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OUR YEAR AHEAD IN 2017

Happy New Year everyone.

Our staff had a long break over the summer and had an opportunity to relax and spend some time with family and friends. I took all of January off and thoroughly enjoyed myself. Last year was a big year from me personally and for our organisation, and it was important to take the time to recover.

We have a big year ahead. There will be new staff, a new strategic plan, research projects as well as continuing our important work on providing consumer perspectives on committees and in the development and review of policy. The Clinical Services Framework and the Specialty Service Plans will also need dedicated focus to ensure that consumer and carers needs are reflected in the documents and processes.

We have advertised for two positions – a Manager of Policy and Research and a Project Officer to work on our Health Literacy Program. Applications closed on 24 January 2017 and we are very pleased with the quality of the candidates. We will be holding interviews in early to mid-February. This will enable us to build our Health Literacy Program.

We have an exciting double-barrelled event planned for 28 February. In the morning, HCCA will hold its annual get-together for consumer representatives, including conference reports and a briefing on HCCA priorities for the year. Following lunch, we will be then hosting a consumer and carer forum with the **Capital Health Network** (CHN). The afternoon forum is open to all HCCA members. This event will provide consumers with information about CHN's needs assessment process and gives consumers an opportunity to have input into what the priorities should be in the four identified areas of need:

- Disability and the NDIS (the interface between the NDIS and primary care)
- Carers (in particular carers' own health and wellbeing)
- Vulnerable children and youth
- Families with complex health and social care issues

There are more details in the upcoming HCCA events section on page 3.

Finally, in January I caught up with Kerry Snell and she let me know that she was planning to retire. This is wonderful news for Kerry and I know she is very excited about the year ahead. She has agreed to stay on until the end of February to give us time to find a replacement and arrange a hand over. Kerry and I have worked together for 8.5 years. She has been a passionate and effective advocate for consumers. I will miss her input very much. I will miss her passion and her expertise in consumer engagement and infrastructure projects.

I look forward to seeing you all in 2017.

Darlene Cox
Executive Director

ACT Health Clinical Services Framework

ACT Health has commenced a significant reform and innovation program to identify what services will be required to deliver quality health care to our community over the next 10+ years. The first phase is the development of the Clinical Services Framework (CSF). Ernst Young have been engaged to deliver this. This is due to be completed in January 2017 and then be released for consultation. This will be an important process to engage in and will be a key element of the HCCA work program in 2017.

After the CSF is drafted there will be preparation of first drafts of Specialty Service Plans (SSPs) for each clinical specialty. It is anticipated to be between 30 and 40 of these. They will include specifics about the patient journey, workforce and ICT needs. There will be SSPs for areas like neurosurgery, aged care, rehabilitation, and cardiology. They are developing a Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Plan for the CSF and SSP.

Kate Gorman, Kathryn Briant and Darlene Cox attended the community sector briefing on the Clinical Services Framework at the Hellenic Club on Friday 16 December 2016. At the briefing there was an emphasis on the delivery of patient centred care. They have not yet described this, nor have they identified the methodology for measuring the delivery of patient centred care.

The following indicative timeframes were given:

- Quarter 1 2017 – draft CSF delivered to the Director General
- Quarter 2 – Draft CSF community consultation
- Quarter 3 – development of SSPs will commence (August / September)

ACT Health Annual Report 2015-16

[Click here for the ACT Health Annual Report for 2015-16.](#)

ACT Statement of Commitment for Primary Health Care and Chronic Conditions

The ACT Government, HCCA, Capital Health Network (CHN) and Calvary Public Hospital have all signed a commitment to work collaboratively together to better coordinate and integrate health services to achieve the best possible health outcomes for people in the ACT. The commitment will focus on achieving 3 key priorities:

1. Increasing access to health care and support for vulnerable people
2. Increasing consumer health literacy
3. Identifying and removing barriers to integration of care

To find out more about the commitment in full, please read the document attached.

Café Conversation – Autoimmune illness

Café Conversation is a program of the [Autoimmune Resource & Research Centre \(ARRC\)](#) to bring together people living with autoimmune illness (eg. Lupus, Sjögren's, Scleroderma, Raynaud's, Fibromyalgia, Hashimotos, Graves etc.) in local areas to talk, laugh & support each other. Please note lunch & drinks are at own expense.

Date & Time: 1pm Thursday 9th February 2017
Venue: Southern Cross Club, 92 Corinna St
Woden ACT 2606
RSVP: text 0404774144 or
k.m.devitt@hotmail.com

CONGRATULATIONS AND WELCOME TO MINISTER HUNT

On Wednesday 18 January 2017, the [Consumers Health Forum \(CHF\)](#) welcomed the appointment of the [Hon. Greg Hunt MP](#) to the position of Minister for Health. "The Health portfolio is currently in the midst of a wide range of changes and reforms, and we look forward to engaging with the new Minister to progress these important issues", CHF's chief executive officer, Leanne Wells said. "It is clear that the community values the current health system – particularly our current universal public health insurance scheme - and wants all Australians to have access to quality health services. We understand that reform is necessary if the system is to be sustainable and continue to meet community expectations." [Click here to read the full media release from CHF from 18 January 2017.](#)

HCCA EVENTS

Consumer Representatives New Year Celebration (morning + lunch)

Come along, catch up with your HCCA network and celebrate our achievements from 2016 and a new year of health consumer advocacy.

Please note that this meeting is for current consumer representatives endorsed by HCCA only.

Time: 10am -1pm

Date: Tuesday 28 February 2017

Venue: Meeting Room Two, Maitland House, 100 Maitland Street, Hackett

RSVP: To Kate Gorman by Monday 20 February on kategorman@hcca.org.au or on 6230 7800. Please advise of any dietary requirements.

Capital Health Network Needs Assessment Forum

Have your input into CHN's needs assessment process, which identifies the current and likely future health care needs of the local population.

All HCCA members are invited to attend this forum.

Time: 1pm-3pm

Date: Tuesday 28 February 2017

Venue: Meeting Room Two, Maitland House, 100 Maitland Street, Hackett

RSVP: To Kate Gorman by Monday 20 February on kategorman@hcca.org.au or 6230 7800. Lunch will be served from 12.15pm. Please advise of any dietary requirements.

COMMITTEE VACANCIES

There is a vacancy for a consumer representative on each of the committees below. These vacancies close on **Monday 20 February 2017**. [Click here for the HCCA Nomination Form to apply for a committee vacancy.](#)

Clare Holland House Quality, Risk & Safety Committee

[Clare Holland House](#) provides specialist palliative care across ACT and the surrounding region.

This committee evaluates and approves standards of care, enhances clinical outcomes and identify risks to ensure effective and safe efficient service at Clare Holland House. The committee is responsible for monitoring the activity of Clare Holland House to ensure all relevant standards are met and the facility is providing clinical care in accordance with best evidence palliative care. This committee also oversees quality improvement activities and risk management.

This committee meets monthly on the third Wednesday of the month from 8:00am to 10:00am at Clare Holland House.

Standard 9 Committee

This high-level committee will establish and maintain systems for recognising and responding to clinical deterioration appropriately in accordance with Standard 9 of the National Safety and Quality Health Standards. This committee has a wide variety of functions, including ensuring governance arrangements are in place to support the development, implementation, and maintenance of organisation-wide recognition and response systems to patient deterioration, review and endorse policies, procedures and protocols relevant to patient deterioration and provide expert advice to capital planning working groups for future developments within the Health Directorate.

This committee meets every second Wednesday of each month at 2:00pm at The Canberra Hospital.

ACT Policy Advisory Committee

This committee evaluates changes to high-level ACT Health Directorate policies and standard operating procedures (SOPs) to determine whether they meet policy management criteria. This criteria aims to ensure appropriate stakeholder consultation has occurred, the policy meets legal obligations, and the purpose and scope of the policy is clear and able to be evaluated. The consumer representative on this committee will not be required to provide consumer input to all policies and SOPs put before this committee. Their role will be to ensure that the consumer perspective has been sought and heard as required when these documents were developed, and to participate in discussion around whether the policy or SOP meets the policy management criteria.

This committee meets on the first Thursday of every month from 9:30am to 11:30am.

COMMITTEE VACANCIES (CONT.)

Woman, Youth & Children Unit Community Health Programs (WYCCHP) Quality & Safety Committee

This committee aims to monitor and improve the standard of clinical care for Woman, Youth and Children Unit Community Health Program (WYCCHP) clients through effective structures, systems and processes. They discuss issues of risk and safety and quality of patient care for all of the Programs. The WYCCHP includes a wide range of services:

- Women's Health Services that target vulnerable women with a view to providing routine health care (such as Pap smears) and supporting women to link with a mainstream GP; alongside counselling.
- Maternal and Child Health Services (MACH) offer services for all parents and their children from birth to 5 years including developmental assessments and graded support for parents based on the family needs.
- School-based immunisation and kindergarten screening.
- Audiometry services for children.
- A small team of School Youth Health Nurses who work in some of the public high schools in the ACT.
- Healthcare Access at School which is a service supporting children, with health care needs, to attend public schools.
- Asthma Educators.
- Social work support for parents of young children.
- Physiotherapy with a focus on the immediate postnatal period (mother and baby).
- Orthoptist – secondary vision assessment and interventions for young children.
- Nutrition family-focused support during pregnancy and early childhood.
- A forensic medical service for children that sits alongside a counselling service and works closely with Care and Protection Services in the ACT and NSW.
- A Child Protection Training team who focus on ensuring Health personnel know how to meet their legislated obligations to keep children safe.
- Community Paediatrics and Child Health Service who offer secondary medical care to children, especially related to developmental concerns.

What WYCCHP services have in common is that the health care is not an extension of hospital or acute care and often the recipients of care are 'well' but need support through a period of vulnerability whether that is because it's a significant period of rapid development (young children, high school students) or a woman has experienced trauma or a family is on the margins and therefore any children are more vulnerable. Meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday of the month from 10am until midday on the 3rd floor of 1 Moore Street, Civic.

Requirements

The successful nominee will have an interest and some background knowledge of this area of health.

Maternity Quality and Safety Committee

This committee aims to improve the standard of care through the promotion of a culture of quality and safety within the Maternity Services at the Canberra Hospital. This committee reviews and monitors safety and quality activities, acknowledges and responds to risk and endorses clinical policies and Standard Operating Procedures. The consumer representative on this committee will have an interest in women's and children's health services, and an ability to contribute the consumer perspective across a range of maternity programs, as well as the ability to read and critique policies and procedures for their impact on maternity services consumers.

This committee meets on the second Tuesday of every month from 11:00am to 12:00pm at the Canberra Hospital.

HEALTH POLICY UPDATE

Happy New Year to you all and I hope you have all had a nice break.

In September last year the [Australian Government released their Response to the Review of Medicines and Medical Devices Regulation](#). The response identifies ways to improve access to therapeutic goods for consumers and remove unnecessary red-tape for industry whilst maintaining the safety of therapeutic goods in Australia. I had the opportunity to attend a forum in December at the [Therapeutic Goods Administration](#) discussing how the implementation of the reforms arising from the Review will take place. There was lots

of great input from consumers about various aspects of the implementation – [click here to learn more about the reforms](#).

January tends to be a quieter time in the policy space, but please look out for email ‘invitations to provide input’ or check out the next edition issue of Consumer Bites for issues of interest to you. It’s a great way to be involved in the work of HCCA and to influence our health care system. Also a reminder that you can look at most of our [policy submissions on the HCCA website](#).

Kathryn Briant, Policy Team
Email: kathrynbriant@hcca.org.au.

FROM THE MULTICULTURAL CORNER...

New ICPS Research Report and accompanying Research to Practice Issue: Supporting Refugee Families

- Research Report: Refugee Communities, Intercultural Dialogue – Building relationships, building communities
- Research to Practice Issue: Supporting Refugee Families in Australia

[Click here to download these publications.](#)

The Institute of Child Protection Studies recently released two new publications, which present the findings from a study that collected data about how services may better support refugee parents to care for their children, to contribute to the development of more responsive and integrated social policy and service delivery. The study was conducted in partnership with the Australian Centre for Child Protection; and included interviews with families with a refugee background, and a national online survey of Commonwealth funded service providers working with refugee families.

The research report provides the study findings in detail, including the challenges experienced by families with a refugee background living in Australia and the implications for policy and practice.

The Research to Practice issue provides a brief overview of the informal and formal supports accessed by these families, barriers to these supports, the characteristics of supportive services and implications for policy and practice.

The following back-issues of the Research to Practice Series are also available to download:

- #1: Interventions and practice principles for supporting young people who are homeless
- #2: Identity and meaning in the lives of vulnerable young people
- #3: Younger Mothers: Stigma and Support
- #4: Children with parents in prison
- #5: Supporting fathers who are homeless
- #6: Supporting young carers in education
- #7: Child-Centred Practice
- #8: Needs and Experiences of Biological Children of Foster Carers
- #9: The importance of the ‘Human Connection’: Helpful relationships with service users and linking social capital
- #10: Supporting quality contact visits for children in out-of-home care
- #11: Not everything is imaginary: Children’s conceptualisations of interpersonal safety
- #12: Children’s views about safety in institutions
- #13: Our Safety Counts: Key Findings from the Australian Survey of Kids and Young People – Perceptions of interpersonal safety and characteristics of safe institutions
- #14: Our Safety Counts: Key Findings from Australian Survey of Kids and Young People – Help-seeking and institutional responses to safety concerns. These back issues are available to download at: <http://www.acu.edu.au/566948>

Yelin Hung, Multicultural Liaison Officer

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Safety and Quality

Choosing Wisely – the doctor-patient partnership

In December 2016, [The Consumers Health Forum of Australia \(CHF\)](#) released a media statement in regards to the results of the [Choosing Wisely Australia](#) consumer surveys, emphasising the importance of doctor-patient communication to reduce the number of unnecessary medical tests recommended each year. The surveys found that 79 percent of consumers had unnecessary medical tests that were recommended to them by their doctors and 41 percent of GPs reported that they were asked by patients for unnecessary tests several times a week. With so many new innovations in medical technology, it is important that consumers and their doctors are informed and have regular discussions in order to make the right choices for their health care. [Click here to read the full media release from CHF.](#)

Choosing Wisely Australia recommends people ask their doctors the following '5 Questions' before they have any test, treatment or procedure:

- Do I really need this test or procedure?
- What are the risks?
- Are there simpler, safer options?
- What happens if I don't do anything?
- What are the costs?

[Click here to access the '5 Questions' resource, available in 10 languages.](#) There are also tips on how to plan for your next healthcare appointment. For more information visit www.choosingwisely.org.au.

Urogynaecological surgical mesh complications

In order to improve the safety and quality of the use of urogynaecological mesh, the [Therapeutic Goods Administration \(TGA\)](#) is urging consumers and health professionals to report any adverse events experienced in association with these medical devices. Reports by consumers and health professionals to the TGA provide important information, building a picture of the safety profile of a product and assisting with the safety monitoring program. [Click here to find out more about this issue from the TGA.](#)

Primary Health Care

Increasing choice in Home Care: changes from 27 Feb 2017

Commencing 27 February 2017, a home care package will be allocated to the consumer, allowing consumers to direct funding for their home care package to the provider of their choice. This change gives consumers a greater degree of choice in their preferred provider, as well as the type of care they receive.

What is changing?

Funding for a home care package will follow the consumer, replacing the current system where home care 'places' are allocated to individual approved providers in particular locations. Consumers will have more choice and control over their home care, including the ability to change providers if they wish.

A new national prioritisation process will be established for home care, including the establishment of a national package queue, which will assign packages to consumers based on their individual needs and how long they have been waiting for services, regardless of where they live.

[Click here to access a range of other support materials for consumers and providers about the changes, available on the Department of Health's website.](#)

Experiencing integration

An interesting qualitative pilot study has recently been published, looking at consumer and provider experiences of integrated primary health care in Australia. This research was led by Dr Michelle Banfield at the Australian National University and HCCA members were involved in the reference group. [Click here to access this publication on Experiencing Integration.](#)

Digital Story Telling and Health Promotion

A pilot study at the University of NSW (UNSW) is looking at digital story telling as a medium of promoting health to CALD and refugee/migrant communities. [Click here to learn more about the UNSW pilot study on digital story telling.](#)

Capital Health Network Newsletters

- [Click here for the latest 2/52 Health Care Bulletin](#), and
- [Click here for Health InterACTion Issue 34](#)

ITEMS OF INTEREST (CONT.)

Importance of Health Literacy

Health literacy is defined as the degree to which a person has the capacity to obtain, process and comprehend health information in order to make decisions about their own health. Around 75% of health information is written at a high school to undergraduate reading level. And as a result, most healthcare information is written at a level more advanced than the reader's ability. [Click here for an article from the EconoTimes about how health literacy can be a matter of life or death.](#)

Health of Older People

ACT Seniors MyWay Card Applications

ACT Seniors My Way Card can provide access to a range of business discounts and ACT Government concessions. New and replacement ACT Seniors My Way Cards are available from COTA ACT Hughes office, ACT Libraries and Access Canberra Shopfronts (see details on the application form available from these outlets – or please contact HCCA if you would like us to email you a copy. The application forms are not available online). Find out more about the ACT Seniors MyWay Cards at [Transport Canberra](#) or on the [COTA ACT website](#).

Also, Transport Canberra has partnered with Transport NSW to entitle ACT Seniors My Way card holders to concession travel in NSW using NSW Gold Opal Card.

Seniors with an early ACT Seniors Card (i.e. one that has 6 numbers as opposed to 9 on the current cards) will need to apply for a **card replacement** in order to apply for an NSW Gold Opal Card.

ACT Seniors MyWay Cards which **have not been used to travel on ACT buses for a period of two years or more**, will have expired and should also be **replaced**.

Please allow up to 7 days for new or replacement ACT Seniors MyWay card registration before applying for a NSW Gold Opal card. [Click here to apply for a NSW Gold Opal card](#), or phone 13 67 25.

COTA ACT January 2017 Newsletter

[Click here to read the January 2017 edition of the COTA ACT Newsletter.](#)

Expressions of Interest for the 2017-19 Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing

Nominations are now being sought for the 2017-19 [ACT Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing](#). The ACT Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing (the Council) provides strategic advice to the ACT Government on issues affecting older people in the ACT. They also communicate the needs and views of older Canberrans to the ACT Government.

The current council has provided the ACT Government with important information on issues such as the health of seniors, elder abuse and worked in partnership with the ACT Government to host the ACT's first Seniors Health Roundtable.

To ensure that the Council can represent all older people we need to have members from diverse cultural backgrounds, the LGBTIQ community and with different experiences. The Minister for Veterans and Seniors is also keen to see nominations from people with knowledge of areas such as legal affairs or elder abuse.

Applications are invited from individuals and representatives of organisations in the ACT who have:

- a demonstrated commitment to improving the lives of seniors in our community;
- a demonstrated knowledge of the interests and concerns of seniors;
- an ability to engage with community members and represent a wide range of views of seniors in our community; and
- a commitment to participate fully in Council activities (e.g. consultations), in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

[Click here to submit an application](#). Applications are open and will close on **3 February 2017**. Further information is available by calling the Office for Veterans and Seniors on 6205 1400, emailing communityparticipation@act.gov.au or visiting www.communityservices.act.gov.au/wac/ageing/advisory_council_on_ageing

ACT Veterans and Seniors Newsletter - December 2016

[Click here for the December 2016 edition of the ACT Veterans and Seniors Newsletter.](#)

LOCAL EVENTS (CONT.)

Women's Mental Health Service Consultation
[Wellways Australia](#) in partnership with [ACT Health](#) will provide a Women's Mental Health Service (WMHS) providing short to medium term supported accommodation for Women over the age of 18 experiencing a mental health issue. The service will operate under a gender informed model understanding that the experience and impacts of mental illness are different for women than for men.

Mental health consumers are invited to attend a consultation regarding the model of care, intake/assessment process, program guidelines and any other issues or items that might be important to the general operation of the service. **Comments from female consumers are preferred as the target group for the service.**

Date: Tuesday 31 January 2017

Time: 1.00pm – 2pm

Venue: Room 11, Level 2, 20 Genge St, City

RSVP: By Friday 27 January to 6230 5796, SMS 0406 457 557 or email actmhcnc@actmhcnc.org.au

RSVP's are appreciated for catering purposes. Please include any dietary requirements when giving your RSVP.

The WMHS will aim to fill gaps in service delivery between acute and inpatient unit services and less structured programs that can be provided in the persons usual environment.

Founded on recovery principles, the WMHS will aim to support women to transition back to their usual place of residence after a period of increased risk, or episode, of mental ill health. The focus of the service will centre on minimising the impact and risks of frequent and long-term acute admissions to the inpatient unit. The service will also support, where appropriate, individuals to remain connected to their community and engaged in education and employment. For carers and families the service aims to assist them to build and maintain a positive relationship with their loved one with a mental illness.

Understanding the NDIS Workshop

Do you want to learn more about the [National Disability Insurance Scheme \(NDIS\)](#)?

Are you or someone you know unsure about transitioning to NDIS?

This workshop will to provide you with the knowledge and ability about how a person with psychosocial disability can access/transition to the NDIS. By the end of this two-day workshop, the participants will:

- Learn about the NDIS, eligibility requirements and registration process
- Explore how to assist potential NDIS participants with decision making & planning
- Explore how the recovery approach relates to the NDIS
- Identify how they can support someone when accessing the NDIS

Workshop Details:

Dates: Mon 30 & Tues 31 January 2017

Time: 10:00am - 4:45pm

Location: Canberra City, venue to be confirmed with participants

Cost: Free (morning tea and light lunch included)

RSVP: If you are interested in participating, please contact the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network: education@actmhcnc.org.au

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. Consumer Bites is the fortnightly newsletter from **Health Care Consumers' Association ACT**.

Editor: Kathryn Briant