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## PREVENTATIVE HEALTH IN THE ACT

Yesterday I attended a Forum developing a Preventative Health Strategy for the ACT, held at the Portrait Gallery. It was a relatively small gathering (about 40 people) and had wide variety of stakeholders, including government, business, community sector and health NGOs.

In December Minister Fitzharris gave a ministerial statement to the Legislative Assembly outlining her priorities for health. The Minister said there will be:

- an emphasis on greater community engagement,
- a greater focus on the needs of patients in our health system,
- increased walking, cycling and public transport use, and
- innovation across all service areas.

One of the specific commitments was on Preventative Health. The Minister spoke about her views on the need to have a specific focus on preventative health to help reduce chronic health conditions, such as heart disease and diabetes. This involves empowering people to understand their own health, and investing in prevention initiatives to help reduce the burden of disease in our community so Canberrans can live long and healthy lives. Part of this commitment will be to appoint a Preventative Health Coordinator and develop a Preventative Health Strategy.

This is included in the Parliamentary Agreement for the 9th Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory between the Labor Party and The Greens. It says:

"Reduce the incidence of heart disease, diabetes, obesity and other preventable health conditions, by expanding and refocussing the Healthy Weight Initiative, appointing a Preventative Health Coordinator and developing a comprehensive preventative health strategy"

Dr Paul Kelly, the Chief Health Officer, presented at the Forum. He spoke about the zero growth target for obesity, regulation around smoking in outdoor areas and also removing vending machines from all ACT Public Schools (2014). He also spoke about building on the Healthy Weight Action Plan that was introduced in 2013. Dr Kelly mentioned the Canberra Paradox where as an overall population we enjoy good health, but there still exist small groups who do not. For

### World Parkinson's Day – Tuesday April 11 2017

Tuesday 11 April 2017 marks the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the discovery of Parkinson's Disease, a disorder of the central nervous system that affects movement. While there is still no cure, World Parkinson's Day aims to raise awareness to a disease that affects 700,000 people and to raise money to one day find a cure. If you would like to get involved or would like to find out more information, [visit the World Parkinson's Day website](#) or search the hashtag #UniteForParkinsons on social media.

example, the ACT population has a very low incidence of smoking (10%) but the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have a daily smoking rate of 30%, and younger women in pregnancy are smoking at harmful levels.

We have relocated offices within Maitland House in Hackett. Previously we occupied the main office and two offices further down the corridor. We now have two large open plan offices side by side. While we lose the dedicated meeting room, we still have space for meetings in our new office. As a result of our relocation, we have office furniture looking for new homes. Currently we have four office chairs on wheels, three desks (one with drawers, two without) and a side table. If you are interested in any furniture, please contact us at [adminofficer@hcca.org.au](mailto:adminofficer@hcca.org.au) or call 6230 7800.



Figure 1 New Office for Consumer Participation and Health Literacy

Darlene Cox  
Executive Director

## New HCCA Staff – Claudia Cresswell

Since the beginning of March, HCCA has added four new staff members to its team. Over the next couple editions of *Consumer Bites*, we thought it might be useful to feature the new staff members for you to get to know them a little better and to find out what it is they are most excited about joining HCCA. This week, we have featured Claudia Cresswell, who has taken the position of HCCA Health Promotions Officer.

Health Promotion is an area that Claudia is passionate about, having had extensive experience working for a number of territory, state and national services in Canberra and Sydney. Claudia has worked for HCCA in the past, and is keen to work with the community, government and healthcare providers to get everyone excited about health literacy. ‘I want to see a range of health literacy advocates across sectors’ In particular Claudia will focus on increasing the health literacy of people with chronic conditions and agencies that support them. She will be working closely with Yelin who targets the health literacy needs of the multicultural community. Priorities will include increasing people’s knowledge of health services, skills in understanding health information and building confidence in consumer’s ability to understand and improve their health. On the environmental side of health literacy she is keen to work with consumers and ACT Health to ensure all ways of accessing the system are easy to use. In her spare time, Claudia loves to go bushwalking and dancing and writes a little poetry.



### Consumer Representatives Training

HCCA are undertaking a review of the Consumer Representatives Training. We are interested to hear your feedback. What has worked well, what could be improved, what would you like to see more of and what is important to you to learn about?

Please get in touch with Sally Deacon, Manager for Consumer & Community Participation ([sallydeacon@hcca.org.au](mailto:sallydeacon@hcca.org.au)) or Kate Gorman, Consumer Representatives Program Coordinator ([kategorman@hcca.org.au](mailto:kategorman@hcca.org.au)).

## Committee Vacancies

Nominations for the committees below close on **Monday 17 April 2017**.

### The Walk-in centre

This committee provides strategic direction for the Walk-in Centres at the Belconnen Community Health Centre and the Tuggeranong Community Health Centre. It is responsible for reviewing and recommending changes to key performance indicators, risk management, adverse events, clinical policy, occupational health and safety, and quality assurance projects and accreditation. The successful nominee will have consumer experience using the services at any of the Walk-in Centres. Ideally, the committee are looking for a consumer between the ages of 20-25 and/or with children between 6-8 years old. If you are interested in applying but do not fall into these criteria, please submit a nomination form anyway.

This committee meets every two months on the third Thursday of the month, from 9.30-11am. The location alternates between the walk-in centres at Belconnen and Tuggeranong.

### Health in Pregnancy Working Group

The aim of this working group is to improve service delivery for larger women during and between pregnancies to support optimal outcomes for mother and baby. It looks at evidence-based services and programs, ACT Health policies, guidelines and resources and training opportunities to support staff to deliver services in a client-centred, non-judgemental and sensitive way.

If you are interested please contact Kate Gorman at the office – [kategorman@hcca.org.au](mailto:kategorman@hcca.org.au)

### Calvary (Public Hospital) Infrastructure Planning and Service Development Committee

Calvary Hospital is seeking a consumer representative to join the Infrastructure Planning and Service Development Committee. This committee's role is to provide the basis for a consistent and standardised approach to capital infrastructure planning and design and the associated Service Development requirements.

This committee meets at Calvary Hospital, Bruce, on the second Thursday of each month from 10 am to 11.30 am.

### Indigenous Health - Podcast

Recently I was fortunate to catch most of an excellent episode of *Life Matters* on Radio National which looked at indigenous racism in Australia's health system. We often talk about the need, as consumer representatives, to broaden our perspective, to seek to understand something about what it is like to walk in another's shoes, and how we take that understanding into our advocacy work. We may not be able to truly *know* the experience of a different age, disability, ethnicity, gender- but we do know that those different experiences exist, and the importance of advocating for the needs of those groups of people. With that in mind, have a listen to [this excellent podcast](#) about the indigenous experience of Australia's health system. And then, if you have more time, here are a couple more related podcasts on [improvements in indigenous health care](#) at Katherine Hospital and the story of Colleen Lavelle, an Aboriginal woman, who talks about [her experience of cancer](#). To also read some of her patient stories, Colleen [also blogs here](#).

If you would like assistance listening to this, please get in touch with the office on 6230 7800. You are welcome to come in to HCCA to listen to these.

Kate Gorman  
Consumer Representatives Program Coordinator

## HEALTH POLICY UPDATE

HCCA are working on a wide variety of exciting policy issues on which we would appreciate your input:

- Draft National Maternity Services Framework - [click here to access all the info on the COAG website](#). Input is due to HCCA by **Tuesday 11 April 2017**.
- Wounds Australia Consultation on the Pan-Pacific Clinical Practice Guideline for Prevention and Management of Venous Leg Ulcers - if you would like a copy of the guideline to comment on, please call or email HCCA. Input is due to HCCA by **Thursday 13 April 2017**.

Over the coming months HCCA may be asked to provide feedback on a range of policies and procedures for the new University of Canberra Public Hospital (UCPH). If this is something that interests you, or if there are any specific services in which you would be keen to comment, please let us know by emailing [kathrynbriant@hcca.org.au](mailto:kathrynbriant@hcca.org.au) or phoning HCCA on 02 6230 7800.

Kathryn Briant  
Policy Team Member

### LOCAL EVENTS

#### **ME/ Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Fibromyalgia Syndrome Self Help Course**

SHOUT are hosting a self-help course for people with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME)/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Fibromyalgia Syndrome, however people with chronic pain are welcome to participate. The course emphasises practical coping strategies and the development of individualised self-management plans to deal with a range of issues including chronic pain and fatigue. It will be run by trained facilitators in a supportive, small group setting, is designed to not only help participants understand chronic illness, but also to give them the tools and confidence to manage it. This course will be run over 8 weeks for 2 hours every Thursday – the details are as follows:

**Dates:** Thursday April 27, May 4, 11, 18, 25 and June 1, 8 and 15

**Time:** 10:30am – 12:30pm

**Venue:** SHOUT, Pearce Community Centre, 7 Collett Place, Pearce

**Cost:** \$75 or \$50 for a concession. This includes all course materials and refreshments

**RSVP:** Please RSVP to ACT ME/ Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Society at [admin@mecfscanberra.org.au](mailto:admin@mecfscanberra.org.au) or 02 6290 1984.

**Bookings are limited.**

### ITEMS OF INTEREST

#### Primary Care

#### **ACT School Immunisations – Feedback from HCCA Involvement**

In March 2016, HCCA consumer representatives and staff participated in a focus group for the 'Increasing School Immunisation Uptake Rates in the ACT' project by ACT Health. This project targeted six high schools in the ACT that had immunisation consent form return rates below 90% and aimed to increase the return rates by sending information flyers to parents of the year 6 and year 7 students. Parents of the students were also encouraged to participate in an online survey which helped to develop the information flyers. At the end of 2016, the study reported that immunisation uptake rates increased across the identified schools. Individual vaccine uptake rates increased, ranging from 6% to 17%. The increased uptake rates across the target schools, will improve health outcomes for adolescents across the ACT. ACT Health would like to thank the consumer representatives that participated as the feedback received proved to be invaluable, helping to guide the development of resources and the future planning of services. If you would like to know more about this study, please see the document attached.



## ITEMS OF INTEREST (CONT.)

### Adult Immunisation Rates more concerning than Children's

[The Conversation](#) has recently been published a journal article calling for Australians to focus their efforts on increasing adult vaccination rates instead of children's, as out of the 4.1 million Australians who are not vaccinated, 92% are adults. Many communicable, preventable diseases are spread by adults and are usually the starting points of epidemics because they have a higher rates of infection and therefore transmit infections more. Health care staff and services are most vulnerable to the high rates of infection due to the vulnerability and weakened immune systems of patients and the constant interactions they receive from staff. There has been evidence to suggest that a mandatory influenza vaccination could dramatically lower the rates of infection in hospitals, yet the solution also lies in designing health promotion programs, culturally sensitive education of the risks of these diseases as well as removing barriers to the wider population and increase regulation of services. [If you would like to read the full journal article on Adult Vaccination, click here.](#)

### COAG Health Council Meeting – 24 March 2017

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Health Council met in Melbourne on 24 March 2017. ACT Minister for Health, Meegan Fitzharris MLA published a media release after the meeting. Two issues she reported on will be of interest to our membership. The Minister said: 'Mental health was raised as a key issue, with the National Mental Health Plan to be renamed the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan, reflecting a stronger focus on suicide prevention.' She added, 'The rollout of the digital My Health Record initiative was also discussed, which is a great key element of the national health agenda. Ministers agreed to a national opt-out scheme for longer term participation and I will look at ways we can progress this reform here in the ACT.' [If you would like to find out more about what was discussed at the COAG Health Council, click here.](#)

### Update on the New Royal Adelaide Hospital

The SA Government has now entered into a minimum 90-day period where they have priority access to the hospital and can start testing how well things are working. Once they do this testing they can then accept the facility. It is getting very exciting for the people of South Australia. [Click here to read more about the completion of the Royal Adelaide Hospital.](#)

### Latest news from CHN

Read all the latest news from the [Capital Health Network](#):

- [Health InterACTion issue 40](#)
- [2/52 Health Care Bulletin](#)

### Health of Older People

#### **Culturally Appropriate Residential Aged Care: 10 Questions to Ask**

The [Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra \(MCCI\)](#) in collaboration with [NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association \(NSWNMA\)](#) have produced an information resource for multicultural and multilingual consumers and carers to help navigate through residential aged care services. The resource titled '*10 Questions to Ask About Your Cultural Needs in Residential Aged Care*' to ensure that vital culture and language needs are met for aged care residents who come from a multicultural background. This resource is a part of a series of information pamphlets called '*10 Questions*' that also addresses the importance of consumer communication with staff of aged care residents, GPs, palliative care, contracts and lifestyle. [If you would like to learn more about the '\*10 Questions\*' information pamphlets, click here.](#)

### **ACT Health Population Bulletin**

The ACT Population Health Bulletin is a quarterly newsletter from ACT Health that centres on a particular body of work, a key function or an emerging topic of interest relating to population health in the ACT. The first issue of 2017 has been released and is on the topic of 'Healthy Ageing in the ACT'. [If you would like to read this issue of the ACT Health Population Bulletin, click here.](#)

## ITEMS OF INTEREST (CONT.)

### COTA ACT - Street Smart Seniors

At the end of 2016, [Council of the Ageing ACT \(COTA ACT\)](#) received a grant from the ACT government to implement their Street Smart Seniors Road Safety Initiative. This program is free for older Canberrans who may not be as confident on the road or for people who would like to refresh their driver safety knowledge. You will learn:

- Being an older driver—the advantages and the challenges
- Road safety and pedestrian safety tips
- How to transition from being a driver to a non-driver
- Travel and transport options and concessions for seniors
- Where to go for further help or information

Funding for this program has been extended, and COTA ACT are now taking bookings for 2017 – 2018. If you would like to find out more about these sessions, please contact Ingrid Pepper on 6282 3777 or by email [communityed@cotaact.org.au](mailto:communityed@cotaact.org.au).

### Safety and Quality

#### AMA Updated Code of Ethics

[The Australian Medical Association \(AMA\)](#) has updated their Code of Ethics. The Code now covers:

- close personal relationships;
- patients with impaired or limited decision-making capacity;
- patients' family members, carers and significant others, including support persons;
- working with colleagues, including bullying and harassment;
- working with other health care professionals;
- supervising/mentoring; and
- health standards, quality and safety.

The AMA have also announced that the updated Code also provides greater clarity on consent; conscientious objection; complaints; control of patient information; fees; professional boundaries; managing interests; stewardship; medico-legal responsibilities; and protecting others from harm. [You can read the Code on the AMA website by clicking here.](#)

### Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal – Public Inquiries

On 30 March 2017, the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal released two new inquiries and are open for public submissions. The first inquiry will be into Housing in the ACT, specifically into the interaction of population growth, affordability, diversity and design, consumer behaviour and suburban and environmental impacts of residential developments. This inquiry will be reported on the last sitting day for 2018. [For more information to make a submission on the Inquiry into Housing, click here.](#) The Committee will also inquire into billboards for outdoor advertising in the ACT to determine if it should change the current regulations to allow the advertisement of billboards in the ACT. This inquiry is narrower in scope and will be reported back on the last sitting day of October 2017. [For more information or to make a submission on the Inquiry into Billboards, click here.](#)

### Chronic Conditions

#### AIDS Garden of Reflection

On Saturday 2 April 2017, the National Arboretum opened a series of four gardens as a part of their Gallery of Gardens project, that will in the future contain seven gardens, and is situated near the visitor's entrance of the Arboretum. One of the gardens opened has been dedicated to those in our community that are affected or have been affected by AIDS. The AIDS Garden of Reflection is a 500-square metre garden filled with native plants and sculptures by local artists, and was made possible through the fundraising efforts of the community as well as the [AIDS Action Council of the ACT](#). This garden is to commemorate those who have passed away from HIV/AIDS as well as a place for reflection for those who are currently affected by HIV/AIDS or know someone who is. [If you would like to know more information about the AIDS Garden of Reflection, click here.](#)

## ITEMS OF INTEREST (CONT.)

### Seasonal Influenza Vaccine

It's that time of year again- flu season. Influenza is highly contagious and potentially deadly. Vaccination against influenza is an effective way to prevent this disease. The influenza vaccine is now available through General Practices in the ACT, with free vaccines being offered to certain groups. For more information, please see the letter from the Deputy Chief Health Officer attached at the end of Consumer Bites.

### International Alliance of Patient's Organisation

*Information can and must produce engagement*

Patient information is one of the crucial aspects of patient-centred healthcare. It is important that patient information is not only comprehensive but also engaging and accessible, in order for patients to have the ability to participate as equals in health-care decision making.

IAPO (International Alliance of Patient's Organisation) of which HCCA is a member of, has recently released a policy brief on patient information and health literacy. IAPO defines patient information as relating to all forms of disease or condition, treatments, medication and health services. When it comes to improving the quality of health information there are five aspects that need to be taken into consideration. They are:

- Credibility
- Clarity
- Patient engagement
- Usability
- Communication

To read more about IAPO's brief on Patient Information and health literacy, [please click here.](#)

To find out more about IAPO's activities, [visit their website here.](#)

## LOCAL EVENTS

### And my dog comes too?...new approaches to living with our pets

For pet owners, especially older pet owners and those living alone, there can be great benefits in being allowed to take their pets to a range of public and other places.

This session will look at what is happening in countries where there is better pet access than in Australia and what could be done here. It will look at ways to improve pet access and constraints; and responsible pet ownership as better access would require a strong focus on responsible pet ownership. Audience input and suggestions will be encouraged.

Chaired by Mary Porter AM, speakers are Meegan Fitzharris MLA; Minister for Territory and City Services and Minister for Health Tammy Ven Dange; CEO, RSPCA ACT, Jan Phillips; President Pets and Positive Ageing Inc, Kate Cvetanovski; Executive Director, Northside Community Service, Veterinarian and 2016 ACT finalist Australian of the Year Dr Alison Taylor BVSc (Hons); and the Manager of Domestic Animal Services.

**Date:** Wednesday 26 April 2017  
**Time:** 09.00 am to 11:00 am  
**Venue:** Reception Room, ACT Legislative Assembly Building, Civic  
**Cost:** Free

Attendance is free but places are limited so bookings are essential. [To register please click here.](#)

For more information, call 0427 975 500

## LOCAL EVENTS (CONTD.)

### Cancer Council- Living Well After Cancer

Finished cancer treatment and ready to move on?

Living Well After Cancer is a free program for people who have finished their cancer treatment. It is:

- run by two trained facilitators who have experienced cancer firsthand
- 2.5 hour program providing practical support and open discussion
- for cancer survivors, carers, family, friends and work colleagues

As a participant you will learn about the possible changes, challenges and opportunities you may face after completing cancer treatment. You will also have the opportunity to connect with others on a similar journey, and share tips, ideas and activities to help you live your life well

**Date:** Saturday 29 April

**Time:** 10am- 12:30pm

Bookings are essential. For more information or to register:

**Phone:** 1300 200 558

**Email:**

[livingwellaftercancer@nswcc.org.au](mailto:livingwellaftercancer@nswcc.org.au)

### Deafness Resource Centre- Digital Storytelling Course

The Deafness Resource Centre is offering a free digital storytelling course to members of the hearing-impaired community living in Canberra. In these six workshops you will:

- write your own script
- record your own voice-over
- take your own photos, and
- make your own short film about a personal story

The workshops will be guided by three practising artists from PhotoAccess and Gen S Stories. They will be run over six Thursdays, 10 am-2pm in April, May and June. There will be an information session:

**Date:** Wednesday 12 April

**Time:** 12:30pm

**Venue:** Deafness Resource Centre, Holder

Places are limited so please book early. For further information please contact Glenn Vermuelen on 6287 4393, or contact Deafness Resource centre [via their website](#).

For more information about digital storytelling, visit the websites of Gen S Stories [here](#); and PhotoAccess [here](#)

## Contact Us



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Please note that Consumer Bites provides a small snippet of health related articles our members might find interesting to consider, ponder and analyse. The HCCA does not purport to endorse any opinions or the veracity of claims contained within the articles.

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