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From my desk

Illona Dunn, Manager Community Engagement



The end of the year is suddenly here with Christmas just around the corner. It is hard to believe how much we have experienced during the year of 2020 from drought, through to fires and then COVID-19. I think everyone is looking forward to a brighter 2021.

In November we had our first virtual WNSWLHD Board Annual Public Meeting. For those of you who were able to dial in, I would be interested in your feedback on the event.

On the horizon for our District we have volunteers gradually returning to their roles pending a review of what is needed for COVID-safe practices in those roles and any additional training that is required.

I wish everyone a kind and caring Christmas and hope you are able to spend time with family and friends during this season.

NSW Budget 2020-2021 – how we fared

The NSW budget 2020-21 was announced on Tuesday 17 November 2020 and the following was announced for health projects for 2020-21 within our local health district communities

- \$27.5 million (as part of a \$241.3 million project) for the Dubbo Hospital Redevelopment (Stages 1 to 4).
- \$20.4 million (as part of a \$35 million project) for the Western Cancer Centre in Dubbo (State and Federal funded).
- \$10.5 million (as part of a \$30million project) for the commencement of the Dubbo Hospital Car Park.
- \$7.5 for the establishment of a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre in Dubbo
- \$5.4 million (as part of a \$70.7 million project) for the demolition of existing buildings to complete the Mudgee Hospital Redevelopment
- \$4 million for a new MRI service at Bathurst Hospital
- \$0.5 million (as part of a \$70.2 million project) for the commencement of the Cowra Hospital Redevelopment
- \$1.1 million for the establishment of a mobile CT service for Cobar, Walgett and Bourke
- A trial of drinking water technologies for the drought affected communities of Walgett and Lightning Ridge

More information can be found at this website

<https://www.budget.nsw.gov.au/2020-21-Budget-Papers>

Health Literacy corner

Health literacy refers to a person's ability to understand and use information to make decisions about their health, follow medication and care instructions and to

find their way through the healthcare system.

Did you know.....?

40 – 80 % of medical information patients receive is forgotten immediately and nearly half the information they do remember is incorrect.

50% of medication is not taken as prescribed. (source Agency for Healthcare, Research and Quality [AHRQ], Universal Precautions Toolkit)

What you need to know when taking medication:

- How it works
- How to take it
- What are the side effects?
- What to do if you experience side effects?
- When you shouldn't take the medication (what are the contraindications)
- Where to get information about the medications
- How to keep the medication safe (eg fridge, out of the sun etc)
- How to use devices that deliver the medication
- How to get more of the medication

COVID-19 update



As of 18 November NSW Health Services had moved from amber alert (moderate transmission) to green alert (low transmission) in line with the [NSW COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control Response Framework](#). This means that most staff do not need to wear a surgical mask when within 1.5 metres of a patient but will still need to wear a mask when working in emergency departments and when attending to patients who have an acute respiratory infection.

If you are coming to the emergency department seeking care and you have acute respiratory systems you must wear a mask.

If you are coming to the facility to visit a patient you do not need to wear a mask on entry into a health facility but you will still need to pass the COVID-19 entry screening. You will need to continue with hand hygiene and physical distancing practices when in the facility and follow any local health service rules and precautions relating to COVID-19, including when visiting a Multipurpose Service residential aged care facility.

Always check with the facility about the visiting rules before you head there.

Although restrictions are easing NSW advises anyone with any symptoms to come forward for testing.

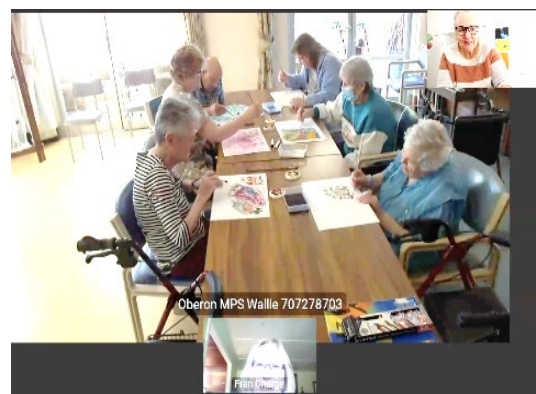
For the latest updates on COVID-19 visit the NSW Health website

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/latest-updates.aspx>

Arts in Health

Virtual art sessions by Arts OutWest

Arts OutWest has adapted its ongoing work in the aged care sector to bring interactive, remote arts experiences to aged care residents at Oberon, Grenfell and Trundle MPSs using video conference technology to link artists to residents. The 1-hour sessions alternate between music and visual arts activities.



Here we have an art session at Oberon MPS. The session starts with Christine McMillan Arts OutWest Arts & Health Coordinator (top right corner of the image) and Oberon Arts Council volunteers guiding a discussion with the residents about particular artworks.

“The conversations are really engaging, the residents share memories and ideas stimulated by the artwork,” Oberon Arts Council president Fran Charge said.

Residents, supported by MPS staff, then create their own artworks as inspired by the art discussed.

The Oberon Arts Council won the 2020 Volunteering Central West Volunteer Team of the Year award for their work on this project.

Arts OutWest has received funding from the Regional Arts Fund Renewal program to extend the project to Western NSW Local Health District's 25 Multipurpose Services.

For more information on this project go to this website <https://artsoutwest.org.au/getting-art-into-aged-care-during-covid/>

If you are interested in finding out what is happening in the art space you can subscribe to their newsletter here <https://artsoutwest.org.au/>


Consumer and community feedback opportunities

WNSWLHD – Draft Cowra Health Service Clinical Services Plan 2020 – 2030. A clinical services plan has been developed for Cowra Hospital and Health Service and describes the key directions over the next 10 years to support healthier lives for people living in Cowra and local surrounding communities.

Survey - National Disability Strategy - The Australian Government is leading the development of a new National Disability Strategy for beyond 2020. Consultation close 18 December 2020. For more information visit <https://engage.dss.gov.au/> and click on *Public consultations for NDS and NDIS Outcomes Frameworks*.

Social Prescribing Survey – University of Wollongong. This project is being conducted by academic staff and 3rd year medical students from the School of Medicine at the University of Wollongong. Social prescribing is when your doctor may suggest various social activities as part of your treatment options to help make you better. The survey closes at the end of January 2021. For more information and to access the survey click this link [Social Prescribing Survey](#).

NSW Gov – Have Your Say – you can find various topics you can provide feedback on at this site <https://www.nsw.gov.au/have-your-say>

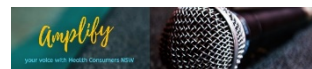
 Current topics include Loss of Pregnancy and the Law, Advocate for Children and Young People Act, various regional water strategies and the Newell Highway upgrade at Coonabarabran.

WNSWLHD Online Community – we are developing a register of people who have an interest in health or have been a health consumer and who would like to provide feedback / comment as part of a service planning and

review in that particular area. You would become a member of our Online Community.

For more information email Illona Dunn at illona.dunn@health.nsw.gov.au

Health Consumers NSW – have an online engagement site called Amplify. There are several projects you can be involved in. Register to be part of this online community at <https://amplify.hcnsw.org.au>



Let's meet

Each edition we will be introducing people who are consumer/community representatives or volunteers in our district.

Nyree Reynolds (Blayney)

Nyree is a Wiradjuri Elder, award winning artist and a member of the Blayney Health Council. Some of Nyree's



artwork hangs in the Blayney MPS, Bathurst Hospital, NSW government and Federal department buildings and in private art collections across Australia and overseas. Her artwork was on two billboards – one on the Mid Western Highway between Blayney and Bathurst and the other on the highway between Cowra and Lyndhurst.

One of Nyree's passions is sharing her language with the wider community. She was able to provide the Wiradjuri signage words to Blayney MPS and Grenfell MPS and in conjunction with Aunty Gloria Rogers did the signage words for Bathurst hospital. Blayney Health Council is very fortunate as Nyree provides *Welcome to Country* in Wiradjuri language at the start of the Health Council meetings.

Laurie McGrath (Gilgandra)



Laurie is the Chair of Gilgandra Health Council. He has lived in the Gilgandra district for more than 30 years. Before moving into town he and his wife farmed wheat and sheep in Biddon. In their "retirement" they run the *Chinnock Bed and Breakfast*. He is no stranger to

committee meetings as he was previously a member of the Gilgandra Shire Council. His dry wit comes in handy during Health Council meetings when there is banter between the members.

Diane Donohue (Grenfell)

Diane has been involved with Weddin Health Council for



some years now and participates in regional working groups and forums. “Weddin Shire is a ‘spoke’ on the ‘hub’ of Cowra Shire and Diane sees it important to keep up the voice for the small places like Weddin to ensure that its residents

are not overlooked in any way. With a very aged demographic, it can be hard for the community when life-long residents have to move to residential aged care in larger towns away from their friends who are unable to drive to see them. Diane volunteers as a community transport driver in her spare time which enables her hear the health stories and experiences with public and private health services shared by her passengers.

“On the whole I am very proud of what WNSW Local Health District has been able to deliver across our huge region. I acknowledge the work done for inclusiveness of our indigenous residents and the general quality and sincerity of our staff”.

Health Council activities

Bathurst Health Council have been busy with members involved on a variety of health service committees such as Art & Health, Stroke, Bathurst Clinical Council and community committees/working groups such as palliative care, aged care, interagency and local government.

Blayney Health Council is exploring what can be done



to better meet the health needs of their ageing population. They are also happy to see the Blayney LGA snapshot was released by the Western NSW Primary Health Network.

Cowra Health Council had Angela Firth, WNSWLHD Manager Planning and Service Development present at their November

meeting the draft Cowra Health Service Clinical Services Plan 2020-2030. Information from the community consultations for the Cowra hospital redevelopment was used to inform the clinical services plan.

The plan was developed with extensive community consultations including

- a survey led by Cowra Health Council where over 400 people responded
- 24 community meetings
- workshops with 3 stakeholder groups and indigenous engagement.



The Health Council is looking forward to the next step in this exciting project for the community.

Orange Health Council have initiated a project where in collaboration with representatives from the Orange Health Service Aboriginal Liaison Group and hospital executive they will be looking at the patient journey of Aboriginal people within Orange Health Service and how this journey can be improved. The Health Council is hoping to soon have a representative from the local Aboriginal community to be part of the working group.

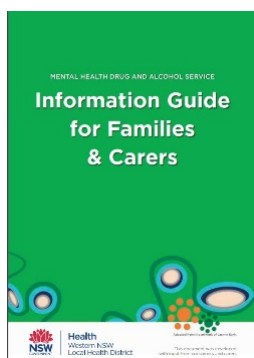
The agenda for the group is:

- Firstly to acknowledge and bring together in one place the large and already existing list of achievements by the service and
- Secondly to identify areas where improvements may be possible and to action these.

Wellington Health Council has been raising community awareness in the area of doctor services and support for the hospital. Local GP Dr Ian Spencer spoke at a community meeting to explain the challenges of recruiting GPs to a rural community and the importance of having reliable and regular virtual care services to support the staff at the hospital.

Mental Health Drug & Alcohol (MHDA) – consumer engagement

Information guide for family and carers - after much consultation led by the Mental Health Drug and Alcohol carer and consumer engagement team, this booklet was launched in November. It provides easy to read information to support you if you are a carer of a person living with a mental illness or drug or alcohol dependence, how the public mental health system works and where to go for more information and support.



More resources are in the pipeline to help support consumers and their families using the services.

A guide for dads: Caring for your family during perinatal mental illness

NSW Health launched this guide in August this year. It was co-designed by fathers, consumers and clinicians at South Eastern Sydney Local Health District and offers information to support fathers, co-parents or carers on how to care for an unwell partner, their new infant and themselves.



Go to this website to hear other dads' stories, find out where to get help, how to support the partner and find out more information.

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/services/parents/dads/Pages/default.aspx>

Volunteer news

International Volunteer Day was established by the United Nations Assembly and is held on 5th December each year.

This year the theme is **“Together we can through volunteering”**. This is to thank volunteers for the work they have done in the community during COVID-19. Whether it was to check on your neighbour, delivering meals, making masks or showing you cared through acts of kindness.



Volunteers in NSW Multipurpose Services (MPS) – NSW Health has revised its policy on health care worker (including volunteers) screening and vaccination [PD2020_17 Occupational Assessment, Screening and Vaccination Against Specified Infectious Diseases](#). In this policy volunteers working in NSW MPSs are classified as Category A High Risk which means that volunteers will need to complete additional forms that are attached to this policy and provide evidence of vaccination for:

- Diphtheria, Tetanus & Pertussis
- Hepatitis B
- Measles, Mumps & Rubella (MMR)
- Varicella
- Influenza

If you are a current volunteer with an MPS please contact your local Health Service Manager to discuss what is required for you before continuing in the role.

Carer news

WNSWLHD Carer Support Strategy – information gathered from the carer surveys conducted during the year will be informing the WNSWLHD Carer Support Strategy. Watch this space for updates.



TOP 5 for Kids Following on from the launch of *TOP 5 for Kids* at Bathurst Health Service during National Carers Week in October, the Carer Support Program has been busy promoting the initiative in the community. The Carer Program Coordinator has recently spoken with a range of community interagency and carer's groups. One such group being the Bathurst *My Time* group, which provides support for parents caring for children with disabilities, developmental delay or chronic health conditions.



Dianne Hull from Bathurst Health Service's Children's Ward

The *TOP 5 for Kids* initiative provides carers of children with special needs, disabilities and chronic health conditions, the opportunity to share up to 5 things they feel are important for health staff to know about when caring for a child during a stay in hospital.

Dates for your diary

January 2021 – Thyroid awareness month

January 24th 2021– World Leprosy day

February - Heart Research month

- Ovarian Cancer Awareness month
 - Feb Fast
 - Bowel Cancer Awareness month
 - 4th Feb World Cancer day
 - 8th Feb Safer Internet day
 - 8th – 14th Feb – Wear Red Week as part of Heart Research
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Websites of interest

<https://www.friendlyfaces.info/pages/index>

Friendly Faces Helping Hands – established by Kelly Foran and her family



in 2011 after facing challenging health situations as a family based in remote rural NSW needing essential specialist medical care, having to deal with travelling long distances, finding their way through cities and finding affordable accommodation.

Leaning from their experiences and wanting to help other families they set up a website that provides a portal for accessing information and linking rural and remote people to city health services.

Health Consumers NSW

<http://www.hcnsw.org.au/>



There are some good resources on their website and they also offer specific training and webinars. If you are a consumer/community rep for our district and are interested in any training please:

Call me on 02 6371 9971 or

Email me at illona.dunn@health.nsw.gov.au.

Social media



Our District has its own Facebook page which now has almost 15,000 followers. I encourage you to visit it, like and share things of interest to your local community Facebook pages or tag your Facebook friends on our page to bring their attention to the post.

You can access our Facebook page by clicking the above Facebook icon or go to our organisation's website

www.wnswlhd.health.gov.au and click on the Facebook icon in the top left corner or if you are in Facebook search for Western NSW Local Health District.

If you have something you would like posted about what your Health Council is doing or your consumer consultation group please send a photo and information on who is in the photo and what it is about to our Communications Support Officer Belinda O'Sullivan at Belinda.Johnson@health.nsw.gov.au

Newsletter articles and feedback

If you have an item (including photos if possible) you would like included in a future edition or if you have any questions relating to articles in the newsletter Please contact me on 6378 6274 or email me at illona.dunn@health.nsw.gov.au.

Newsletter subscription

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