target audience and ensure clarity in the message. Effective strategies to improving communication for all staff will ultimately influence and drive improvements within your service.

### **Coming Events & Key Dates**

#### **2008 Aged Care Quality Improvement Seminars**

**20th & 21st February 2008**

**14th & 15 May 2008**

**17th & 18th September 2008**

**Contact Cora Castens on (03) 9096 6964 or email [cora.castens@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:cora.castens@dhs.vic.gov.au) to register your interest.**

### **Contributions**

**We are keen to hear your feedback on this bulletin and to publish your stories and contributions in future editions.**

**These can be sent to:**  
[cora.castens@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:cora.castens@dhs.vic.gov.au)