



Chronic  
Illness  
Alliance

## Chronic Illness Alliance Inc

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### Newsletter June 2008

**THE CHRONIC ILLNESS ALLIANCE** undertakes a range of educational and information projects aimed at minimising the social impact of chronic illness by developing a better focus in health policy and health services. We rely on the participation of our members in our activities to help achieve our goals.

#### **WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

We welcome our most recent members, the Carers' Victoria and Reality Check.

Carers Victoria is the state-wide voice for family carers. Carers Victoria represents and provides support to carers in the community.

Reality Check has joined recently and is an entirely volunteer run group representing young adults with type 1 diabetes.

Member organisations details are updated on our website. Please have a look to check we have your organisation's details correctly presented.

[www.chronicillness.org.au/community.htm](http://www.chronicillness.org.au/community.htm)

#### **REMINDER! MEMBERSHIPS ARE NOW DUE FOR OUR CURRENT MEMBERS**

#### **FAREWELL TO CHRISTOPHER NEWELL**

It is with great sadness that we farewell Dr Christopher Newell who died suddenly in June 2008, aged 44. Christopher was a bioethicist at the University of Tasmania, an Anglican priest and above all a strong and impassioned supporter for the rights of all people with disabilities. As a disabled person himself, he worked tirelessly on their behalf and always with great wisdom and a sense of humour. Christopher received an Order of Australia medal in 2001 for services to people with disabilities, to health consumers and the development and practice of ethics. He was an invitee to the

2020 Forum in Canberra this year where he gave voice to the needs of all health consumers. Our sympathy goes to his wife and children and the Tasmanian community.

## **CURRENT PROJECTS AND WORKSHOPS**

### **Chronic Illness Peer Support Network**

This new initiative has received some project funding from the Ian Potter Foundation. This means that the network will be properly supported and resourced as it will have the services of a project officer. Based on a similar model to the Chronic Disease Self-management Special Interest Group, the network will meet bi-monthly and include both program managers and peer support volunteers in all its activities.

The main objective of the network is to progressively improve the quality and quantity of the network members' peer support programs through sharing knowledge and collectively adding to that body of knowledge; from learning from each other's presentations and from other experts about how to build better and stronger programs.

Thank you to the Ian Potter Foundation for its timely support and congratulations to Jo-Anne for her successful application.

If you are interested in being part of this network or just attending the meeting, please contact Jo-Anne Tamlyn on 9882 4654 or email [jtamlyn@chronicillness.org.au](mailto:jtamlyn@chronicillness.org.au).

### **'Invisible Illness'**

The Alliance has received some funds from the Jack Brockhoff Foundation which will allow us to commence a revision of these webpages and promote it more widely to school communities. Thanks to the Jack Brockhoff Foundation and congratulations again to Jo-Anne for her successful application.

## **CHRONIC DISEASE SELF-MANAGEMENT SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP**

This group continues to meet on a bi-monthly basis. The next metropolitan meeting is on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> August from 10 to 12 noon. It will be at the St Vincent's Conference Centre (cnr Victoria and Nicholson Sts) and features Kaylene Fiddes from the Australian Disease Management Association and Jo Harris of the Disease Management Unit of Bayside Health.

On Monday 4 August, the Special Interest Group is facilitating a chronic pain workshop in Mildura, inviting health professionals working in the chronic disease management areas and Hospitals Admissions Risk Programs across the region to attend. We also extend the invitation to interested consumers and support groups in the region.

Our recent Special Interest Group meeting, held in June featured Rhonda Petschel who gave an update on the work of the 'Flinders Model'. It was well attended and her excellent power-point presentation is now on our website:

[www.chronicillness.org.au/sig](http://www.chronicillness.org.au/sig)

### **MEDICARE AUSTRALIA ON-LINE SERVICE**

Some of you may not be aware that Medicare Australia has developed a secure site where information about your families' Medicare Claims history is stored. You can also view your Medicare Safety Net balance and Medicare tax statement. To access these services you need to go on-line and register and then receive a password. A secure history of PBS medications usage will also be made available soon.

### **DEPRESSION AND CHRONIC ILLNESSES**

All the work that the Chronic Illness Alliance undertakes with people with chronic illnesses demonstrates there is a close relationship between having a physical illness and developing depression. For that reason we welcome all the resources that become available to assist people cope better. The winter edition of 'Medicines Talk' presents information about the use of antidepressant medications including prescription antidepressants and herbal and natural medicines. There is advice about the value of combining medications, counseling (non-drug treatments), physical exercise and enjoyable activities. Also valuable is the guide to using antidepressants and the other sources of help and information. Information in other languages is available from Multicultural Mental Health Association ([www.mmha.org.au](http://www.mmha.org.au)) while beyondblue has resources on [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au) or through its helpline 1800 187 263.

To read the full Winter 2008 (no 26) edition of Medicines Talk go to [www.nps.org.au/consumers](http://www.nps.org.au/consumers). You can read it on-line or be put on the mailing list. You can also phone 02 8217 8700 to have it mailed.

### **SAFETY AND QUALITY IN RADIOLOGY**

Quality Use of Diagnostic Imaging Program (QUDI) is undertaken by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists. One of the outcomes of this program has been the establishment of a Radiology Events Register, where adverse incidents relating to radiology are reported by radiologists. The Alliance welcomes such initiatives as it will lead to a safer health system. We would also like to see a means for consumers to report incidents regarding radiology.

The QUDI e-news of June 2008 reports:

*'There are now over 650 incidents in the RAER. These have been derived from incidents reported by radiologists, clinical reviews and medico-legal reports. An initial analysis of these incidents and their classification in the AIMS database has shown that although there were ten 'Principal Incident Types' (the incident type most proximal to the harm, or potential harm, caused), 'Clinical Management' accounted for three quarters of the total number of incidents. Of these incidents, about half involved X-ray or CT scan, while a further 17% was associated with ultrasound. Overall, incidents most commonly occurred during the interpretation of images, although approximately 20% of incidents occurred during patient preparation and technical performance of the procedure, respectively. In terms of factors that contributed to these incidents, staff factors, such as cognition (e.g. inadequate knowledge, inexperience, misreading, failure to*

*synthesise/act) and communication (lack of providing instructions or information, inadequate handover) were most significant. About 10% of incidents were related to patient factors and organisational factors. These results provide an excellent starting point on which to systematically develop clinically relevant corrective strategies.'*

### **THE REGULATION OF COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINES**

There is an ongoing debate about the value of regulating complementary medicines and therapies. Not all complementary therapists are opposed to having the industry regulated. In fact some see it as a means to ensure that consumers receive products that are of the highest standards. A report written on behalf of the Naturopathy Foundation and titled the Regulation of Complementary Medicines by Jonathon Wardle of the University of Queensland will be placed on our website in the next 24 hours. The report has been received by Senator McLucas who is concerned with these matters federally. It should provide informative reading!