

Carers Representation Program E Bulletin: 5 May 2011

Welcome to the fortnightly Carer Representation Program E-Bulletin
Informing you of Mental Health committee updates, news, events and more. This issue:

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ACT Budget 2011 -2012

The ACT Government brought down its 2011-2012 Budget on 3 May. While noting that the economic outlook for the territory remains positive, the Government remains committed to returning the Budget to surplus in 2013-14. Its focus has therefore been to stabilise the economy.

It has provided funding for a number of initiatives which will help to address the pressing needs of people with disability (physical and mental), their families and Carers.

In relation to mental health these include, increased funding of \$19.8m over four years for additional mental health services. This total includes an additional \$13.8m for additional doctors, nurses and allied health practitioners for the new Adult Mental Health Inpatient Facility. Mental health services in the ACT will receive a funding boost of \$4.2m over four years to meet the growth in demand for mental health services. This total incorporate a \$1m per annum indexed injection to meet the growth in both acute and community settings. Importantly for Carers some of the additional funding allocated to the ACT Mental Health services will be directed towards the recruitment of a Carer Consultant position which will provide expert input into service delivery from a Carer perspective.

The ACT Budget papers can be found at http://www.treasury.act.gov.au/budget/budget_2011/index.htm

Mental Health Budget Push Continues: Thousands of Faces In Full Page Ad

The Leader of the Opposition, Tony Abbot has announced on 21 April a number of mental health initiatives to provide further support to people who suffer from mental illness. The initiatives have been based on the "six experts' plan", which was released at the end of March, and which builds on the Better Access to mental Health initiative of 2006. Mr Abbot said a Coalition Government would spend an extra \$180 million, in line with the six experts' recommendation on:

- Improving existing employment services for people with serious mental health problems.
- \$150 million to boost the outside services that job agencies could deploy for interventions on behalf of their clients.
- \$40 million to establish a national mental health research centre
- \$20 million to establish a national mental health workforce training institute.

Many people with serious mental health problems are on the disability pension because they are unable to work more than 15 hours a week.

The Coalition would also establish a mental health commission to provide expert advice to the minister, to champion mental health issues and improve outcomes for patients within government. The six experts' plan also recommends that \$150 million be spent on better coordinated accommodation services for people with mental illness. The AMA has welcomed the announcements.

New website for Carers of People with Bipolar disorder

The website is a new information resource for carers of people with bipolar disorder (18 years and over) developed in a study at the University of Melbourne. The University of Melbourne welcomes feedback about the usefulness of the website and you are invited to complete a very brief, anonymous feedback survey before leaving the bipolarcaregivers website (the survey closes on 31 May 2011). For more information and to complete the brief survey, click on www.bipolarcaregivers.org or contact Lesley Berk at lberk@unimelb.edu.au

New Suicide Statistics Affirm the Need for Professional Services

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2009 - Causes of Death data) suicide remains the 14th leading cause of death in Australia, with 2132 Australians taking their own lives in 2009. In a media statement released on 3 May 2011 stated that new figures highlighted the need for professionally staffed 24 hour support services for people at risk of suicide, their carers and those who had lost a loved one to suicide.

The Suicide Call Back Service is Australia's only professionally staffed, 24 hour helpline for people at risk

of suicide, their carers and people bereaved by suicide. In addition to the crisis line, we provide a unique call back service offering people up to six free telephone counseling sessions - with the same counselor - at a time of their choosing. Our website also provides a source of ongoing support through a suite of online resources including a moderated bulletin board and e-therapy tools. Our professional counselors are committed to preventing suicide within the community, and provide specialised support to almost 6000 Australians a year.

Anyone who is experiencing suicidal thoughts, worried for a loved one or bereaved by suicide should seek free, professional support from: Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467. Available Nationally 24 hours a day, seven days a week. www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Invitation - Grace Groom Memorial Oration

Each year the Mental Health Council of Australia organises an annual lecture called the Grace Groom Memorial Oration after former MHCA CEO, Grace Groom. This year the invited speaker is ABC broadcaster, author and motivational speaker, Craig Hamilton. Mr Hamilton uses his personal experience of living with bipolar disorder as a central part of his message of hope to audiences. This year MHCA has offered a free table (up to 8 people) for consumers and carers. If you are interested in attending the Grace Groom Oration, please contact MHCC on 6249 7756 or admin@mhccact.org.au to register your interest by COB this Friday 6 May. We will let you know whether you have secured a ticket next week. The Grace Groom Memorial Oration will be held at the National Press Club in Canberra on 2 June 2011, 12.00 – 2.00 pm. Lunch will be served.

FREE Computer Course for Carers from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Background

This is a wonderful opportunity for Carers from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background. Are you or do you know someone from a CALD background who cares for a person with a disability, chronic illness, mental illness, dementia or frail aged?

Carers ACT are running a FREE 4 week, 8 session computer training course for CALD Carers.

CALD Carers Basic Computer Course II

When: 9.30am - 2pm Wednesdays and Fridays 25 May to 17 June 2011 (8 sessions in total)

Where: Carers ACT, 2/80 Beaurepaire Crescent Holt FREE for Family Carers from a CALD background.

Must have completed Basic Computer 1 or equivalent (some familiarity with computers) Topics covered will include Microsoft Office 2007 (Word, Outlook, Excel) and saving photos on a PC.

To register please contact reception on 6296 9900 or email anndeyh@carersact.asn.au to register for the course or for further information.

Recovery through Craft

Are you interested in learning various craft techniques? Meeting interesting people? Having afternoon tea? Taking your own creations home? Phillipa's craft group offers support, skills development, social interaction and an opportunity to relax and have fun.

When: 11th May to 15th June 2011 - Wednesdays from 1.30 to 3.30pm

Where: At the Rainbow, (H Block, Canberra Technology Park, Phillip Avenue, Watson)

Cost: Free and craft materials will be provided.

For more information and/or registration please contact Peers for Recovery Program, Mental Health Foundation (ACT) on 02 6282 6658/ 0406 377 512 or e-mail info@mhf.org

Reminder Carer Representative required for Youth Step up, Step down Model of Care Committee

ACT Health is forming a new committee and would very much appreciate the input of a carer of a young person with mental health issues, preferably aged from 18 – 25 years, or not much older. If you are interested in nominating for this position, please contact Julia on 6296 9952 or at juliap@carersact.asn.au for an application form. Applications close on Thursday 19 May 2011. If more than one application is received, they will be forwarded to the Chair of the Committee who will make a decision based on the candidates' relevant experience.

Reminder Carer Representative required for the Seclusion and Restraint Working Group

A Carer Representative is sought for the Seclusion and Restraint Working Group. The functions of the group are to formally review all incidents of seclusion and restraint, code black and Early Support & Intervention Team in PSU and MHAU. The review includes:

- Overview of consumer's admission to date,
- Description of events prior to an incident,
- Medications offered/given/requested,
- Description of incident – who/where/what/how, the skill mix on unit at the time
- Acuity on unit at the time
- Details of seclusion order –length of time on order and length of actual seclusion
- Post seclusion support
- Seclusion Reporting Compliance
- Coping and Safety Tool
- Reflection – consumers and staff
- Maintain systemic and cultural changes that enable all stakeholders to better support consumers.

The group reports its outcomes to the Seclusion and Restraint Working Party, the PSU staff meeting and Wards staff meeting through the Director of Clinical Services. Please note that the meetings are held weekly, every Friday afternoon, generally from 2pm. If there have been no seclusion episodes during the reporting period, then other ES&IT and Code Black Incidents will be reviewed.

If you are interested in nominating for this position, please contact Julia on 6296 9952 or at juliap@carersact.asn.au for an application form. Applications close on Thursday 19 May 2011. If more than one application is received, they will be forwarded to the Chair of the Working Group who will make a decision based on the candidates' relevant experience.