

The National After Hours Conference in Sydney March 22nd & 23rd

Summary

The conference kicked off with an overview by Andrew Stuart, First Assistant Secretary, Health Services Division, of the Commonwealth's commitment to after hours which includes \$43.4M over 4 years. He discussed the program achievements so far, including the increase in MBS after hours rebates, standards and accreditation for medical deputising services, the Blue Moon Consumer Survey (Phase 2 soon to be released), the after hours trials (evaluation soon to be released) and the grant funding. He also highlighted the issues of information transfer, methods of ongoing funding, essential capacity and access.

David Carson, who has been instrumental in the progression of NHS out of hours services guided us through the NHS Direct (telephone information and triage) Service. Although this is a service developed for a different health service environment there is no doubt that there was a lot of interest in the future role of telephone triage and health information call centres in Australia. At the moment uptake of telephone information and triage has been at a regional or state level; centres exist in Central Grampians, WA and ACT with NSW in the process of initiating such a service.

For more information on primary care out of hours in the UK and NHS Direct see <http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/> and <http://www.doh.gov.uk/pricare/oohreport.htm>.

Other presentations included:

- An update of the quality improvements and future of deputising services by David Law president of NAMDS
- An overview of service delivery reform and policy context with a focus on service integration by Peter Broadhead, DoHA
- GP/ED interface; a state perspective from Brian Joyce, DHS Vic
- Future Directions and new developments from EPAG, Dr Georgia Karabatsos
- Privacy in the after hours context from Lee Holliss, ACCC;
- Presentations from several current projects including a very informative look at the Central Grampians nurse triage trial.

For further information on any of the presentations please contact Nicole Petterson n.petterson@gpdv.com.au