

The National Report

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Are We Listening? ACSA National Conference - Sydney 12-16 September

Register now to take advantage of the early-bird and group rates.

The *Cost of Implementing Personal Health Budgets Discussion Paper* prepared by researchers at the PSSRU has just been released in the UK and is a major contribution to the UK Health and aged care reform process.

ACSA's Keynote speaker, David Behan who is Director General of Social Care in the UK Department of Health will be able to brief conference delegates on this important report and other changes. The report is available at

http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_128368.pdf

Getting There

A number of airlines and hotels have had fare sales over recent weeks, and there were still some available when National Report checked this week. So do yourself a favour- go online and check out deals. You might be able to send two delegates on the travel savings!

Registration details at www.agedcare.org.au Register now to take advantage of the early-bird and group rates.

Productivity Commission Final Report Date

The Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, Mark Butler has advised that he will be releasing the final report of the Productivity Commission (PC) on Monday 8 August. He will then travel around the country to discuss and listen to different points of view on the proposed reforms.

ACSA will produce an immediate response to the media, and summary to members of what it means in a special edition National Report. ACSA will also be involved in the response from the National Aged Care Alliance (NACA). A more detailed analysis will appear in the Spring Issue (59) of Agendas, due out at the end of August.

ACSA Staff Changes

ACSA Deputy CEO, Pat Sparrow is leaving after 10 years to take up a newly created role of Director, Aged Care Reform Engagement with COTA to oversee community and consumer engagement with the aged care reform process over the next 12 months.

The role aims to ensure that consumer and community views are considered by provider, union and professional organisations engaged in the reform process flowing from the release of the PC final report.

Pat has been at ACSA since 2001 and has been responsible for policy development across community and residential care. In recent years she managed the image campaign (Kevin 87) and was the executive officer of the Campaign for the Care of Older Australians (CCOA) which developed 'The Grand Plan'.

ACSA will continue to work with Pat in her new role, but we will miss her enthusiasm, commitment and collegiate approach with the sector.

David Kemp will be working as a part-time consultant with the ACSA National Office on PC reform and other policy areas. David has considerable knowledge and expertise in aged care. He was an Assistant State Manager of DOHA in South Australia, with responsibility for aged and community care funding and regulation. He is currently Advisor to the CEOs of ECH, Eldercare and Resthaven.

David will provide strategic and policy advice during the PC reform process.

ACSA will soon advertise a senior policy position in Canberra.

Fair Work Australia Equal Remuneration Case

The Federal Government's submission, made to Fair Work Australia's Equal Remuneration Case says the Government will "meet its responsibilities and provide fair and appropriate (wage) supplementation, in consultation with stakeholders and taking into account the fiscal implications and opportunities for reforms in the SACS sector... within the constrained fiscal environment."

It says "all Governments will need to work with the sector to identify potential improvements in service delivery." The submission suggests a 30% wage rise would increase the annual wages bill by between \$1.25billion and \$1.5billion. It also questions if the gender arguments of the wages application have been sufficiently argued. A copy of the submission is available at: http://www.fwa.gov.au/sites/remuneration/submissions/AustGovt_Submission_08-Jul-11.pdf

CPI Figures for June 2011

The All Groups CPI rose 0.9% in the June quarter 2011, compared with a rise of 1.6% in the March quarter 2011. It rose 3.6% through the year to the June quarter 2011, compared with a rise of 3.3% through the year to the March quarter 2011.

The most significant price rises this quarter were for fruit (+26.9%), automotive fuel (+4.0%), hospital and medical services (+3.4%), furniture (+6.0%), deposit and loan facilities (+2.1%) and rents (+1.1%).

The most significant offsetting price falls were for vegetables (-10.3%), audio, visual and computing equipment (-6.3%), electricity (-1.5%), domestic holiday travel and accommodation (-1.5%), milk (-4.6%) and toiletries and personal care products (-2.3%).

The ABS said that the impact of the floods and cyclone Yasi, cannot be readily quantified but that any impact on consumer prices is reflected in the data.

Contingence Aids Payment Scheme Variation 2011 (No. 4) - National Health Act 1953 - F2011L01529

Minister Butler has tabled these variations covering amendments to the Scheme, consequential to the Human Services Legislation Amendment Act 2011. The changes reflect the previously announced new service delivery approach to significantly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. The Variations will commence retrospectively on 1 July 2011.

Home Modifications & Their Impact on Waged Care Substitution

This report examines and analyses the potential of home modification services to substitute for waged home care services.

The report reviews current literature on home modifications and care substitution followed by three case-based cost analyses in order to demonstrate cost impacts and to illustrate how the key variables affect home modification and waged home care costs. Report at: http://www.homemods.info/files/Homemods_v_WagedCare_final_29apr.pdf

Research to Boost Role of Nurse Practitioners in Aged Care

Older Australians' access to health services will be increased under a new research initiative to explore the role of nurse practitioners in the aged care sector. University of Canberra researchers, led by Professor Rachel Davey will evaluate 25 pilots designed to identify 'best practice' in the delivery of primary health care to aged care residents, under the DoHA funded project.

After An Emergency, Comprehensive Care Is Best For Older Patients

Older people rushed to the emergency room are more likely to be living at home up to a year later if they receive a comprehensive and age-appropriate evaluation during their hospital stay.

That's the finding of a new review of recent studies that evaluate the usefulness of a comprehensive geriatric assessment, or CGA. "Rather than a single assessment, a CGA is a thorough examination of an older person's medical background and psychological and functional capabilities, combined with a multidisciplinary treatment plan," said Graham Ellis, M.D., lead review author and a geriatrician at Monklands Hospital in Airdrie, Scotland.

The review appears in the latest issue of The Cochrane Library, a publication of the Cochrane Collaboration, an international organization that evaluates medical research. Systematic reviews draw evidence-based conclusions about medical practice after considering both the content and quality of existing medical trials on a topic.

The researchers suggest that the significant benefits of these assessments and the relatively low financial costs of specialist wards should encourage hospitals to reorganize their geriatric services.

Other researchers have found ways to use the comprehensive geriatric assessments outside of a hospital setting, which could save even more money in the long term. The GRACE project, administered and tested by Indiana University, the Regenstrief Institute and Wishard Health Services across the United States, connects older, low-income patients with a multidisciplinary geriatric health care team via home visits by a nurse practitioner and social worker.

The GRACE program has been shown to lower hospital admission rates and improve the quality of life even for older adults with multiple chronic diseases, said Steven Counsell, M.D., the program's lead researcher and a geriatric professor at Indiana University School of Medicine.

The Younger People with Disability in Residential Aged Care (YPIRAC) Program Report

YPIRAC is a 5-year program agreed by the Council of Australian Governments in 2006. It aims to reduce the number of younger people aged less than 65 years with disability living in residential aged care.

This AIHW report analyses the characteristics of its users. It is available at <http://www.aihw.gov.au>

Disability and Ageing: lifelong planning for a better future – Senate Inquiry Report

Senate Community Affairs References Committee, Parliament of Australia, released this report on 6 July.

The committee recommends that the government look to increase its support of existing innovative planning schemes undertaken by the non-government sector. In so doing, the committee also recommends the establishment of national guidelines to give clear direction on how these organisations might be constituted and how they should account for increased public funding. The committee envisages that these guidelines would also represent the beginning of an integrated and coordinated national approach to planning.

http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/clac_ctte/planning_options_people_ageing_with_disability_43/report/index.htm

Nursing and Allied Health Rural Locum Scheme (NAHRLS)

This Government funded scheme assists in the provision of locum back-fills to allow Nurses, Midwives and eligible Allied Health Professionals within rural and remote settings, the opportunity to leave their place of work, for up to 14 days, to attend CPD training activities. Health Services/organisations provide NAHRLS with the details of their locum back fill requirement and NAHRLS says it will:

1. Find a suitable 'like for like' locum back fill with no agency fees
2. Credential the locum
3. Organise and pay for all costs associated with the travel & accommodation of the locum to and from the designated location

Health Services/organisations cover the cost of a pre-determined, fixed rate of pay for the locum placement, with no agency fees. The NAHRLS will:

1. Pay the locum a daily incentive allowance
2. Pay the locum a daily meal allowance
3. Manage all pay-roll requirements for the locum on your behalf – paying the base rate and allowances
4. Invoice the Health Services/organisations on completion of the placement, for the base rate of pay only – no other chargers or fees incurred.

Health Services/organisations wishing to take advantage of this scheme should provide information about the locum requirement i.e. position to be filled, dates and location etc. Applications can be made either electronically via www.nahrls.com.au or by contacting the NAHRLS team on free-call 1300 NAHRLS.

Government Warning on Scammers Targeting Pensioners Following Carbon Price Announcement

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has issued an alert about a new scam where people purporting to be from the Government are asking pensioners for their

bank account details to supposedly transfer payments as part of the Government's carbon price household assistance package. A variation on the scam involves callers running a survey on the proposed carbon price and asking for personal and banking details. Initial reports show that the scammers are quoting a household assistance amount of \$5,000 and offer payment by direct deposit or cheque.

Anyone who is contacted by someone claiming to be from the Government and offering to transfer money in exchange for personal information, such as their bank account details, should contact the ACCC immediately.

Pensioners and recipients of government payments who want to find out more about the household assistance package should call 1800 057 590 or visit www.cleanenergyfuture.gov.au.

"People should be aware that the first payments to pensioners and families are not scheduled to be made until May and June next year," Minister for Families, Community Services, Housing and Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin said.

"When the increased payments start they will be automatic and pensioners and families will not need to apply or provide their bank account details."

Consumers can also keep up to date with the latest scams on the ACCC website, Scamwatch.gov.au, and can also sign up for regular email alerts. Report scams to Scamwatch ACCC Infocentre on 1300 795 995, or contact your local police.

Flu Season Peaking

The Influenza Specialist Group is warning that high rates of influenza outbreaks have been confirmed in QLD, SA and NSW. There is still time for most Australians, especially those in at-risk groups, to protect themselves and those around them.

The Australian Government's Communicable Diseases Surveillance data shows that reported cases of influenza – most notably the pandemic (H1N1) 2009 and influenza B – have risen by more than 200 percent since May 1, and is an indication that the peak flu season is now imminent in Australia.

The cold and flu season is also triggering a rapid drop in blood donors and blood stocks, prompting the call for new donors to roll up their sleeves and give blood. Nationally, the Blood Service only has three days' stock of the universal O-Negative blood type. To donate, contact the Blood Service on 13 14 95 or visit www.donateblood.com.au

New Look for National Ageing Research Institute (NARI)

The *New Look, New Directions* launch has been held to promote NARI's rebranding which involves a new logo, a new website and new partnerships.

NARI's new logo includes the institution's full name as well as the tag line *Bringing research to life*. The other major changes will include NARI's website which will be easier to navigate and include a new feature; an online payment portal, making it possible for donations to be made online.

Victorian Court Battle over Power of Attorney

Paul Komesaroff, a Professor of Medicine and Ethics at Monash University is fighting a court battle to continue administering the affairs of his elderly mother, despite her granting him those powers before being diagnosed with dementia.

The Age on 25 July reported that Komesaroff said the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) had failed to properly consult his 89 year old mother, about a bid by his sister to have an administrator appointed to manage her finances.

Legal documents executed before Mrs Komesaroff was diagnosed with dementia in 2005 and again afterwards in the presence of a neuropsychiatrist gave power to her three children to manage her affairs, with two of them to prevail after any disagreement.

Professor Komesaroff said appointing an administrator would be a violation of his mother's long-held wishes. He said the case raised broader concerns about representation of elderly people in the legal system, arguing that his mother was still able to express her wishes despite having some cognitive impairment.

Professor Komesaroff said VCAT had refused a bid for his mother to be legally represented, and he was concerned it would deem her as lacking legal competence on the basis of a single assessment by a geriatrician. The appointment of an administrator would also significantly reduce her savings.

Experts say competency can fluctuate for people with dementia, and assessment requires multiple approaches at different times.

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