



**eNews**

*Email Bulletin of Health Issues Centre*

25 November 2009

Level 5, Health Sciences 2  
LA TROBE UNIVERSITY VIC 3086

**Ph:** (03) 9479 5827

**Fax:** (03) 9479 5977

[info@healthissuescentre.org.au](mailto:info@healthissuescentre.org.au)

[www.healthissuescentre.org.au](http://www.healthissuescentre.org.au)

## **Dear Consumers, Carers, Community Members and Health Professionals**

This will be the last edition of *eNews* for 2009. The Board, Management and Staff would like to thank you all for your support and participation through the year. We would like to wish everyone a restful, happy and energising holiday season and look forward to seeing you all again in 2010.

Whatever you celebrate during this time and in recognition of our Multicultural society we would like to wish you all

### **Merry Christmas**

**25 December**

25 December - Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ who Christians believe to be the son of God

### **Happy Bodhi Day**

**9 December**

Some Buddhists celebrate Gautama's attainment of Enlightenment on this day under the Bodhi tree in Bodhgaya, North India

### **Happy Hanukkah**

**12-19 December**

Jewish Hanukkah celebrates the victory over religious persecution in the Holy Land and also commemorates the re-dedication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem and the miracle of the burning oil

### **Al-Hijira**

**18 December**

This Muslim Festival marks the migration of the Prophet Mohammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina

### **Yule**

**21 December**

Yule is the time of the winter solstice when the sun child is reborn, an image of the return of new life born through the love of the Gods

### **Ashura**

**27 December**

This is a day of fasting for **Sunni Muslims**. The day that Nun (Noah) left the Ark and the day that Musa (Moses) was saved from the Egyptians by Allah.

For **Shi'a Muslims** it is a day of mourning to commemorate the martyrdom of Hussein, a grandson of the Prophet (pbuh) in 680 CE

---

## **OFFICE HOURS OVER THE DECEMBER/JANUARY PERIOD**

**HIC will close from 5 pm on 23 December and reopen on 4 January 2010.**

## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HEALTH ISSUES CENTRE

### **The priorities of rural consumers who travel for healthcare**

HIC is putting together a resource of initiatives and ideas about what public health services across Victoria are doing and can do further to support rural consumers who are travelling for healthcare.

If you have initiatives in any of the following areas can you please contact Jackie Mansourian (03) 9479 5870 [j.mansourian@healthissuescentre.org.au](mailto:j.mansourian@healthissuescentre.org.au)

- Ways of identifying rural consumers at all points along the journey of healthcare
- "Someone who actually knows the system" Key staff in rural, district rural, regional and city hospitals who provide coordinated support and advocacy within the health service for rural consumers
- Development and provision of whole-of-transport and accommodation information to consumers and health services
- Rethinking discharge to 'transfer of care': holistic assessment, early planning with consumer and carer and close communication and coordination between treating and more localised health services
- Initiatives that limit the requirement for travel by rural consumers

### **Consumer participation in health and medical research**

Tere Dawson is attending a two-day training for academic researchers and students on Consumer and Community Involvement in Research. This is a Summer School organised by the University of Western Australia and INVOLVE, the UK leading centre for public and patient involvement in health and the NHS. Tere will have the opportunity to learn and hear from latest development in training of academic researchers and students interested in engaging consumers and carers earlier in their research processes. This information will enhance Health Issues Centre's contribution to the area of consumer participation in cancer research in Victoria. Taking this opportunity has been possible through the funding of the Victorian Cancer Agency to the consumer participation in research project that Health Issues Centre has been implementing since February 2009.

Health Issues Centre also gave a presentation on consumer participation in research to a group of cancer researchers and academics members of the Victorian Cooperative Oncology Group (VCOG). The presentation was well received and there was interest in asking more about the issues involved.

### **Consumer participation and the National Health and Hospitals Commission report**

Health Issues Centre had the opportunity to present the perspective of consumer participation at the latest General Practice Interest Group (GPIC). A short presentation highlighted the recommendations that refer directly or indirectly to consumer participation. These include among others;

**Recommendation 2** Mechanisms for effectively conducting ... [health reform] dialogue should be developed and should include expert ... consumer perspectives

**Recommendation 12** Access to evidence-based, consumer-friendly information that supports people in making healthy choices and in better understanding and making decisions about their use of health services

**Recommendation 27** National Access Targets should be developed incorporating community perspectives through vehicles like citizen juries

**Recommendation 82** More effective mechanisms for consumer and carer participation and feedback to shape programs and service delivery

**Recommendation 93** A systematic mechanism to formulating health care priorities that incorporates ... community perspectives through vehicles like citizen juries.

**Recommendation 108** National Health and Medical Research Council should consult widely with consumers

**Recommendation 118** National social marketing strategy to inform consumers ... of the proposed e-health approach.

**Recommendation 121** Development of a national policy and open technical standards framework for e-health, ... developed with the participation and commitment of and with consumers.

A full copy of the report and recommendation can be found at <http://www.nhhrc.org.au/internet/nhhrc/publishing.nsf/Content/nhhrc-report>

## JOURNAL NEWS

Issue #100 is now available to all Health Issues Centre members and will be available through RMIT Informit soon. It has interesting reflections on the past and future of consumer participation.

Issue #101 is ready to go out early December 2009 with interesting articles about human rights and health.

Issue #102 will be on the journey of consumers that travel from rural areas to access health services in metropolitan hospitals.

## CONSUMER PARTICIPATION

On 8 October 2009, the National Human Rights Consultation Committee released its report and recommended that Australia adopt a Human Rights Act. (Available here: <http://www.humanrightsconsultation.gov.au/www/nhrcc/nhrcc.nsf/Page/Report>).

The Government has announced that it will respond to the report in the coming weeks. For people concerned with improved protection of human rights in Australia, the time to act is now!

What can you do? Write to your local MP or straight to the Prime Minister and the Attorney-General.

You can be part of the campaign for a Human Rights Act by writing or emailing to your local MP or to the Prime Minister and the Attorney-General.

A sample letter to MPs, sent by the Human Rights Law Resource Centre, is attached to this email. Further materials, including a Briefing Paper on a Human Rights Act, a summary of the report's key findings and recommendations, and the HRLRC submissions to the Consultation, are available at: <http://www.hrlrc.org.au/content/topics/national-human-rights-consultation/act-now-a-human-rights-act-for-australia/>

If you need any further information, contact Emily Howie on (03) 8636 4432 or [emily.howie@hrlrc.org.au](mailto:emily.howie@hrlrc.org.au).

## CONSUMER POSITIONS

**Consumer Position CNP090046**

Southern Melbourne Integrated Cancer Service (SMICS) Community Advisory Group  
New closing date 27 November 2009

The Consumer Advisory Group meet quarterly and provides the structure for SMICS to gain the consumer perspective on projects and activities that will lead to improving the cancer experience for consumers across southern Melbourne.

[CNP090046- SMICS CAG Information](#)

[CNP090046- SMICS CAG Application Form](#)

[CNP090046- SMICS CAG Poster](#)

## EVENTS OF INTEREST

### **Policy Statement on Patient Information**

The International Alliance of Patients' Organizations (IAPO) has launched a Policy Statement on Patient Information outlining recommendations for information providers to meet the information needs of patients worldwide, at a regional meeting of patient groups in Argentina. The IAPO Policy Statement on Patient Information outlines a key principle of patient-centred healthcare and expresses the experience and needs of IAPO's global patient group membership. To read the Policy Statement go to

<http://www.patientsorganizations.org/showarticle.pl?id=1070;n=31024>

### **Financial Literacy for Not-For-Profit Organisations**

The VCOSS clearinghouse is pleased to present a training opportunity for community organisations in Dandenong. This is the last of a series of fantastic financial literacy workshops.

This seminar is designed specifically for workers in the community sector to help people without a financial background make sense of financial statements

This seminar will help you understand your financial statements. Using straight forward techniques learn how to interpret your income statement and your balance sheet. These skills will enable you to ask the right questions and provide you with information that will help in decision making.

#### **DANDENONG:**

10.00am – 3.00pm

Wednesday, 25 November 2009

Meeting Room 1, WHISE, 15 Scott St, Dandenong

**Download a registration form [here](#).**

### **Community Participation in Community Health Network for health professionals**

Are you responsible for consumer and community participation in your community health service? Then come along to the Community Participation in Community Health Network

<http://www.healthissuescentre.org.au/documents/items/2009/11/299897-upload-00001.pdf>

## CONFERENCES

### **Inaugural International Advance Care Planning Conference**

Melbourne, Australia 22-24 April 2010.

<http://www.internationalacp2010.com/index.php>

### **Diversity in Health 2010**

Melbourne, 7 and 9 June 2010. [Read more](#)

### **Community Engagement in Policy Development**

Melbourne, Feb 23 and 24 2010

<http://communityengagementpolicy.com/>

## **POLICY NEWS**

### **Launch of standards and indicators for consumer, carer and community participation in Victorian public health services**

At the *Consumer Participation in Health... My Story Matters* conference held in Melbourne between the 21 and 22 of September 2009, the *Doing it with us not for us strategic directions 2010-13* was launched. This document contains a suite of five standards and indicators for consumer, carer and community participation. These standards are directed to public health services across Victoria and the Victorian Department of Health expects them to report on their work on consumer, carer and community participation in the annual Quality of Care Reports and other reporting mechanisms.

To see the standards and indicators go to

[http://www.health.vic.gov.au/consumer/downloads/strategic\\_direction\\_2010-13.pdf](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/consumer/downloads/strategic_direction_2010-13.pdf)

## **OTHER NEWS**

### **Bushfire preparedness kit**

The Victorian Department of Health and the Department of Human Services have made available a Health and Community Services Bushfire Preparedness Kit. This kit contains information for consumers and organisations in the health and community services sector to help prepare for the coming summer.

Electronic versions of the material are available at <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/bushfire/>

### **Public and private hospitals**

20 October 2009

Public and private hospitals are estimated to have similar total costs, according to this report, but there are differences in the composition of costs between the two sectors, with medical and diagnostics, and prostheses more costly in private hospitals; and general hospital costs and capital costs higher in public hospitals.

This discussion draft responds to a request by the Australian government to examine three aspects of the health care system: the relative performance of public and private hospitals; rates of informed financial consent for privately insured patients; and the most appropriate indexation factor for the Medicare Levy Surcharge income thresholds.

With major differences within and between the public and private hospital sectors, like-for-like comparisons are difficult. Existing data collections are limited by inconsistent collection methods and missing information. The Commission has sought to address these limitations, but its initial cost estimates should be considered experimental.

Based on available data, the Commission also found that:

- Private hospitals appear to have lower infection rates than public hospitals (but private hospitals generally treat patients who have a lower risk of infection)

- Private hospitals have higher labour productivity and shorter lengths of stay than public hospitals (partly due to differences between what they do and who they treat).

The Commission will refine its comparison of costs and other indicators for the final report. Data enhancements for public hospitals foreshadowed by governments over the next few years and expanded reporting for private hospitals would better enable future comparisons.

Responding to other aspects of the reference, the Commission found that:

- Only a small proportion of private patients incur out-of-pocket expenses without providing informed financial consent
- The most appropriate indexation factor for the Medicare Levy Surcharge income thresholds is Average Weekly Ordinary Time Earnings.

The Commission has released this discussion draft to encourage further discussion and input before it completes its final report in December 2009.

<http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/study/hospitals/draft>

### **Cutting through: using health information technology for effective chronic care delivery**

Robin McKenzie, et al, 19 October 2009

Could it be that Australia is finally on a path that will lead us forward on the e-health agenda after all the false starts we have encountered over the last decade?

This report was prepared in early 2009 by Information Integrity Solutions (IIS) for the Health Information Exchange Sub-Committee to report to the Australian National Consultative Committee on e-Health (ANCC on e-Health). It was prepared in response to the increasing need to cut through the difficult issues arising in relation to chronic care and to find a sustainable, effective and efficient solution.

This solution has so far eluded the many organisations and interests, including government despite significant funds and effort being exerted on the problem. Global Access Partners (GAP) facilitated and oversaw the stakeholder consultation process and IIS conducted the research and prepared the report. The members of the Health Information Exchange Sub-Committee are listed at the back of this report.

<http://www.iispartners.com/downloads/2009-02%20Cutting%20Through%20eHealth%20paper%20final.pdf>

### **The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) is seeking expressions of interest from suitably qualified and experienced candidates to be appointed to vacancies that will occur on the Board in 2010.**

The ASRC runs 25 diverse programs which include free legal, health and counselling services as well as ESL, casework and employment programs. The ASRC established the first health and employment services for asylum seekers in Victoria, provides food to over 400 asylum seeker families a month through our Food Bank, and is the largest provider of pro bono legal assistance to asylum seekers in Australia.

Successful applicants will have experience as a Board Director, preferably within the public or not for profit sectors.

All expressions of interest should be sent by email only, to the Board Secretary, Hannah Lawson on [hr@asrc.org.au](mailto:hr@asrc.org.au)

## DO YOU WANT TO BE INVOLVED?

### **Consumer Register**

If you would like to receive information about new committee positions join the HIC Consumer Register [Health Issues Centre Consumer Register Form](#)

### **Health Services and Government**

Are you looking for consumer/s for your committee, focus group or project? HIC maintains a register of over 200 consumers. To request a consumer for your committee, focus group or projects download a [Consumer Request Form](#)

## NEW ON OUR WEBSITE

[New Resources added for November 2009- Ageing and Participation](#)

## NEW RESOURCES

### **Towards national indicators of safety and quality in health care**

[Health Care Safety and Quality Unit, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](#)

09 October 2009

This report sets out recommendations for a set of 55 national indicators of safety and quality in health care. The report concludes the National Indicators Project, a major project funded by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission) and undertaken by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) in close consultation with the Commission and a wide range of clinical and other stakeholders.

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10792>

### **Health Consumers Queensland Consumer Representatives Program**

Health Consumers Queensland has set up its consumer representative program. They have developed two new resources one for agencies and one for consumers. While they are for Queensland health services the information in them is transferrable. The information may help organisations who want to set up their own consumer representative program.

### **Consumer Handbook**

[http://www.health.qld.gov.au/hcq/network\\_reps/cons\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/hcq/network_reps/cons_handbook.pdf)

### **Agency Handbook**

[http://www.health.qld.gov.au/hcq/network\\_reps/agen\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/hcq/network_reps/agen_handbook.pdf)

### **More information**

[http://www.health.qld.gov.au/hcq/network\\_reps/consumer\\_reps.asp](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/hcq/network_reps/consumer_reps.asp)

To subscribe or unsubscribe to eNews, contact Souzi Markos:

[s.markos@healthissuescentre.org.au](mailto:s.markos@healthissuescentre.org.au)