

Welcome to the New Zealand Rural General Practice Network e-zine for 25 January 2011.

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## New rural ranking is put to the test

A draft revised Rural Ranking Scale (RRS) now being trialled is set to be refined this year. (NZ Doctor)

Following "robust" feedback from practices trialling the new draft model RRS, further revisions will be made in a new version this year, says Ministry of Health national programme manager primary healthcare, Danny Wu.

Rural General Practice Network chair Kirsty Murrell-McMillan says a lot of work went on behind the scenes last year to develop the draft model, in a joint process involving the network, the ministry and DHBs.

[Read more.](#)

## Network Conference 2011 – last chance for Early Bird registrations

Only a few days remain to take advantage of Early Bird registration rates for the Network's 2011 conference in Wellington. The offer closes on January 31, so be in quick.

The theme of this year's conference is "Family Matters: Supporting rural general practice, rural communities, practitioners and their families".

The showcase rural health event will be held from March 17-20 at the Wellington Convention Centre (Michael Fowler Centre).

The New Zealand Rural General Practice Network was formed in the early 1990s by a group of GPs who were passionate about providing quality healthcare to rural communities and supporting rural GPs and their families. The 2011 Conference revisits these core values.

For information on the programme, registration, exhibition stands, sponsorship and social events [click here](#). Or contact Communications and Membership Manager Rob Olsen directly on 04 495 5887 or 021 82 2468.

## Peter Snow Memorial Award 2011

Nominations are now open for the annual Peter Snow Memorial Award to be announced at the Network's 2011 conference in Wellington, March 17-20.

The award was set up to honour the life and work of Dr Peter Snow who passed away in March 2006. Dr Snow was a rural general practitioner based in Tapanui.

For more information, nomination guidelines or to nominate someone please [click here](#).

## GP leaves environment in good health too

Hundreds turned out for the recent funeral of Barrie Bayston as Otaki remembered the life of its long-serving general practitioner. (Kapiti Observer)

Dr Bayston made a final journey through the streets of the town as his casket was carried between Raukawa Marae and All Saint's Church, surrounded by family and friends.

[Read more.](#)

## Skype video conferencing available

Are you a Skype user? Many of you may already be regular users of Skype and already aware of its benefits. Now Skype is offering group video calling for use at work or at home. For more information [click here](#).

## Paramedic humbled by rare honour

Being able to help people in a time of need is reward enough for Waimate man Grant Eames. (ODT)

So when Mr Eames (62) found out he was being awarded one of the highest honours in St John, he was "blown away".

[Read more.](#)

## SDHB blows rest home budget

The Southern District Health Board is trying to find out if big cuts to home help services in Southland and Otago is behind an even larger budget blowout in rest home costs. (Southland Times)

Hundreds of unwell Southlanders lost their entitlement to housekeeping services last year and those cuts were expected to continue.

[Read more.](#)

## GP trial at Thames starts well

None of the patients fast tracked through Thames Hospital's emergency department by a general practitioner, as part of a three-month pilot, required a referral to emergency department specialists.

The pilot began in Thames on January 8 where Thames Medical Centre GP Steven Gunn treated 22 people. On January 15 Dr Brendon Aish saw 16 people, replacing the Thames medical centre's weekend clinics.

"GPs are skilled in quickly assessing a patient's need and offering appropriate treatment," said Dr Aish.

Patients presenting to the emergency department when the GP is present are first triaged by an ED nurse and if suitable for the GP service, are "fast tracked" through this option.

"On both days no patients offered fast tracked needed a referral to the ED team. This is an indication of how well the initial ED triage system is working."

People needing after-hours primary care services at weekends are reminded to phone their GP surgery first before attending the ED. Their call will be answered by a trained nurse who will be able to give them advice on whether they need to go to the ED or if they can wait to see their doctor on Monday. In emergencies people should continue to phone 111.

The initiative is a three-month pilot, funded by Waikato DHB, aimed at reducing the after-hours demand on GPs and assist with the increasing ED workload, particularly over summer.

## National strategy for after-hours care urgently needed – NZMA

The increase in patients attending emergency departments (EDs) for minor ailments, instead of visiting their general practice, highlights the problem of access to after-hours primary care which the Government must urgently address, says New Zealand Medical Association (NZMA) Chair Dr Peter Foley.

"In recent times it has become worse and the problem cannot be left for each DHB on its own to resolve," says Dr Foley.

[Read more.](#)

Meanwhile, NZMA Chief Executive Officer Cameron McIver will retire from the association after 15 years in the role. Mr McIver left an army career in 1989 and went on to manage several national NGOs. He was appointed NZMA CEO in October 1995. Mr McIver's formal date for finishing in the role is mid-March 2011.

The NZMA is now undertaking a recruitment process to appoint a new CEO to this important and influential position.

## 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.

## 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)



## Rise in farm deaths

The number of people killed on farms in 2010 almost doubled compared with the previous year, and serious accidents went up by 15 per cent. (RNZ)

Last year, 17 people were killed working on farms, compared to nine in 2009, and 312 were seriously hurt. An Otago University senior researcher of farm accidents, Kirsten Lovelock, says the rise of dairy farming has led to a shortage of labour which is being filled by workers from overseas.

She says those people don't have experience working with large numbers of animals and equipment like tractors and quad bikes, which inevitably leads to accidents.

Federated Farmers health and safety spokesperson Donald Aubrey says the statistics are disappointing, though he says a campaign for safer use of quad bikes has had results, with a 13 per cent reduction in serious injuries.

## Extra clinical support for ambulance call centres

Health Minister Tony Ryall announced recently that Emergency Ambulance Call Centres, which take 111 calls are to get extra funding to provide an advanced level of support for over-the-phone triage of emergency calls.

[Read more.](#)

## Emergency caesarean after midwife failure

A midwife has been criticised for her care of a 30-year-old woman who ended up having her first baby by emergency caesarean. (Stuff)

Health and Disability Commissioner Anthony Hill said, in a decision issued recently, the midwife failed to recognise and do the right thing when her client became unwell late in the pregnancy.

[Read more.](#)

## That's ODD

Sav Blanc sun screen? We all know Marlborough sauvignon blanc is good for drinking, but putting it in sunscreen? (Stuff)

That's just one of the unexpected uses that Marlborough company NZ Extracts has discovered in its quest to wring every last health benefit out of the mighty grape seed.

[Read more.](#)

## Are you an enterprising rural woman?

Entries are now open for the Rural Women New Zealand Enterprising Rural Women Award 2011.

The award is being sponsored by Telecom and Access Homehealth Ltd, who will both be involved in the judging.

Entries close Friday, March 18, 2011 and the Award ceremony will take place in Auckland in May, when the North and South Island winners will find out who will take away the Supreme Award.

Further information and entry forms can be found on the Rural Women New Zealand [website](#) or by calling (04) 473 5524.

[www.ruralwomen.org.nz](http://www.ruralwomen.org.nz)

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