

Welcome to the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network e-zine for 8 March 2010.

In this issue • Nurses fear cutbacks put lives at risk • Search for GPs to get that much tougher • Bonding scheme for health grads expanded and much more...

Nurses fear cutbacks put lives at risk

Nelson Hospital nurses are so stressed they are writing to their district health board and have taken their frustrations to a forum. The Nelson Marlborough District Health Board has been told by Health Minister Tony Ryall to stop spending so much money because of its worsening deficit, but nurses are saying the constraints are putting patients' lives at risk.

(Nelson Mail)

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Search for GPs to get that much tougher

Attracting GPs to Taranaki will not get any easier with Australian employment laws soon to be relaxed, adding to the lure of the big money already on offer.

A bill to become law in April will change the rules around where overseas-trained doctors can work across the Tasman and could hamper moves to make access to healthcare easier for Kiwis.

(Taranaki Daily News)

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Bonding scheme for health grads expanded

The Government has expanded eligibility for its voluntary bonding scheme for health graduates working in hard-to-staff areas and specialties. Health Minister Tony Ryall said: "South Canterbury has been added to the list of hard to staff regions, and surgical nursing has been added to the list of hard to staff specialties which qualify for the scheme."

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Southland DHB's health targets performance

Southland District Health Board continued to make steady progress in the government's key priority health target areas during the second quarter of 2009/10.

Each of the 2009/10 health targets reflects a priority health area for the government. The targets focus on improving the health sector's performance, and ensuring the health and disability system is contributing to maintaining and improving health outcomes in these important areas.

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Clinicians' views sought on new Pharmac role

Clinicians are being asked for their views on an expanded role for Pharmac, which was a recommendation from the Ministerial Review Group last year. The proposal suggests giving Pharmac a greater role in the purchase of hospital medicines and some medical devices.

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Nurses mark old times

Seventeen nurses gathered in Palmerston North recently to celebrate 50 years in the profession and to party like it was 1960. Retired nurse Margaret Ryniker, who now lives in Havelock North, said her nursing school class trained in Palmerston North and began working on January 19, 1960.

(Manawatu Standard)

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Impressive entries

Rural Women New Zealand is delighted with the quality of entries in its Enterprising Rural Women Award 2010, which closed recently. The high calibre of entries is going to make the task of judging very challenging, says Rural Women national president Margaret Chapman.

The award is being judged by Theresa Gattung of Wool Partners International; Doug Langford, recently retired chairman of Access Homehealth Ltd - which is sponsoring the award - and Ms Chapman. A North and South Island winner will be chosen, both of whom will attend the award ceremony at the Rural Women New Zealand national conference in Oamaru on May 25, when the supreme winner will be announced.

Looming workforce crisis in ambulance sector

Ambulance officers are warning of a crisis in the sector as overworked paramedics miss meal breaks because of heavy workloads. "Very few employees have to wait seven hours to get a meal break, but in the ambulance sector this is becoming more frequent as paramedics struggle to manage the increasing demand on the current resource base," says NDU ambulance sector coordinator and former paramedic Craig Page.

(Scoop)

[Read more](#)

Maori-based health care

A new choice in family doctor for Masterton Maori, Pacific Islanders and those who find healthcare difficult to access has been given the go-ahead. Health and social services provider Whaiora has confirmed it has received approval to add a general practice to its range of existing services.

(Wairarapa News)

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Patient care may suffer, say doctors

Patient care could suffer under a government proposal to expand Pharmac's role, a doctors' group warns. Under the proposal, the government's drug-buying agency could assess and buy hospital drugs, medical devices and vaccines.

(The Press)

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Rural Women NZ slams removal of home support services in Otago and Southland

Rural Women New Zealand is angry at the planned removal of home support services for 3000 people in Southland and Otago.

"There has been no research into what effect this is going to have on the wellbeing of these clients, or whether it is going to result in any medium- or long-term savings for the DHBs," says RWNZ spokesperson, Marie Appleton. "This is a poorly thought out attempt at short-term cost cutting which is likely to backfire badly."

(Scoop)

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Rest home entry gets harder

In another move to cut spending on the elderly in Otago and Southland, people referred to rest-homes in future will be "stood down" for about six months to see if they can be supported at home. No person will be able to access residential care until all community support options have "demonstrably failed", a report to Otago District Health Board says.

[Read more](#)

Meanwhile, older people who have publicly expressed fears about the loss of home support are the very people who will continue to receive the service, the Otago and Southland DHBs' regional chief executive officer, Brian Rousseau said. "People housebound with poor vision are the ones who will continue to receive home support," he said.

(Scoop)

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