

Daily Health Media Summary - Australia

Thursday, 12 July

Aged Care

"Nursing home carers abused"

The Canberra Times, 12/07/2007 - Danielle Cronin

Many personal carers working in Canberra nursing homes have been verbally abused, physically attacked or sexually assaulted by residents, a report reveals. Victims are more likely to confide in a colleague rather than fill out an incident report, which is the correct course of action. And these front-line workers receive a "disturbing" lack of training to deal with residents' challenging behaviours caused by mental illness and dementia. The Australian National University Research Centre for the Neurosciences of Ageing and the Older Persons Mental Health Service surveyed personal carers. Report co-author Tony Jones said the findings had been passed on to the Federal Government, which was trying to crack down on abuse of aged-care residents. The results would be http://canberra.yourguide.com.au/detail.asp?class=news&subclass=general&story_id=1020315&category

Business News

"Sigma Pharmaceuticals"

Financial Review, 12/07/2007 - Fiona Tyndall

Shares in Drug distributor Sigma Pharmaceuticals fell to a new low yesterday to \$1.68. the company last week unexpectedly slashed its earnings guidance by up to 10 per cent, blaming competition in the generic medicines market and lack of government reform. The shares hit a high of \$3.03 late last year, but are now 45 cents below that price. Their 2002 listing price was \$2.45 in April when a major share holder, Duchen family, sold its shares. After the downgrade Credit Suisse said its confidence in management had been "dented" and slashed its earnings per share

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"Healthscopes share price lingers as hedge funds gamble"

Financial Review, 12/07/2007 - Anthony Hughes

Healthscope seems to have caught the same disease as Westfarmers. For perhaps different reasons, the pathology and hospital group is suffering from a weak share price while to consummates its scrip-based takeover of rival Symbion Health's diagnostic businesses (with private equity taking over there consumer products and pharmacy businesses. One issue is uncertainty associated with ACCC ruling on the deal due July 25 (submissions were due yesterday), but this may be overstated.

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Consumer Issues

"Doctor waiting lists shrink"

ABC News Online, 11/07/2007 -

Waiting lists for doctors in Albury-Wodonga, on the New South Wales-Victorian border, are getting smaller. A recruitment campaign was launched four months ago in response to a critical shortage of doctors in the region. Recruitment coordinator Denise Clem says three specialists have made inquiries and six new doctors have started. She says some doctors are taking new patients. "In some of the practices, you couldn't get one for weeks, you can get some on the same day now," she said. "You know it's not the case across the border, of course you still have to ring around in some of the practices, but we're getting there."

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/07/11/1975838.htm>

"Doctor rating website should be closed down: AMAQ"

ABC News Online, 11/07/2007 -

The Queensland branch of the Australian Medical Association (AMAA) says the American website RateMDs, which allows patients to anonymously rate their doctors, should be shut down. The number of Queensland doctors named on the website has jumped from 11 to 145 in just three weeks. AMAA president Dr Ross Cartmill says people with complaints about doctors should use official agencies such as the Health Quality Complaints Commission. "I encourage patients who feel they have a genuine complaint to take it to a genuine authority who will genuinely deal with the issue," he said. He says it is not acceptable that

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/07/11/1975394.htm>

"Flu hotline busy"

ABC News Online, 11/07/2007 -

Hundreds of concerned parents are still calling the Health Direct line in Perth because their children are showing symptoms of influenza. The Health Department says the help line was receiving about 1,500 calls a day following the warning on Friday that three children had died from a combination of a flu virus and a common bacterial infection. At midday today, Health Direct had received more than 400 calls - still well above

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/07/11/1976083.htm>

Dental Health

"Fly-in dentists to service Whyalla"

ABC News Online, 11/07/2007 -

Public dentists are being flown into Whyalla, in South Australia's mid north, to fill a service gap in the area that has been apparent since last month. The Health Department has sent two public dentists to service Whyalla. Both will travel from Adelaide for one and a half days per week at separate times. Assistant general secretary of the Public Service Association, Nev Kitchin, says the equivalent of a three day week dental service is not adequate. "They will not fill the entire gap and it's unknown as to how long they'll actually keep doing this," he said. "I mean they'll be flying in and out on a regular basis. "Clearly Whyalla is a great place to live and ideally we'd like to see a resident dentist in that

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/07/11/1975796.htm>

"Protein to fight tooth decay"

Courier Mail, 12/07/2007 - Janelle Miles

A MOUTHWASH based on a protein found in children with kidney failure could help protect young teeth. Paediatric dentist Kerrod Hallett hopes to start trials of the mouthwash in five to 12-year-olds at Gold Coast and Townsville schools next month. The mouthwash is based on a protein called urease, found in high levels in the saliva of children with chronic renal failure. "We've noticed in these children over a number of years that their teeth were not decayed," Associate Professor Hallett said. "We believe there's something in their saliva that's stopping germs from growing in their mouths and we think the material responsible is a by-product of urea called urease." Because the children's kidneys do not function properly, they are unable to excrete urea from the body effectively. "The body's got to get rid of urease somehow so the next

<http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0.23739.22060496-3102.00.html>

Emergency Medicine

"Ambulance needs first aid"

Courier Mail, 12/07/2007 -

INCOMING Emergency Services Minister Neil Roberts is facing a revolt from disgruntled ambulance officers, with a new report revealing high stress and fatigue levels and plummeting morale. Paramedics fed up with a controversial roster system they say is ruining their lives want Mr Roberts to go on the road with them to see first-hand the pressure they are under. They say the system is leaving them exhausted, compromising patient care and leading to marriage break-ups and health problems. A survey by the Emergency Medical Service Protection Association, which represents ambulance officers, found 94 per cent of paramedics had low morale. More than 90 per cent said their fatigue and stress levels had risen, 70 per cent felt their job satisfaction had

<http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0.23739.22060250-3102.00.html>

Family Health - Men

"I feel your pain: how older doctors are suffering prostate empathy"

Sydney Morning Herald, 12/07/2007 - Bellinda Kontominas

OLDER male doctors are more likely to wrongly recommend prostate screening than their younger counterparts because they have "prostatempathy", a US study has revealed. Researchers at Harvard Medical School analysed data from 105,765 men treated between 1997 and 2004, and information about their doctors. Of more than 232,000 prostate-specific antigen tests ordered, more than 16 per cent were considered inappropriate, with 15.3 per cent performed in patients 75 years or older and 0.8 per cent in patients younger than 40 years, says the research, published in the American Medical Association's Archives of Internal Medicine journal. US guidelines recommend that men who are unlikely to live a further 10 years, or are aged over 75 or under 40 do not

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/i-feel-your-pain-how-older-doctors-are-suffering-prostate->

Family Health - Women

"Older women face HRT danger"

Courier Mail, 11/07/2007 - Anna Edwards

OLDER women who use hormone replacement therapy are at increased risk of heart attack, angina and blood clots, new Australian research shows. A study published today confirms that women who start taking HRT in their 60s don't get the same heart protection as women in their 50s who start during menopause. Published in the British Medical Journal, the findings only apply to women who started therapy later in life, not those who begin taking it when they are younger. "Based on our findings, we wouldn't advise starting hormone replacement in your 60s, 70s or 80s," said Professor Alastair MacLennan from the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the University of Adelaide. "We'd love to think HRT could have helped protect them from heart disease, because

<http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,23739,22060643-5003426,00.html>

"HRT heart risk for older women"

the age, 12/07/2007 - Tamara McLean

WOMEN who start hormone replacement therapy long after going through menopause will do themselves more harm than good, new Australian research shows. The study found that older women who topped up oestrogen levels with HRT were at increased risk of heart attack, coronary death, angina and blood clots. The international study, published in the British Medical Journal, applies only to women who start therapy later in life. "Based on our findings, we wouldn't advise starting hormone replacement in your 60s, 70s or 80s," said Professor Alastair MacLennan of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the University of Adelaide. "We'd love to think HRT could have helped protect them from heart disease, because it's the biggest killer of older women, but we've

<http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/hrt-heart-risk-for-older-women/2007/07/12/1183833609319.html>

Health Administration

"Labor's Future Directions In Health"

Media Release, 11/07/2007 - Nicola Roxon and Liz Prime

Labor's Shadow Minister for Health Nicola Roxon and Labor candidate for Cowan Liz Prime met with hospital executives at Joondalup Health Campus on Monday. Ms Roxon was particularly keen to investigate the unique private / public partnership operating at Joondalup, and to hear about the hospital's expansion plans. "Labor recognises that we have a truly mixed health sector in Australia, which benefits from both strong public and private investment," said Ms Roxon. "We are very interested in looking beyond the old public / private debate - and the interaction of private and public services at Joondalup Health Campus may well provide some inspiration for future direction in this area." Ms Roxon stressed that Federal Labor wanted to tackle the broader structural issues which affect the affordability and quality of health care delivery and that

http://www.aushealthcare.com.au/news/news_details.asp?nid=9330

Health Funding - PBS

"Breast cancer drug subsidy set to take effect"

ABC News Online, 11/07/2007 -

A Brisbane oncologist says thousands more women will soon be able to afford an expensive medication that can help prevent the return of breast cancer. Dr Geoffrey Beadle says the drug letrozole, sold as Femara, is used to prevent the return of cancer in patients who have already undergone certain other treatments. He says the medication will be cheaper when a federal subsidy comes into effect next month. "Its current costs are beyond the reach of some women with breast cancer and by subsidising the cost through the Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme [PBS], it is now a drug that is accessible for all women for who it's

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/07/11/1975895.htm>

Hospitals

"Pressure on hospital staff increases chance of mistakes: AMA"

ABC News Online, 11/07/2007 -

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) says the pressure on staff in public hospitals increases the chance of mistakes. A report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has found 130 serious errors occurred in 2004-05, including 27 cases of surgical instruments being left in patients after operations. The AMA says the number of mistakes is small compared to the 4.3 million episodes of care provided in hospitals during that same period. Dr Rosanna Capolingua says some mistakes happen due to the pressure that medical staff face working in the public sector. "Shift changes, under-staffing, sheer volume of work, those sorts of pressures are something that indeed can be avoided by making sure that we put adequate funding for staff, adequate infrastructure into the hospitals, and support the hospitals so the doctors and nurses can do the

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/07/11/1975833.htm>

"Politicians Ignore Patient Deaths In Hospitals"

Media Release, 11/07/2007 - Doctors Reform Society

In 1996 it was revealed that at least 4500 preventable deaths per year occurred in public and private hospitals," said Dr Tim Woodruff, President, Doctors Reform Society. "That's the equivalent of 10 jumbo jets crashing with all lives lost every year. Those numbers would have grounded the airlines." "For the hospitals it has meant minimal changes over 11 years because it's simply not taken seriously enough by politicians, said Dr Woodruff. "State public hospitals are doing small programs looking at the most obvious major mistakes and learning from these mistakes. They pick up only the most obvious." "The barriers to addressing this issue include a complete failure of the Federal Government to look at a no fault medical indemnity scheme to address the major issue of medical

http://www.aushealthcare.com.au/news/news_details.asp?nid=9321

"Report reveals serious mistakes in public hospitals"

ABC News Online, 11/07/2007 - Sophie Scott

A new report has found 130 serious mistakes were made in Australian public hospitals in 2004 and 2005. The report says most mistakes occurred after a breakdown in rules and procedures. Jenny Hargreaves from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare collected information on serious or so-called sentinel events from 759 public hospitals across Australia. "The most common type were procedures involving the wrong patient or body part," she said. "Of the 130 total sentinel events, 53 of them were procedures involving the wrong patient or body part," she said. The report found there were 27 cases of surgical instruments being left in patients after operations, while seven patients died from being given the wrong drugs. The report says measures have been taken to

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/07/11/1976195.htm>

"Studying Sentinel Events Means Learning From Mistakes"

Media Release, 11/07/2007 -

A new report, released today by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), and the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission), examines sentinel events that occurred in Australian public hospitals in 2004-05. Ms Jenny Hargreaves, Senior Executive in the Institute's Economics and Health Services Group explained sentinel events as relatively rare events which may potentially, or actually, contribute to patient harm. Examples of sentinel events include procedures involving the wrong patient or body part; swabs or instruments left behind after surgery requiring re-operation; and maternal death during delivery. These accidental events are now being reported and analysed, to look for ways of making the complex world of hospital

http://www.aushealthcare.com.au/news/news_details.asp?nid=9322

"Hospital errors revealed in new report"

AM, 11/07/2007 - Sophie Scott

Hospitals are meant to be places of healing, but sometimes errors are made. Now, for the first time, a report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare details exactly how many times Australian patients have been harmed or accidentally killed while being treated in hospitals. The information was collated from 759 public hospitals around Australia, giving researchers a unique window into the vulnerability of the nation's health system. It found 130 serious mistakes or so-called "sentinel events" occurred in hospitals in 2004 to 2005. Jenny Hargreaves from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare was one of the report authors. JENNY HARGREAVES: The most common type were procedures involving the wrong patient or wrong body part. So of the 130 total sentinel events, 53 of them were procedures involving the wrong

<http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2007/s1975553.htm>

"Power out at hospital"

Courier Mail, 12/07/2007 - Peter Michael

TOWNSVILLE Hospital has postponed surgery for 11 patients as emergency crews last night worked to restore power after a two-day outage. The biggest hospital in the state's north has been running on generators since Monday when an underground high-voltage cable was damaged by a Queensland Health contractor. One of three hospital generators also failed yesterday. People's lives have not been at risk, a Queensland Health spokesman said. There has been load-shedding of non-essential services to ensure clinical services continued, the spokesman said. Ergon energy crews last night were working to restore power through the 11,000-volt cable and a technical specialist was flown in from Mackay to assist. A hospital statement said all essential emergency equipment required for patient safety was fully operational.

<http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,23739,22060456-3102,00.html>

Medical Research

"Victorian discovery may help ease chemo side effects"

ABC News Online, 11/07/2007 -

A discovery by Victorian researchers could help reduce the side effects of chemotherapy for cancer patients. They have identified two molecules that control the life span of blood platelets. Dr David Huang from the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute for Medical Research says they hope to increase the life span of blood and boost its supply. "It's a basic scientific discovery and we still have a lot of work to do to try to translate these findings to make a difference for patients who are under going cancer treatment," he said. "But the big implication is that it will reduce the risk potentially of bleeding for patients who are undergoing chemotherapy." Victorian Health Minister Bronwyn Pike says the government wants to encourage research that will benefit patients. "Not only will we be able to claim wonderful research, not only will we be able to claim wonderful hospitals, but we will be able to lead the world in the

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/07/11/1975854.htm>

"Blood research offers new hope for chemo patients"

ABC News Online, 11/07/2007 -

A discovery by Victorian researchers is expected to dramatically improve the recovery of cancer patients. Scientists at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research have discovered the two key molecules that control the lifespan of blood platelets. Producing more of the blood product is expected to reduce the side effects of chemotherapy, such as

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/07/11/1975683.htm>

Medical Workforce

"Govt moves to restore faith in overseas-trained doctors"

ABC News Online, 11/07/2007 -

The Queensland Government has revealed it is developing an advertising campaign to encourage Queenslanders to support overseas-trained doctors. Health Minister Stephen Robertson says there are more than 2,100 foreign doctors working in Queensland hospitals and the system could not cope without them. Mr Robertson has told budget estimates hearings that the campaign is being planned in light of the arrest of Dr Mohammed Haneef. Dr Haneef has been held without charge for more than a week under Australia's new anti-terrorism laws, as Australian Federal Police question him over suspected links to the failed UK bomb attacks. "This is not the time for the minority in our community to use recent events to verbally insult or discriminate against overseas-trained doctors working in our hospitals," Mr Robertson said. "It is time however, for Australia to show the world and our overseas-trained doctors

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/07/11/1975892.htm>

"Top medico returns after walkout"

Mercury, 12/07/2007 -

A LEADING medical specialist who quit Tasmania in disgust at the Royal Hobart Hospital's chronic staff shortages is returning to the state. Associate Professor Bruce Taylor will spend most of his time at the Menzies Research Institute working to unlock the secrets of multiple sclerosis. He will also work part-time at the Royal. "I'm going to be working at the Royal in a limited capacity. The majority of my time will be in medical research," Prof Taylor said. Since leaving Hobart in 2004, Prof Taylor has been working in a public hospital in New Zealand. During that time he made regular trips to Hobart to oversee MS research. Prof Taylor was one of a number of specialists to leave the Royal in 2004,

<http://www.news.com.au/mercury/story/0.22884.22060769-3462.00.html>

Mental Health

"SA mental health services feel the strain as 43 psychiatrists quit"

PM, 11/07/2007 - Nick Harmsen

The South Australian Government is warning that it will have to bring in junior and overseas doctors to fill the jobs of 43 psychiatrists who are quitting the state's public hospitals. Their resignations take effect on Friday, and already mental health services are feeling the strain. One clinic in Adelaide's western suburbs is no longer admitting new patients. And it could be shut down unless a solution to the industrial row can be found. The dispute between public sector psychiatrists and the South Australian Government has been fought out for months, but come close of business Friday, it could come to a shuddering halt. At issue is a 40 per cent pay loading the psychiatrists argue is needed to attract and keep staff. Their union also wants the Government to recruit fifteen extra psychiatrists to manage the workload. The Government says it can't

<http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2007/s1976301.htm>

"High price of psychiatrist walk-out"

Adelaide Advertiser, 11/07/2007 - NICK HENDERSON

THE cost of replacing resigning public sector psychiatrists may outstrip the pay increase they are demanding, the State Government said today. The majority of senior public sector psychiatrists will leave the system on Friday after an impasse was reached in the Industrial Relations Commission this morning. Another hearing has been urgently called and will take place this afternoon to try to prevent the resignations of 43 psychiatrists. They are calling for better staffing ratios and a 40 per cent pay rise to match interstate salaries. Mental Health Minister Gail Gago today said she would do everything she could to prevent the resignations. She said the government had a detailed contingency plan

<http://www.news.com.au/adelaidenow/story/0,22606,22055421-2682,00.html>

"Boost To Queensland Mental Health Services"

Media Release, 11/07/2007 - Sen Brett Mason

The Australian Government is providing almost \$5 million over the next five years for additional mental health services in rural and remote areas of Queensland. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing, Senator Brett Mason, said today that the funding was part of the first stage of the Government's \$72.3 million investment in the Mental Health Services in Rural and Remote Areas initiative. Speaking in Longreach, Senator Mason said the funding would ease the difficulties people living in rural and remote areas have in getting access to mental health services. Under stage one of the initiative the Government is providing more than \$21 million to 15 organisations over five years for

http://www.aushealthcare.com.au/news/news_details.asp?nid=9331

"Govt planning for big mental health staff loss"

ABC News Online, 11/07/2007 -

The South Australian Government says junior and overseas doctors will replace public sector psychiatrists if they leave at the end of the week. Most of the workforce has given notice over a pay and conditions dispute. Mental Health Minister Gail Gago says a clinic at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Adelaide is being closed in preparation for a possible mass departure of staff. She says the closure of the Cramond Clinic will mean transferring some patients. "We've stopped admitting for the time being and there are a number of clients that are going to be discharged over the next couple of days and that will most likely only leave a handful of clients," she said. Ms Gago says, as well as bringing in junior and overseas doctors, other staff are being asked to extend their hours. "We're offering increased hours to those that are working part-

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/07/11/1975713.htm>

"Cost of hiring doctors to outstrip demands"

Adelaide Advertiser, 12/07/2007 - NICK HENDERSON

THE cost of replacing resigning public sector psychiatrists may outstrip the pay increase they are demanding, the State Government has admitted. The majority of senior public sector psychiatrists are set to leave the system on Friday after tendering their resignations almost two weeks ago. They are calling for better staffing ratios and a 40 per cent pay rise to match interstate salaries. Mental Health Minister Gail Gago yesterday said recruiting agencies would be used to replace the resigning employees as part of a detailed contingency plan if the issue can not be resolved by the end of the week. An Industrial Relations Commission hearing will continue today in an attempt to avert the resignations from being carried out. Under the contingency plan only those patients

<http://www.news.com.au/adelaidenow/story/0,22606,22058236-2682,00.html>

Politics

"White House 'muzzled top doc' on stem cell research"

ABC News Online, 11/07/2007 -

The first US surgeon-general appointed by President George W Bush has accused the administration of political interference and muzzling him on key issues like embryonic stem cell research. "Anything that doesn't fit into the political appointees' ideological, theological or political agenda is ignored, marginalised or simply buried," Dr Richard Carmona, who served as the nation's top doctor from 2002 until 2006, told a House of Representatives committee. "The problem with this approach is that in public health, as in a democracy, there is nothing worse than ignoring science, or marginalising the voice of science for reasons driven by changing political winds," Dr Carmona added. "The job of surgeon-

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/07/11/1975378.htm>

Public Health - Alcohol

"Howard, NT square off on grog bans"

ABC News Online, 11/07/2007 -

The fight for who will control Alice Springs town camps is on after Prime Minister John Howard rejected the Northern Territory's proposal to control alcohol issues on Aboriginal land. The Northern Territory Government is pushing for greater flexibility in where and how much alcohol is allowed in remote communities. But Mr Howard has ruled out the Territory Government's plan. "We will develop our own proposals and legislation in relation to the alcohol issues, according to the principals that I laid down with Mr Brough some two weeks ago," he said. Central Australian Indigenous leader Pat Turner says governments must realise there is an overwhelming need for more alcohol rehabilitation services in the region. She says the Commonwealth could make a real difference by strengthening organisations like the Central Australian Aboriginal Alcohol

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/07/11/1975561.htm>

"ACT pubs fined for breaching licensing laws"

ABC News Online, 11/07/2007 -

The ACT Government has started cracking down on bars which breach liquor licensing laws. Since Monday, three well known establishments have been found flouting regulations which have resulted in suspended licenses and fines of up to five-thousand dollars. Some of the breaches included allowing customers to remain standing in outside dining areas just to drink, failing to control outdoor areas, and cleanliness. But the Attorney General Simon Corbell says the most serious offences were blocking emergency exits and over-crowding. "Each premises has a capacity in terms of the number of people that can be accommodated. That is regulated and that is determined for each premises, and the licence-holder must ensure that they do not exceed that. So it's not a case of trying to squeeze more people in. If everyone's sitting down

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/07/11/1975646.htm>

Public Health - Cancer

"Lung cancer our hidden killer"

Daily Telegraph, 11/07/2007 - Kate Sikora

LUNG cancer patients are too scared and embarrassed to seek help for their condition because of the stigma of smoking, medical experts have revealed. As a result, a free helpline will open today, dedicated to lung cancer patients who are suffering in silence. Despite the disease being the leading cause of cancer deaths in men, celebrities are more inclined to lend their services to high-profile causes such as breast and skin cancer. Each year, 3000 people are diagnosed with lung cancer. Medical experts believe the stigma of smoking is causing patients to miss out on vital services. Cancer Council chief executive officer Dr Andrew Penman said many people believed lung cancer patients did not deserve the same attention as other sufferers. "Despite its prevalence, lung cancer has poor visibility in the general community compared to cancers like skin, prostate and breast, which have benefited

<http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/story/0,22049,22056717-5006009,00.html>

Public Health - Diabetes

"Best Manage Your Diabetes By Getting To Know Your Medicines And Making Lifestyle Improvements"

Media Release, 11/07/2007 - National Prescribing Service

National Prescribing Service Limited (NPS) has today issued a reminder to people living with diabetes that medicines may not be the only management option. Coinciding with National Diabetes Week, NPS acting CEO Judith Mackson, today said that the principles of quality use of medicines encourage doctors and people living with a chronic condition to look at the best possible treatment blend, and this means looking at both medicines and lifestyle factors. The number of Australians with diabetes has tripled since 1981 and continues to increase. In 2000, almost 1 million people had diabetes – this is predicted to reach 1.6 million people by 2030. "We encourage people living with diabetes to talk to their doctor about developing the best management plan to

http://www.aushealthcare.com.au/news/news_details.asp?nid=9329

Public Health - General

"Fight for her life"

Herald Sun, 12/07/2007 - Kamahl Cogdon

ANNABEL Memmolo can barely stand, but she's in the race of her life. The desperately ill 19-month-old has just three months to find a suitable donor liver for a lifesaving transplant. Parents Vanessa and Michael are pleading with Victorians to help give her a second chance at life. They know their hope will be another family's heartbreak, but want potential donors and their loved ones to realise what their decision could mean to Annabel. "It would be such an amazing gift," a tearful Mrs Memmolo said. "It would give Annabel the chance of having a future."

Annabel is one of six children awaiting a liver transplant at the Royal Children's Hospital. The hospital's liver transplant co-ordinator, Lyn Crellin, said just one liver transplant had been done this year. There were

<http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,22058677-2862,00.html>

Public Health - Illicit Drugs

"Govt announces studies into amphetamine use"

ABC News Online, 11/07/2007 -

The State Government will carry out two new studies on the rising use of amphetamines in Queensland. The first will involve about 700 users at 18 sites around the state and will look at drug dependence and the link with crime. Health Minister Stephen Robertson has told budget estimate hearings that the second study will track young amphetamine users over time to monitor their drug taking and health. "Both will be done in collaboration with the CMC [Crime and Misconduct Commission] and the Queensland Alcohol and Drug Research and Education Centre," he said. "Both these studies will develop timely data to inform government about effective and properly targeted responses to address rising

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/07/11/1975867.htm>

"Studies Put Spotlight On Amphetamine Use In Queensland"

Media Release, 11/07/2007 - Stephen Robertson

The Beattie Government is embarking on two major studies to examine use of amphetamines, including Ice, in Queensland, Health Minister Stephen Robertson said today. Mr Robertson told Parliament the studies will be done by Queensland Health in collaboration with the Crime and Misconduct Commission and the Queensland Alcohol and Drug Research and Education Centre. He also revealed more than \$100,000 worth of banned ice pipes, bongs and bong components were seized this week during Queensland Health raids on two retail outlets in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast. "Enforcement of new State Government laws banning the sale of Ice pipes and bong components commenced last Thursday," he said. "So far, 450 ice pipes, 450 bongs and thousands of bong

http://www.aushealthcare.com.au/news/news_details.asp?nid=9327

Public Health - Immunisation

"SA has highest flu job rate"

Adelaide Advertiser, 12/07/2007 -

SOUTH Australia has the highest influenza vaccine coverage in the nation, a study has found. The study in the Vaccine journal says South Australia has a flu vaccine coverage rate of 82.4 per cent. However the study found the figure was not rising among elderly South Australians, with one in five over 65 still reluctant to have a flu vaccination.

Immunisation rates among those older than 65 in SA had increased from 55.5 per cent in 1993, to more than 80 per cent in 2000, the study

<http://www.news.com.au/adelaidenow/story/0,22606,22058810-2682,00.html>

Public Health - Indigenous Health

"'Routine' medical checks begin in NT"

ABC News Online, 11/07/2007 -

A doctor taking part in the Federal Government's emergency response plan in the Northern Territory says the medical checks to be carried out on Aboriginal children will be routine. Dr Emil Djackic says the team will not be focusing on looking for signs of sexual abuse. "This is part of routine child health check for Aboriginal children that has been available under the Medicare system for the last 15 months," he said. "It really is a global check of children aged from 0 through to 16." The first of the Federal Government's medical teams arrived in the community of Hermannsburg about 100 kilometres west of Alice Springs yesterday morning. The team, made up of one doctor, three nurses and a social worker, spent the day getting to know community members and had a

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/07/11/1975671.htm>

"Boost for Sobriety Group"

Adelaide Advertiser, 11/07/2007 -

ADELAIDE City Council today announced it would allocate \$46,000 to the troubled Aboriginal Sobriety Group. The decision comes just days after it was publicly revealed the State Government had withdrawn \$750,000 from the Salvation Army's Warrondi centre in Whitmore Square. The centre was opened in October, 2003, in response to concerns about the introduction of city dry zones. The Government is this week embroiled in a row with the Salvation Army over whether or not the service is effective, particularly for homeless indigenous people. Council's contribution to the Aboriginal Sobriety Group for 2007-08 is the largest of 12 community development grants totalling \$282,500. Other groups to benefit include the Brian Burdekin Health and Welfare Service, \$40,000; Catherine House, \$37,000; Adelaide Day

<http://www.news.com.au/adelaidenow/story/0,22606,22056006-2682,00.html>

"Aboriginal health body celebrates success"

ABC News Online, 11/07/2007 -

Victoria's main Aboriginal health body says there has been significant improvement in the health of Aborigines in the past 10 years. The Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation is celebrating its first decade with a booklet detailing major success stories. Chief executive Jill Gallagher says examples are the reduction in teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. "It was actually young Aboriginal people who came up with the concepts and actually delivered the programs," she said. "They're very highly

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/07/11/1975584.htm>

"Students Tackle Indigenous Health Problems In N.T."

Media Release, 11/07/2007 - Australian National University

Two students from the ANU Medical School will help tackle ear health issues among Indigenous children in the Northern Territory next week as part of a volunteer program led by Canberra doctors. Third-year medical students Christopher Gilbert and Kate Kalloniatis will be part of a medical team working at Tennant Creek Hospital on widespread chronic ear infections, which can lead to perforated eardrums, hearing loss and deafness among children. Christopher, who spent six weeks at Tennant Creek earlier this year as part of his Rural Clinical School placement, said that ear health issues are a major problem for Indigenous children in central Australia, where relatively poor living conditions can contribute to persistent ear infections and further complications. "We'll be doing what

http://www.aushealthcare.com.au/news/news_details.asp?nid=9324

Public Health - Obesity

"Health Survey Shows One In Five Queensland Kids Are Overweight"

Media Release, 11/07/2007 - Stephen Robertson

A new Beattie Government child health survey has found more than one in five Queensland children are overweight or obese, Health Minister Stephen Robertson said today. Mr Robertson said the Healthy Kids Queensland Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey was the first study of child health in Queensland since a national survey in 1995. "The survey shows that Queensland - like the rest of Australia - is experiencing an epidemic of unhealthy weight and obesity among children," he said. "Overall, 21% of Queensland children aged 5 - 17 years are overweight or obese; including 19.5% of boys and 22.7% of girls. "However, generally obesity rates in Queensland children were about 3% lower than in kids in New South Wales and Western Australia

http://www.aushealthcare.com.au/news/news_details.asp?nid=9328

"TV junk food ads feeding child obesity: Minister"

ABC News Online, 12/07/2007 -

The first study of child health in Queensland in more than a decade shows one-in-five children are overweight or obese. The rates are slightly lower than in New South Wales and Western Australia, but Queensland Health Minister Stephen Robertson says the Commonwealth should act. The university study also found half the state's children ate less than one serve of vegetables a day, while fewer than one-in-six boys and one-in-15 girls did an hour of daily moderate physical activity. Health Minister Stephen Robertson says it is further proof of the need for the Federal Government to limit TV junk food advertising. "We banned tobacco advertising years ago - why? Because advertising encourages people to smoke," he said. "Why not apply that same rationale, that same commonsense, to the advertising of junk food during the hours when kids

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/07/12/1976452.htm>

"One in five kids overweight"

Courier Mail, 12/07/2007 - Gabrielle Dunlevy

A STUDY of child health in Queensland has found the state is experiencing an obesity epidemic among the young, with more than one in five overweight or obese. Overall, 21 per cent of Queensland children aged five to 17 are overweight or obese, including 19.5 per cent of boys and 22.7 per cent of girls. But it was a better result than some states – the obesity rate being about 3 per cent lower than in NSW and Western Australia. Health Minister Stephen Robertson said the figures were serious, given the link between excess weight and chronic health problems. "Not only does it require a government response, but it requires a response by families themselves," Mr Robertson said. Mr Robertson called on the Federal Government to ban junk food advertising

<http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,23739,22060497-3102,00.html>

Public Health - Sexual Health

"Councillors argue over youth council safe sex bid"

ABC News Online, 11/07/2007 -

Kalgoorlie Boulder city councillors have clashed over a decision to allow the southern Western Australian city's youth council to be involved in an event promoting the use of condoms. The youth council has requested permission to take part in the launch of the snake condom program as part of the city's NAIDOC celebrations in September. The program, which has proved successful in Victoria and the Kimberley, uses slogans, posters and free condoms to promote safe sex to Indigenous youth. Despite some councillors arguing the youth council was straying into a health and education issue, most councillors voted in support of the project. Cr Wayne Johnson says the youth council should be applauded. "I think the youth council have a lot of worthwhile causes that they pursue, this is one that came up for endorsement by this council and it's one that they've earmarked, move on with it - it's good for the

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/07/11/1975573.htm>

"Roll up to condom show"

Daily Telegraph, 11/07/2007 -

CONDOMS of all shapes and sizes were on display at a fashion show yesterday featuring dresses, hats and even lollipops made of the sexual aid. Models fought through extravagant soap bubble special effects to show off tight-fitting wedding gowns, scaly-looking evening dresses, outrageous bikinis and other garments made entirely of condoms, inflated or otherwise. The show was held at the Fourth China Reproductive Health New Technologies and Products Expo and organized by China's largest condom manufacturer, Guilin Latex Factory, to promote the use of condoms in the fight against HIV/AIDS. It also marked World Population Day, organized annually by the U.N. Population Fund. China, with a population now of 1.3 billion, introduced a strict one-child policy in

<http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/story/0,22049,22057020-5006007,00.html>

Radiology

"Govt rethinks PET scan funding decision"

ABC News Online, 11/07/2007 - Alison Caldwell

A positron emission tomography (PET) scan is one of the most effective diagnostic tools that can be used to detect whether a cancer remains after surgery. Only a few hospitals in mainland Australia can carry them out, following a decision to restrict funding seven years ago. But the Federal Government is now considering funding more machines because the decision to restrict funding might have been based on bad information. The decision to review funding yesterday followed revelations on the ABC's 7:30 Report that the original decision to restrict funding may have cost thousands of Australians their health, and in some

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/07/11/1975390.htm>

Safety & Quality

"State attacked over 4-day wait on flu alert"

the West Australian, 11/07/2007 -

The first of three children killed last week by a rare combination of the flu and bacteria died at least four days before health officials issued a public alert, prompting claims from the Opposition yesterday that the State Government waited too long to warn parents. The West Australian understands Health Department officials knew of the first child's death on Monday. Two more children died from the same combination on Thursday, but the department did not issue an alert to parents warning them about the flulike symptoms until late on Friday. The Opposition believes a preliminary alert should have been issued no later than Wednesday and this potentially could have saved the lives of the other two children.

The new information came as it emerged that doctors at three suburban hospitals have written to the Health Department saying they were

<http://www.thewest.com.au/default.aspx?MenuID=77&ContentID=33957>

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