

Welcome to the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network e-zine for 9 August 2010.

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## Network on Twitter

You can follow the Network and associated rural health sector news, views and events on Twitter or sign up and give us your news and views - just click on the Twitter icon below or visit our website [www.rgpn.org.nz](http://www.rgpn.org.nz)



## Network Conference 2011

### Conference 2011 update

The date is set, the venue secured and planning is well underway for the Network's 2011 annual conference in Wellington.

The city's Michael Fowler Centre will host rural general practices' annual showcase event from March 17 – 20 next year and the theme is "Family Matters", inspired by the urge to get back to the very roots of the Network's formation in the 1990s.

Conference committee members, headed by convenor Dr James Reid, have been meeting monthly since May to plan the programme, potential guest speakers, keynote sessions and social events.

Keen to build on the success of Christchurch 2010, which saw more than 320 general practitioners and others register and attend, there'll be some "very early bird" registration offers available so keep an eye on the Network's website [www.rgpn.org.nz](http://www.rgpn.org.nz) and the two-monthly Rural Networker or E-zine for further details. Start planning now so you can attend this important event on the rural general practice calendar.

If you would like to submit an abstract please register your interest initially with Network Communications Manager Rob Olsen: [rob@rgpn.org.nz](mailto:rob@rgpn.org.nz) or telephone 04 495 5887.

You can follow conference updates on Twitter too. Just visit our website [www.rgpn.org.nz](http://www.rgpn.org.nz)

## EOI PHO Consolidation survey update

Thanks to all those GPs who participated in the recent EOI PHO Consolidation survey circulated by the Network. We appreciate your efforts in taking the time to complete it amidst a busy schedule. The results are currently being analysed and will be circulated to you in the coming month.

## Shared services board confirmed

Health Minister Tony Ryall announced recently that a new deputy chair and six further directors have been appointed to the Board of the new shared services organisation, Health Benefits Limited.

The organisation has been created to help reduce the cost of DHB back office functions and harness the benefits of bulk purchasing, with estimated savings of up to \$700 million over several years.

[Read more](#)

## Nurse rallies to promote neurosurgery importance

Owaka woman Sandra Grant knows only too well the value of neurosurgery services in Dunedin. (ODT)

Mrs Grant, a former Christchurch-based nurse who helped patients recovering from brain injuries, also has two family members who had relied in the past on neurosurgery services at Dunedin Hospital.

[Read more](#)

## St John restructuring report to stay secret

Details of a planned management restructure by St John have been held back from public release because managers say it is a private matter. (Manawatu Standard)

The Manawatu Standard uncovered plans to merge St John Central and Midland regions by the end of the year. The management changes were revealed in an internal memo that was leaked to the newspaper.

[Read more](#)

## GP problem more chronic than acute

The shortage of GPs in Balclutha, which is likely to cause lengthy waits for patients, is symptomatic of the long-standing problem of attracting, and retaining, doctors in rural areas, a health administrator said.

Colleen Fenton, Balclutha General Practitioners Ltd practice manager, was responding to questions about an Otago Daily Times report in which Clutha Health First manager Ray Anton predicted some patients might have to wait up to seven days to see a doctor.

[Read more](#)

## Guidelines needed for unregulated health workers

Nurses want national guidelines on the use of unregulated health care workers who work in the community, including in general practices.

A professional nursing adviser with the New Zealand Nurses' Organisation (NZNO), Kate Weston says nurses support innovation in community health care but not at the expense of patient and professional safety.

[Read more](#)

The Network is interested in your thoughts. Email [rob@rgpn.org.nz](mailto:rob@rgpn.org.nz)

## Guild welcomes cough and cold medicines reclassification

The Pharmacy Guild of New Zealand (the Guild) has welcomed Medsafe's move to restrict the sale of cough and cold medicines containing the cough suppressant, dextromethorphan, and the decongestant, phenylephrine. (Scoop)

The medicines will be reclassified to pharmacy-only for children under 12 years of age.

These changes are in line with recommendations made to the Health Minister by the Medicines Classification Committee and Medsafe. They follow concerns about the safety of these medicines in children and are similar to changes being made or considered in other countries, such as Australia and the United Kingdom.

[Read more](#)

## New health board team to split responsibilities

A new executive leadership team takes the helm of the Nelson Marlborough District Health Board on October 1. (Nelson Mail)

Board chief executive John Peters told the board's disability support advisory committee that more than 80 people had applied for the new positions.

[Read more](#)

## ADHD care to transfer to GPs

Children with ADHD may soon be treated by their GPs rather than by hospital specialists, the Taranaki District Health Board says. (Taranaki Daily News)

The move is one of the first of a succession of Taranaki health services about to be shifted from expensive hospital-based care into the community.

[Read more](#)

## Computer housekeeping

The Wellington branch of PMAANZ invites practice managers to a presentation by IT consultant Matt Leahy on Computer Housekeeping.

The venue is Compass Health rooms, level 7, 195-201 Willis Street, Wellington, on Wednesday, August 11. Drinks and nibbles 6.30pm, presentation 7pm-8pm, PMAANZ branch meeting 8pm to 8.30pm. Non-members \$10. To RSVP email Bev Wong: [bev.wong@citygpps.co.nz](mailto:bev.wong@citygpps.co.nz) or fax 04 381 6160.

## Not a member? Join the Network!

The Network is the only nationwide membership-based organisation in New Zealand representing the interests of rural general practice.

Visit our [website](#) for additional information and an online application form or contact Rob Olsen on 04 495 5887.

## Successful providers announced

Thirty-one Maori health, disability and social service providers have successfully gained contracts through Te Ao Auahatanga Hauora Maori, the Maori Health Innovation Fund.

[Read more](#)

## Air ambulance trust faces uncertain future

A pioneering southern air ambulance and rescue trust might have reached its "use-by date", according to its chairman.

The Southern Region Lions Air Ambulance Trust will meet before the end of the year to discuss whether it continues to operate.

[Read more](#)

## District nurse thriving

Heather Tucker believes district nursing has come a long way from bathing old men and cleaning out the local nurse's car.

"That was nearly 35 years ago during my training days, but the job is very different now," she says.

[Read more](#)

## PHARMAC to work with hospitals on widened role

Consistent national access to medicines for patients and more effective use of DHB funding will be the aims of PHARMAC's involvement in funding hospital medicines and medical devices, Chief Executive Matthew Brougham says. (Scoop)

PHARMAC welcomes the wider role outlined recently by Health Minister Tony Ryall, Mr Brougham says.

[Read more](#)

## NZNO welcomes new chief nurse

The New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO) has welcomed the appointment of one of its former presidents, Jane O'Malley, as chief nurse. (Scoop)

The Ministry of Health's Deputy Director-General of Sector Capability and Innovation, Margie Apa, announced the appointment recently and Ms O'Malley, currently director of nursing and midwifery at West Coast District Health Board, will take up the position in late September.

Current NZNO president Nano Tunnicliff said Ms O'Malley would bring a range of strengths to the position, at a crucial time for nursing and the health sector.

[Read more](#)

## Nurse practitioner heads new college for community nurses

A nurse practitioner working in Katikati in the Bay of Plenty, Rosemary Minto, has been elected chairperson of the New Zealand Nurses Organisation's 2000-strong College of Primary Health Care Nurses. (Scoop)

The college, officially launched last month, includes practice, public health, district, sexual health, prison, school and rural nurses and nurses working for Maori and iwi health providers.

Ms Minto works as a nurse practitioner in adult family health in a rural general practice in Katikati and believes nurses working in the community should have a strong collective voice.

[Read more](#)