

Number 21 WINTER 2008

# HEALTHY TERRITORY

A NEWSLETTER FOR ACT HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

Print Post Approved  
PP 255003/05627

## Contents

Find Thirty. It's not a big exercise	1
From the Chief Executive	2
Big Budget boost for ACT Health	3
Corrections health program in the ACT	4
Project Management news	5
ACT Health launches 'flu campaign	6
Celebrating Midwives and Nurses Week	6
2008 ACT Quality in Health Care Awards	6
Reviews of drug services	7
Health and Aged care symposium	8
CIT students in allied health	8
What is podiatry?	9
ACT leads nation in mental health	10
ACT immunisation strategy	11
Interprofessional Learning Project	12
Combating Ross River Virus	13
Student unite to promote rural health	13
Students combine with seniors for a great day out	14
ACT Division of General Practice Home medicine review	15
Conference Diary	16

## Find Thirty. It's not a big exercise<sup>®</sup>

In March 2008 ACT Health launched a three year physical activity campaign **Find thirty. It's not a big exercise<sup>®</sup>**. This campaign was developed by the Western Australian Department of Health and has been successfully implemented in Western Australia. The campaign aims to increase awareness among adults of the type and frequency of physical activity necessary for good health. That is thirty minutes of moderate to intense physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week.

Most people are already aware of the health benefits of physical activity. Despite this, just under half of all ACT adults do not participate in sufficient levels of physical activity needed for good health.

Research also shows that many people think it is difficult to be physically active, believing that it requires a major time commitment and needs to be vigorous to be worthwhile. Therefore, the message strategy of **Find thirty. It's not a big exercise<sup>®</sup>** is to counter these perceptions by highlighting the fact that thirty minutes can be accumulated in shorter sessions



ACT Health's Joon-Li Choo promotes the Find Thirty message at this year's RSPCA Million Paws Walk

of at least ten minutes. The campaign provides examples of how to make physical activity part of the daily routine.

The first phase of the campaign included:

- Television advertisements
- ACTION bus advertisement
- Print media advertisements
- Screening of a television advertisement at Canberra Connect Shopfronts
- Resource development and distribution, including; a generic consumer brochure,

*Continued over page*



## FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Mark Cormack,  
Chief Executive

# CAPITAL ASSET DEVELOPMENT PLAN: YOUR HEALTH – OUR PRIORITY

As announced in the recent 2008-09 ACT Budget, the ACT Government is about to embark on an ambitious construction project that will provide the territory with the health facilities needed to meet the challenges of healthcare into the future, beginning with \$300 million in funding for the first stage of the project. We are now entering the first stage of what is expected to be a \$1 billion redevelopment of our health facilities, the details of which are outlined in the new Capital Asset Development Plan: Your health - Our priority.

This year's Budget provides funding for the first stage of building a sustainable and modern health system, to ensure the safety, availability and viability of quality healthcare in the ACT to 2022.

ACT Health is now undertaking the recruitment process for a Project Director - a company with experience in large and complex health construction projects.

The first stages of the 10-year building program will focus on a new women's and children's hospital and multi-storey car park at TCH and a new ICU/HDU/CCU at Calvary Hospital.

A feasibility study for the Women's and Children's Hospital was completed in early June and a naming competition for the women's and children's hospital has been announced by the Minister.

If you have any questions or a suggestion for the new women's and children's hospital just go to [yourhealthourpriority@act.gov.au](mailto:yourhealthourpriority@act.gov.au)

In order to provide you with more information about what's planned in the way of capital expenditure and recurrent funding, please visit this online site:

<http://www.health.act.gov.au/yhop>

---

### CONTINUED FROM COVER STORY

a 'Come on walkies' consumer flyer, a 'Be a good exercise instructor. Prescribe thirty minutes' GP brochure; and, an A3 poster.

In addition, campaign messages are also promoted electronically through the National Find thirty® website, the ACT Health website and the ACT Health Promotion website.

ACT Health has formed a partnership with the RSPCA, where Find thirty® featured at this year's Million Paws Walk. Other Find thirty® partnerships include the University of Canberra Advertising students, and the ACT Division of General Practice.

### GET INVOLVED WITH FIND THIRTY®

Have you thought about how to get involved with promoting Find thirty®?

Health Promotion and Grants have a range of free campaign materials that you can use to promote the Find thirty® message.

For more information or to request campaign materials, visit the ACT page on the Find thirty® website [www.findthirty.com.au](http://www.findthirty.com.au) or contact Health Promotion and Grants by email [healthpromotion@act.gov.au](mailto:healthpromotion@act.gov.au) or phone (02) 6207 9527.

The ACT Government is readying itself for the future with a \$889 million investment in ACT health services in the 2008-09 Budget, to ensure that all Canberrans have access to a high quality and effective public health system now and into the future.

The *Your health—our priority* initiative provides \$300 million as the first stage of an overhaul of the health system infrastructure. This investment will see the Canberra Hospital reconfigured and redeveloped with a large investment to upgrade Canberra's network of community health facilities.

It is the first phase of an anticipated \$1 billion investment in health infrastructure.

Major capital projects to be undertaken through this initial investment are:

- \$90 million for the construction of a Women's and Children's Hospital;
- \$37.6 million suite of mental health facilities, including a Young Person's Unit, an Adult Acute Inpatient Unit, a Secure Adult Unit, and a Mental Health Assessment Unit. This is in addition to the \$8.5 million over four years provided in recurrent funding to provide greater support for people with mental illness;
- \$18 million for the Gungahlin Community Health Centre.
- \$9.4 million for an Intensive Care and High Dependency Unit at the Calvary Hospital;
- \$5.5 million for a new Neurosurgery Operating Theatre, integrated with "state of the art imaging systems;
- \$4.1 million for the construction of a Surgical Assessment and Planning Unit.

"This is the largest investment in health infrastructure by any Government and will support the health workforce in improving health outcomes, including combating lifestyle diseases and mental health," Health Minister Katy Gallagher said.

A range of other important health initiatives will also be funded through the 2008-2009 Budget, including:

# Big Budget boost for ACT Health



- \$12.6 million over four years for better access to elective surgery;
- \$16.8 million over four years for up to 20 new inpatient beds at TCH;
- \$10.5 million over four years for increased critical care capacity;
- \$4.2 million over four years to improve cancer treatment services;
- \$6.7 million for a new Cardiac Catheter Laboratory;
- \$1.2 million for a public Sleep Studies Laboratory;
- \$4.2 million over four years to enhanced aged-care specific health services;
- \$579,000 investment over four years to boost Palliative care services;
- \$1.3 million for a new Skills Development Centre;

Critical care capacity across ACT public hospitals is also set to increase, with a \$10.5 million investment over four years. This will provide two additional critical care network beds and provide a flexible mix of intensive care unit beds and high dependency unit beds dependent on demand.

The 2008-09 Budget also provides \$4.2 million, over four years, to increase and improve cancer treatment services. This funding will provide an additional three beds and expand outpatient services for cancer treatment, as well as increase the psycho-social supports available to people who have been diagnosed with cancer.

Over \$6.7 million dollars has also been provided for a second Cardiac Catheter laboratory at the Canberra Hospital. This will ensure that future interventional cardiology needs can be met.

"Palliative care services have also been strengthened, with a \$579,000 investment over four years for two new positions to enhance the provision of current palliative care services," Ms Gallagher said.

"This will specifically target the needs of people living in residential aged care facilities.

"The capacity of ACT Health to meet current and anticipated workforce shortages will also be strengthened through the provision of forward design funding for a Skills Development Centre at a cost of \$1.3 million. This will enable ACT Health to meet the training and research needs of staff now and into the future."

# Corrections Health Program in the ACT

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) is currently establishing its first prison and replacing the Quamby Youth Detention Centre. The construction of the Alexander Maconochie Centre is planned to replace both the Belconnen Remand Centre and the Symonston Temporary Remand Centre and Quamby will be replaced with the construction of the new Youth Justice Centre (Bimberi) at Gungahlin adjacent to Mitchell. Both centres will be commissioned this year. ACT Health's Corrections Health Program currently co-ordinates the provision of health services to adults on remand in the Belconnen Remand Centre, the Symonston Temporary Remand Centre and to children and young people on committal or remand in the Quamby Youth Detention Centre (Quamby).

When completed the Alexander Maconochie Centre will accommodate the full spectrum of prisoners of both genders, indigenous and non-indigenous, from a range of age groups. Prisoners will include those of non-English speaking background, people with disabilities and those with chronic, acute and multiple health conditions. Bimberi will house children and young people on committal or remand. At any one time it will accommodate young people, both males and females, aged between 10 and 18 years.

In order to ensure that the differences in the clinical population, developmental and welfare needs of children and young people were clearly articulated two service plans have been developed; the Children's and Young People's Justice Health Services Plan 2008-2012 and the Adult Corrections Health Services Plan 2008-2012.

ACT Health's Corrections Health Program is working in partnership with the Department of Justice and Community Services, Department of Disability, Housing and Community services - Office of Child, Youth and Family Services, and other key stakeholders to ensure a seamless transition of current health services into the new centres.

The function of the Corrections Health Program is to sustain and improve the health of remandees, prisoners, children and young people in detention by providing and coordinating effective, holistic and efficient health services.

The Corrections Health Program will run in the context of the *Health Act 1993*, the *Human Rights Act 2004* and the *Children and Young People Act 1999* and the provision of health services to the Alexander Maconochie Centre is defined within the *Corrections Management Act 2007*.

# PROJECT MANAGEMENT NEWS – our 2007/2008 performance

As we have reached the end of the 2007/2008 financial year it is time to look back and evaluate our performance over the past twelve months. 2007/2008 has been a busy year that has seen the introduction of a new project management system across the portfolio, the publication of the project management policy and handbook, the launch of a complementary website, the commencement of regular reporting to Portfolio Executive on major projects, and the establishment of the Project Managers' Network, just to mention a few significant issues.

Another important milestone was the selection of an accredited training provider to deliver project management courses for staff, following an open tendering process in early 2007. McMillan Staff Development, our partners in education since 2004, were awarded the contract in July 2007. The idea behind selecting just one provider to deliver the training was to encourage and facilitate the use of a standard, universally suitable project management methodology across the portfolio, with the long-term aim of improving performance.

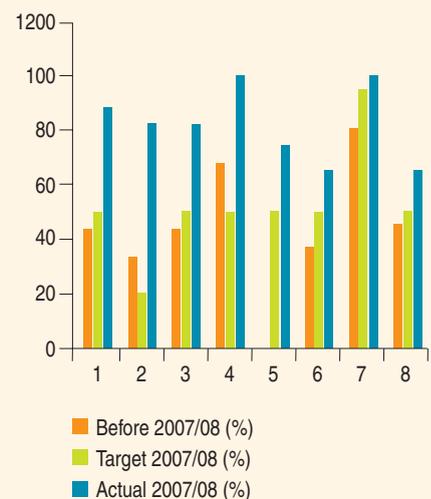
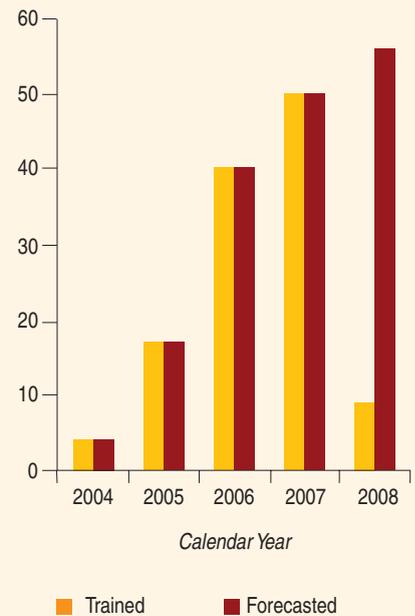
It is pleasing to report that our plans have worked. There has been a significant increase in the number of staff undertaking accredited project management training over the past 12 months and consequently in the uptake of the preferred methodology by new ACT Health projects.

There is also good news regarding our performance in other priority areas. In 2007/2008 we have focused our attention on ensuring that all new projects had a project manager and project sponsor nominated and a clear scope document drafted prior to project start-up. Experience shows that these three ingredients (dedicated project manager, committed project sponsor, agreed scope document) are strong predictors of future success regardless of the topic, size, cost or complexity of a project.

We have set our targets high in these areas, expecting 95% of new projects to have a nominated project manager and project sponsor, and at least 50% to have a negotiated scope document, before project commencement. We have managed to surpass these targets and all projects that commenced in the 2007/2008 financial year have complied with both of these criteria (100%).

We achieved considerable improvement in other performance areas as well, as indicated on the graphs to the right. In particular we have made good progress in terms of budget planning and risk management for new projects. Thanks should go to all who have contributed to these excellent results.

**If you have any questions or comments please contact the Project Management Office on (02) 6205-0900 or at [klara.soos@act.gov.au](mailto:klara.soos@act.gov.au) or access the Project Management website through the ACT Health Intranet / Business Support / Project Management or <http://cid/c/healthintranet?a=da&did=5081609>**



## ACT Health launches *'Help stop the spread of flu'* campaign

Three simple steps could help prevent the spread of 'flu and colds this winter, ACT Health Minister, Katy Gallagher MLA said in announcing the start of a *Help stop the spread of 'flu* Campaign.

Ms Gallagher said the campaign would appear as television and radio advertisements.

She said the ACT Health initiative would include wide-ranging public information aimed at promoting simple hygiene practices as a means of reducing the spread of 'flu and other winter illnesses.

"The message; 'cover your nose and mouth when you sneeze or cough, dispose of dirty tissues in a bin and wash your hands afterwards' will be promoted through the local media," Ms Gallagher said.

"Last year we had close on 400 notified cases of influenza, compared to 80 the year before. In part, this sharp increase was due to an outbreak amongst visiting schoolchildren from Queensland, but the local numbers were still significantly higher.

"Our public hospital emergency departments were also inundated with people presenting with influenza, gastroenteritis, cough and cold symptoms.

"Of course, we are keen to reduce the pressure this places on our emergency departments, but we also want to promote this as a general health message.

"If people follow these simple steps, the spreading of germs in the workplace and at home will be reduced—and that has to be a good thing for all concerned."

**For further information visit:**  
[www.health.act.gov.au](http://www.health.act.gov.au)



## Celebrating Midwives & N

Over 400 nurses and midwives attended the Rydges Lakeside Hotel recently to celebrate International Midwives and Nurses Week 2008. One of the highlights of the week was the large number of nominations (over 80) - congratulations to all nominees.

**ACT Midwife of the Year 2008** was awarded to Carolyn Patterson. Carolyn is from the Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service, in particular, within the Aboriginal Midwifery Access Program.

The women that Carolyn cares for often have significant psychosocial and socio-economic difficulties and Carolyn's skill in establishing rapport, openness and trust has led to an increased willingness for these women to access the midwifery services available to them.

Carolyn is an excellent midwife who demonstrates not only clinical excellence but empathy and a deep understanding of the cultural and health needs of indigenous Australian women.

**ACT Nurse of the Year 2008** was awarded to Barbara Harvie of Renal Services at Canberra Hospital. Barbara is the renal outpatient Clinical Nurse Consultant, an authorised Nurse Practitioner and leads a team of nursing experts in the management of chronic kidney disease.

For over 20 years, Barbara has provided strong leadership in a diverse range of settings and she is recognised locally and nationally for her expertise in kidney disease.

## 2008 ACT Quality in Health Care Awards

The Quality in Healthcare Awards aim to recognise leadership and innovation in patient safety and quality of care, and publicly honour innovations that improve the delivery of safe quality care within the ACT health care system. The awards are presented in the following categories: safety; access and efficiency; innovative models of care; consumer participation; and systems support.

The Awards are open to individuals or teams working in health, or studying a health related field in the ACT. Recognition is also given to winning student and private sector entrants.

In 2007, the overall winning project, a collaborative effort from The Canberra Hospital and Calvary Health Care ACT, titled "Early Recognition of the Deteriorating Patient", was rewarded with a handmade trophy. Students from the University of Canberra were also honoured for their winning project, "A Critical Pathway: Multidisciplinary Approach to Urinary Incontinence Post Stroke".

Winners of each category will receive trophies at an Awards presentation dinner to be held on 17 November 2008 at the Federal Golf Club.

ACT Nurse of the Year Barbara Harvie  
(left) celebrates her award



Barbara has raised the profile of professional nursing in the ACT and continues to promote the role of nursing through ongoing education and research and by her participation on local and national committees.

Winners in other categories during Midwives and Nurses Week included:

- **Clinical Excellence:** Joanne Costuna - Jindalee Aged Care
- **Enrolled Nurse Excellence:** Josephine Green - Maternity Unit, Calvary John James Hospital
- **Management Excellence:** Margaret Stuart - Aged Care and Rehabilitation Service
- **Research Excellence:** Heather McKay - Patient Safety and Quality Unit
- **Assistance in Nursing Excellence:** Camille Cheater - Villaggio Sant' Antonio Aged Care
- **Education Excellence:** Jon Darvill - Paediatric Services, The Canberra Hospital
- **Team Excellence:** Sharon Chambers; Virginia Bird; Sarah Majeed; Michelle Ace - Gastroenterology and Hepatology Unit, Canberra Hospital

## Reviews of drug services

Reports from two recent alcohol and other drug reviews have now been completed.

The first was a review of the ACT Alcohol and Other Drug Service System completed by Siggins Miller Consultants.

The review identified priority areas for investing resources in the coming years in order to ensure the system has the capacity to meet the needs of individuals, families and the community in the ACT.

A copy of the report has been made publicly available and ACT Health has undertaken to consult with key stakeholders over the coming months to seek comment on the report's findings.

You can download the full report, the summary report, & the ACT AOD sector profile at the following page:

<http://www.health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=da&did=10133064&pid=1206593605>.

Links to other AOD publications and the ACT AOD Sector website are also provided.

A broader review of the service system, subsequently led to a Clinical Review of the Inpatient Drug and Alcohol Detoxification facilities in the ACT led by Dr Adam Winstock. Dr Winstock is the Senior Staff Specialist Drug Health Services Sydney South West Area Health Services and Conjoint Senior Lecturer at the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC), New South Wales.

The review made three major recommendations:

- To increase the occupancy of the Woden inpatient Unit by admitting patients suitable for transfer from Canberra Hospital and broadening the scope of the unit to include routine admissions for assessment and stabilisation of complex clients.
- Enhancing the role of Arcadia House as a transitional care unit and improving linkages between the two units.
- The development and implementation of a common core assessment tool (CCAT).

**For a copy of the Winstock report contact John.Didlick@act.gov.au**

# ALLIED HEALTH

## Health and Aged Care Symposium

Earlier this year Community Health and the Aged Care and Rehabilitation Service held its first dedicated Allied Health Symposium titled 'Turning Vision into Reality'.

This symposium showcased local projects carried out by CH & ACRS staff. It highlighted some of the progress that has been made since the publication of the Community Health & Aged Care & Rehabilitation Service Vision document titled 'Allied Health 2006 and Beyond: Turning Vision into Reality'.

It was an intensive but fun and interesting afternoon with a great variety of presentations from across a range of Allied Health disciplines.

Many of the presentations were relevant across disciplines- e.g: Rachel Bacon described an excellent holistic approach to providing clinical placements for students; Annegret Ludwig's amazing 'TAP into Physiotherapy' project has reduced client waiting times to an average of only 2 weeks; Corinne Coulter and Jeanie Weber identified how group classes for clients can not only be more time and cost efficient but also result in excellent clinical outcomes; and Therese Bowen's Footsure Health Promotion program presentation was so engaging that she is now fighting off multidisciplinary collaborators!

Irmina Nahon, the Community Health Allied Health Professional of the Year, inspired and motivated everyone with a captivating and funny presentation on how she fell into research and accidentally became a world expert in her field of continence!

In other presentations Lynne Prentice and Leah Cain provided accessible advice for parents of fussy eaters; Sarah Lock and Fiona Gunn improved communication and life for the partners of people with aphasia (difficulty in speaking or understanding words, usually following a stroke); and Margaret Jacobs and Margot Green discussed a practical method of ensuring that consistent best practice is applied by all disciplines providing tracheostomy care to clients. Last, but by no means least, Michelle Gray and Georgie Ashton took attendees into the often unfamiliar but important territory of safe management of Alcohol and Drug affected clients.

Feedback on the Symposium was very positive, with 98% of evaluations rating the afternoon as either good or excellent. This was a tremendous opportunity to showcase some of the great projects run by clinicians in allied health.

Due to the success of this symposium we have decided to hold a second Community Health and ACRS Allied Health Symposium on 16<sup>th</sup> October this year.

**For more information please contact [cathy.watson@act.gov.au](mailto:cathy.watson@act.gov.au)**

## CIT students graduate in ALLIED HEALTH

The first students to complete a Certificate IV level qualification in Allied Health Assistance graduated from the Canberra Institute of Technology earlier this year. Seventeen students were awarded a Certificate IV in Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy or Speech Pathology Assistance. They commenced study in the two year part-time course in 2005. This is the first time that formal training has been offered for Allied Health Assistants in the ACT. The training program was developed as a result of a strong collaboration between CIT, ACT Health and the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services, Therapy ACT division.

For ACT Health and Therapy ACT, as the main local employers of Allied Health Assistants, the availability of relevant, locally-based training was imperative in order to provide a knowledgeable, skilled and adaptable workforce for the future. Partnering with CIT allowed those workforce needs to be translated into education outcomes, in the form of the Certificate IV qualification.

Allied Health Assistants work under the supervision of an Allied Health Professional, but are able to undertake some of the less complex clinical duties so that the Allied Health professional staff can utilise their skills and expertise for more complex issues. In this way optimal use can be made of the skills of both professionals and assistants, at a time when allied health services are in high demand due to the rise in chronic and complex disease and the ageing of our population.

To meet the range of needs in areas such as rehabilitation and aged care, the qualification is being offered this year with combinations of skill sets, for example, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy, with twenty-eight students currently enrolled. In addition, Nutrition and Podiatry Assistant training is planned to commence later this year.

# ALLIED HEALTH

There are many opportunities for podiatrists in ACT Health



## What is Podiatry?

**P**odiatry is the health profession that deals with conditions affecting the human foot. Podiatrists are educated to diagnose and treat a wide range of foot pathologies. It is a very practical profession that regularly involves hands on treatment or assessment and visual analysis of gait, lower limb alignment and foot function.

Most of the care a podiatrist provides for a patient involves one or more of the following:

- Relief of pain from foot deformities, injuries and wounds.
- Prescription and provision of foot orthoses (specialist insoles) to re-align foot or leg imbalances.
- Use of podiatric instruments and techniques including minor surgery involving local anaesthesia.
- Preventative care for people with conditions that may affect their foot health such as patients with diabetes, poor circulation and various forms of arthritis.

Podiatrists can administer local anaesthesia to relieve pain and to perform minor surgical procedures for ingrown toenails.

Podiatrists provide education regarding foot health and self care techniques as well as prevention of foot pathology. This is an important component of individual care and may also occur on a larger scale, either to specific target groups or as a community project.

Podiatrists therefore can play a big part in keeping people mobile and pain free, and like other health professionals, often make

a significant difference to quality of life.

### Thinking of a Career in Podiatry?

If you're a good communicator and enjoy working with people, then Podiatry could be the career for you. Many podiatry students chose their career following their own experience as a podiatry patient.

Podiatrists are in great demand. They can work in a variety of settings including public health services, private practice, high risk foot clinics, residential aged care facilities, sports medicine clinics, management and research. An advantage of podiatry is that it can provide flexible working conditions.

In universities, a small number of Podiatrists may pursue a career in education and/or research.

Podiatry continues to be a developing profession enhancing patient mobility and quality of life.

### Extended Scope of Practice

Podiatric surgical qualifications are a post-graduate speciality of the podiatric profession. Podiatric Surgeons are qualified to perform orthopaedic work and reconstructive plastic surgery on the feet. A podiatrist must have completed an extensive training program through the Fellowship of the Australasian College of Podiatric Surgeons, to be qualified in this speciality.

### Training and Qualifications

In Australia, qualification as a podiatrist requires completion of a degree course. This involves theoretical, practical and clinical placement components that give students a firm knowledge of the diagnostic and treatment techniques.

Currently there are six Universities offering a bachelor degree in podiatry.

- La Trobe University, Melbourne.
- University of South Australia, Adelaide.
- Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane.
- University of Newcastle, Newcastle.
- University of Western Australia, Perth.
- Charles Sturt University, Albury.

Each university can provide details about courses, fees and scholarships available.

All podiatrists must maintain current registration with a relevant state/ territory Podiatrists Registration Board before they are able to practice.

### ACT Health podiatry clinics

ACT Health offers opportunities for podiatrists in community health and hospital settings.

Community Health podiatry clinics are located in multiple locations across the ACT.

The high-risk podiatry clinic located at the Canberra Hospital treats both inpatients and outpatients according to high-risk clinical criteria.

If you are interested in working for ACT Health, please contact:

Kerryn Maher, ACT Health Podiatry Lead Professional on 62079977, or email at [pod@act.gov.au](mailto:pod@act.gov.au)

**You can obtain further information on employment opportunities with ACT Health via the website:**

**[www.health.act.gov.au](http://www.health.act.gov.au)**

# MENTAL HEALTH

## ACT LEADS NATION IN MENTAL HEALTH

The ACT is leading the nation in mental health reform and investment according to a new national report showing the ACT has gone from having the lowest per-capita spending on mental health in Australia to the second highest. Progressive investment from the ACT Government has seen funding to mental health increase from \$27.4m in 2001-02 to \$57.4 in 2007-08, an increase of 109%.

"This report confirms the ACT leads the nation in mental health investment, mental health reform, consumer participation and funding to the community sector," said Health Minister Katy Gallagher.

"The ACT Government's additional funding has provided enhanced services across inpatient services, community mental health services, child and adolescent services, older person's mental health services and the non-government sector.

"It also provides for community education, mental health promotion and prevention, supported accommodation, psychosocial rehabilitation and support, as well as a range of acute services," Ms Gallagher said.

The report provides a twelve-year view of the trends and performance of Mental Health Services at the national, state and territory levels over the period of 1993 to 2005.

Over the 12 year period covered in the report to the end of 2004-05, the ACT had the most dramatic overall increase in funding of any jurisdiction of 90.8%.

"This report publicises the significant efforts that ACT Health and non-Government providers have made over the past six years to improve the capacity and quality of the mental health system," Ms. Gallagher said.

"Nonetheless, I am conscious that many mentally ill people in our community, and their carers, still require greater support, and the Government is committed to further investment and reform in this area."

# HEALTH PROTECTION

## ACT Immunisation Strategy

One of the key objectives of the ACT Immunisation Strategy 2007-2010 is to increase the provision of early childhood immunisation coverage in the ACT through general practice. In March 2005 Maternal and Child Health (MACH) Nurses of ACT Health were administering approximately 61.5% of childhood immunisations per month with general practice undertaking 37.5% and the remaining 1% by public and private hospitals and Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service.

There has been a significant shift in childhood immunisation provision to general practice since early 2005. In March 2008 general practices in the ACT administered approximately 57.5% of childhood immunisations with ACT Health MACH Nurses administering 42% of immunisations to children aged under seven years of age.

This shift has enabled MACH to shift resources and service priorities to activities such as supporting parents in adjusting to a new baby and increasing the number of New Parent Groups across the Territory. It has also enabled a focus on supporting vulnerable families in the community to care for their infants with additional support, such as sustained home visiting for the first 12 months of the infant's life.

For general practice this has ensured parents with small children are presenting to their general practitioner from an early age and developing a relationship with their primary health care provider at a time when they are well. Further, the significant increase of Nurses in General Practice in the

ACT and a specific MBS item number pertaining to immunisation has facilitated this transition.

The ACT Health Protection Service, MACH Nurses and the ACT Division of General Practice have worked collaboratively throughout this period to ensure that consistent messages about immunisation are being passed onto consumers. This shift to GP based immunisation has been achieved with no overall decrease in childhood immunisation coverage in the Territory.

The latest data on childhood immunisation coverage in the ACT is outlined in **Table 1**.

**Table 1** - Coverage data provided by the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register

Age Group	Percentage of Children in age group fully immunised (ACT)	Percentage of children in age group fully immunised (National)
12 to 15 months	93.90	91.29
24 to 27 months	93.94	92.83
72 to 75 months	90.57	88.19

**\* does not include immunisation against varicella, pneumococcal and meningococcal C**

# INTERPROFESSIONAL LEARNING

## Interprofessional Learning (IPL) Project

### INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

The ACT Health IPL Project aims to promote a culture of interprofessional working across the health service. In order to do this, health professionals need to be certain of what is meant by interprofessional working, what behaviours illustrate interprofessional practice and how this applies to their working environment.

To clarify these issues and to nurture champions and leaders of interprofessional practice within ACT Health, the IPL coordinator is facilitating workshops on interprofessional practice.

A keen group of interprofessional champions enjoyed a day-long workshop recently which benefited from the international interprofessional network through the facilitation of Helena Low from the UK. Helena has a great wealth of knowledge and experience in teaching IPL to qualified health professionals, and ACT Health was able to share her knowledge and resources in two intense days of workshops. Feedback from participants indicated that these workshops were fun as well as practical.

All participants appreciated the opportunity to network and find out more about the organisation in which they work. Several participants commented on how, before the workshop, they hadn't realised how large and complex ACT Health was, and how many different professional roles there were.

As a result of these workshops about twenty different IPL initiatives are being



Attendees at the Helena Low workshop

instigated across ACT Health. These initiatives seek to build on current practice, roles and responsibilities to optimise the interprofessional opportunities within the health service.

Further workshops are being planned and the IPL coordinator is always pleased to facilitate IPL workshops on request across ACT.

### COMMUNITY OF INTERPROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The IPL research team (see last edition of Healthy Territory for details) are seeking an opportunity to contribute to the knowledge base and research resources within ACT Health. Look out for flyers detailing the newly launched Community of Interprofessional Practice (CoIPP).

CoIPP sessions will be held on a variety of topics to stimulate discussion, sharing of information and teaching of research skills. All are welcome to these sessions where IPL 'success stories' will be shared and barriers and enablers of interprofessional working explored. The IPL team welcomes suggested topics, venues and formats for these sessions. If you are not sure what IPL is all about come along and ask.

#### Contact:

**Judy Stone, [judy.stone@act.gov.au](mailto:judy.stone@act.gov.au) or phone: 6205 3058**

# UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA

## UC researcher discovers key to combating Ross River Virus

Relief is in sight for sufferers of the debilitating arthritis associated with Ross River Virus following a major breakthrough by University of Canberra researchers.

Virologist Professor Suresh Mahalingam and University of Canberra colleagues (Dr Brett Lidbury and Dr Rulli Nestor) have identified the cell and proteins

behind the arthritic inflammation caused by Ross River Virus.

Ross River Virus, a mosquito borne viral disease, is the number one virus in Australia and can cause a debilitating arthritic inflammation which can last for between three and six months.

Ross River Virus is also closely associated to the viral disease Chikungunya which

in recent years has infected six million people in India and more than 300,000 cases in the French territories of the Western Indian Ocean.

An outbreak of the virus was recently reported in Italy with 200 people affected. This is the first case of an epidemic of a tropical disease in a developed, European country.

Professor Mahalingam said proteins produced by macrophages, a cell of the immune system, are responsible for attacking the tissue and causing arthritic inflammation and tissue damage.

"The good news is that we have been able to determine through this research that there is a drug which is currently available commercially that can be used to combat the severity of disease.

"You can't eliminate the possibility of contracting the virus however this will greatly reduce its severity," said Professor Mahalingam.

"I have been researching this virus for four years and this discovery could lead to the development of anti-viral drugs. My research in this area aims to discover new treatments and a clearer understanding of this disease. This research is especially important to Australia where Ross River Virus is a major problem," said Professor Mahalingam.

Professor Mahalingam believes this discovery has worldwide implications as infection with a number of viruses such as HIV, influenza virus, rubella virus, hepatitis viruses, Epstein-Barr virus and dengue virus can lead to arthritis. The research is featured as the cover story in the prestigious Journal of Infectious Diseases.

## STUDENTS UNITE to promote rural health

Two University of Canberra health students have won a national award for their work to promote rural health. Pharmacy student Nick Knowles and physiotherapy student Aleem Khalfan were given the \$2,500 Rural Health Workforce Australia Award for outstanding contribution to a Rural Health Club for their work in establishing a club on campus as part of the National Rural Health Students' Network.

CRANC (the Canberra Rural Allied Health and Nursing Collective) is one of 25 university branches of the network and has members from the allied health and nursing cohorts at the University.

"We won the award because they appreciated how quickly we managed to get the club up and running," Mr Knowles said.

CRANC works to promote health careers in rural communities and, with financial support from the National Rural Health Network, helps fund opportunities for University of Canberra students to get work experience in remote and regional areas.



Pharmacy student Nick Knowles and physiotherapy student Aleem Khalfan show off their award

It provides an opportunity for University of Canberra health students to establish a network of students with similar interests.

Mr Knowles said due its close alliance with the ANU Rural Medical Society CRANC was "unique" among rural health clubs in being able to bring together such a breadth of health disciplines.

"Canberra probably leads the way in inter-professional activities," he said.

# UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA

## Students combine with seniors for a great day out

University of Canberra Sports Management students spent six weeks preparing over 100 seniors for a sports carnival with a difference. The annual Canberra Seniors Sports carnival is hosted by the YMCA and is part of National Heart Week.

University of Canberra students spent at least one hour every week assisting them in practising the events including hot potato, seated volleyball, javelin, cannonball and relays.

Nick Harvey, Alarna Nightingale, Lauren Ghirardello, Nikita Hellmuth and Edwina Bone spent time training a group of seniors known as the 'Angels' from the Goodwin retirement home.

The students were amazed at how involved the seniors were in the process. "They were always excited to see us and really got involved in all the activities.

"One of the real benefits along with the exercise was the fact that it gave them an opportunity to get out and about," according to Edwina Bone.

Manager of the YMCA's Community Health Unit Helen Palethorpe, said the senior participants were role-models for all ages to become physically active.

"They are inspirational," she said. "They are all aged between 80 and 100, yet they are prepared to come out today and get involved in competition."

In 2006 the YMCA and the University of Canberra developed a plan to involve second year Sports Science students and make the event and issues surrounding it a part of their curriculum.



The program has proven to be a benefit for both students and competitors. It has provided a practical application of the physiology of exercise and the functional capacity of ageing people.

It is expected that the link between students and the seniors will continue as the participation in a team supported by young people can provide a strong sense of "belonging" and provide a social connection that is crucial for good mental health.

The seniors were also entertained during the day by the U3A choir with medals presented to the winning participants by former Olympians Petria Thomas and Rob DeCastella.

Lake Ginninderra retirement home was named as the overall winner.

UC students out and about with some of the ACT's senior citizens

# OTHER HEALTH NEWS

## ACT Division of General Practice– Home medicine review

The ACT Division of General Practice (ACTDGP) recently hosted a Home Medicine Review (refer to box 1) education evening, with more than 70 in attendance. This included pharmacists from community pharmacy, hospital pharmacy, ACT Health, Department of Health & Ageing and Universities from the ACT and surrounding region. The aim of the evening was to bring together pharmacists accredited to conduct HMRs, those currently undertaking the accreditation process and pharmacists interested in HMR to further their education and understanding of the HMR process. HMR's provide a partnership between GPs and pharmacists, in caring for their patients, by providing a process where they can review a patient's medication use in the home.

The evening was presented by Carlene Smith, Manager of the Medication Management Review Program at The Pharmacy Guild of Australia (NSW Branch) and covered the basic clinical aspects of Alzheimer's disease and how a HMR can benefit patients.

The take home message for the evening was that a HMR can assist in the ongoing support and care for patients with Alzheimer's disease. This is beneficial to the patient as after diagnosis, the patients may be using numerous medications to treat various behavioral symptoms, and is also a way of monitoring compliance issues and providing adequate carer support strategies.

Sarah Haltiner, HMR Facilitator at the ACTDGP organises topic specific events monthly which are open to all pharmacists. The events are accredited by The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points are awarded to participating pharmacists. In addition several larger joint HMR education events are organized and involve GPs, Practice Nurses and other Health Care Professionals working in a collaborative environment.

**For more information on HMR please contact Sarah Haltiner at the ACT Division of General Practice on 6287 8099 or email [s.haltiner@actdgp.asn.au](mailto:s.haltiner@actdgp.asn.au)**



### BOX 1. WHAT IS A HMR?

A HMR is a service provided to patients living at home in the community with the goal to maximise the benefit from their medications. This is accomplished through a team approach involving the patients' GP, the preferred community pharmacy and other relevant members of the healthcare team, with the patient as the central focus. In cooperation with the patient, and by referral from a GP, the accredited pharmacist visits the patient at home, reviews their medication(s) and provides the GP with a report. The GP and patient then agree on a medication management plan.

# CONFERENCE DIARY

<p><b>Turning Vision into Reality - October 2008 Allied Health Symposium</b></p>	<p>Community Health and Aged Care and Rehabilitation Service Allied Health Symposiums offer staff the opportunity to present their projects and learn about other Allied Health projects.</p> <p>Yes - Community Health and Aged Care and Rehabilitation Service have decided to hold a second symposium this year! This is because we were unable to hold an Allied Health Symposium in 2007 and the March Symposium was so successful.</p> <p>We will maintain the theme of the first symposium: 'Turning Vision into Reality'</p>	<p><b>Next Community Health and Aged Care &amp; Rehabilitation Allied Health Symposium</b></p> <p><b>12.30-4.30pm 16th October 2008</b></p> <p><b>Centre for Teaching &amp; Learning, 51 Freemantle Drive Stirling</b></p>
<p><b>Advancing Asthma Where? Australian Asthma Conference   20-21 October 2008</b></p>	<p>Asthma Foundation NSW is pleased to invite you to attend the 2008 Australian Asthma Conference from 20-21 October 2008.</p> <p>This forward looking event will be held in Sydney at the Australian Technology Park. You can register an expression of interest and find out more about the program at the conference website – <a href="http://www.asthmaconference2008.com">www.asthmaconference2008.com</a>.</p> <p>We look forward to bringing together a wide cross section of people connected with asthma -consumers, health professionals, scientists and researchers, policy makers from State and Federal Governments and Asthma Foundations of Australia staff – to review the changing world of asthma in our nation, and developing ideas and actions which will influence and inform future asthma agendas.</p> <p>Please mark these dates in your diary, visit the conference website, and forward this email onto your colleagues and friends and family.</p>	<p><b>For any queries email <a href="mailto:asthma2008@tourhosts.com.au">asthma2008@tourhosts.com.au</a>.</b></p> <p><b>We look forward to welcoming you to Sydney!</b></p>

## Feedback

Healthy Territory is ACT Health's newsletter for people providing healthcare and health related services across the ACT. Healthy Territory tells what is happening at the policy and planning level, and shares information about key issues, directions and events within the ACT health system.

Contributions, comments and any feedback are gratefully accepted from anyone working in our health sector. Healthy Territory is for all ACT healthcare providers, so have your say and voice your ideas, opinions and criticisms.

Contact: Kath Denmead  
phone (02) 6205 0897  
fax (02) 6244 4297  
email [kath.denmead@act.gov.au](mailto:kath.denmead@act.gov.au)



Authorised by Natalie Driver  
Communications and Marketing  
for ACT Health

ACT Health  
GPO Box 825  
Canberra City ACT 2601

web [www.health.act.gov.au](http://www.health.act.gov.au)

© ACT Government 2008