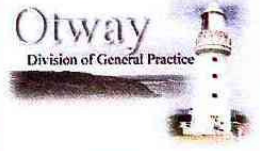




Inside the Lighthouse

Otway Division of General Practice Newsletter

April 2009



Victorian Dairy Conference 2009 - WARRNAMBOOL

The Otway Division of General Practice's Community Support Worker, Emma Mahony, worked in partnership with Sustainable Farm Families (and Western District Health Service), Department of Primary Industry and Dr Daryl Pedler to develop and deliver health checks at the 2009 Victorian Dairy Conference.

The Dairy Conference moves around the state year to year and is one of the biggest events on the Dairy Industry calendar. The conference attracts farmers and interested industry groups from right across the South West and beyond. The theme of this year's conference was 'Plug In, Charge Up and Power On'.

The Health Checks were held on day 2 of the Conference and were a great success, providing an invaluable insight into the health and wellbeing of the farming community. Susan Brumby (Director of the National Centre for Farmers Health and Western District Health Service), stated that, "38 per cent of the 101 farmers and industry workers who took the health check-up indicated their health had interfered with their daily life in the past four weeks. That's actually pretty high, it shows that they are a target group that needs to be considering their health and wellbeing and safety."

The Otway Division recruited six practice nurses who conducted the Health Checks alongside staff from Sustainable Farm Families, Western District Health Service and South West Health Care. Nurses participating on the day were; Sue Blake (Hopkins Medical Centre), Roma Britnell (Kirrae Health Services), Rob Kenna (WRAD), Julie Battistello (Warrnambool Medical Clinic), Julieanne Crowe (Otway Division of General Practice) and Cheryl Roads (Kimberly Clinic) to whom we extend our great thanks. We also extend our thanks to Dr Tatiana Cimpoesu for her time and enthusiasm on the day. Dr Cimpoesu worked alongside Dr Daryl Pedler providing further information and referral to participants where needed.



Pictured above:

Emma Mahony (ODGP), Roma Britnell (Kirrae Health Services), Dr Tatiana Cimpoesu (Warrnambool Medical Clinic), Cheryl Roads (Kimberley Clinic), Sue Blake (Hopkins Medical Centre), Julie Battistello (Warrnambool Medical Clinic), Julieanne Crow (ODGP), Sandra Poole (South West Health Care - Manifold Place).
Not pictured Rob Kenna (Western Region Alcohol & Drug Service WRAD).

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Victorian Dairy Conference 2009 *continued from Page 1*

Emma Mahony was also a guest speaker at the Conference Breakfast presenting an overview of 'Looking after yourself and looking out for others.' This presentation covered how to understand and identify stress, how to care for your mental health and wellbeing and reiterating the important message of this Department of Health And Ageing's Initiative, seek help! A similar message was shared by Susan Brumby, in response to the results of the Health Checks. She spoke of some concerns around participants results across a number of areas including, Weight; 64 males and 37 females, of the 101 participants, were overweight or obese, Blood Pressure; 42.4% of the men recorded high blood pressure, Blood sugar levels; high across 29.7% of males and 27% of the females, and Cholesterol; high across 21.9% of males and 16.2% of females.



Above: The Health Check Team

Other areas of interest included 40% of the population drank at high risk levels at least monthly (measured against old drinking guidelines) and approximately 11% of the participants had a high result in the K10, psychological distress scale, which would indicate the need for stress management skills.

As above the success of the day was captured in the Warrnambool Standard on Thursday April 2nd, an interview with Emma Mahony appeared in the Weekly Times on Wednesday April 8th, and the findings of the day along with an overview of the planning and development of the Health Checks will follow in coming months. So stay tuned...

The Otway Division looks forward to further partnerships working in the area of promoting health and building the communities understanding of health and wellbeing, and their knowledge of choices, supports and services available to them. This collaboration provided the opportunity to share our staff and resources, to build upon the farming community's understanding of mental health and to more broadly promote the importance of investing in their own health and wellbeing. This idea of investing in their health as an investment in the long-term viability of their farming enterprise, reiterates the Sustainable Farm Families message of investing in 'The Human Resource in the Triple Bottom Line.'

Great thanks are also extended to Susan Brumby, Dr Daryl Pedler, Cate Mercer-Grant and Helen Chenoweth for their hard work and enthusiasm. May this opportunity provide an example for such partnerships (across and beyond the Health Sector) and primary health activities into the future.

As shared in an earlier Friday Fax (March 27th 2009) GPs may continue to receive referrals from these Health Checks. Please note that there were approximately 58 referrals provided, while this number will be confirmed in coming weeks. As outlined earlier, referrals were provided to participants where fasting blood sugars were greater than 5.5mmol, blood pressures greater than 140/190 and the result of the K10 assessment greater than 20. Thanks are extended to all the GPs involved.

For more information on the Mental Health Support for Drought Affected Communities Initiative call Emma Mahony at the Otway Division of General Practice Warrnambool office on 5564 5805.