



President and CEO Report

On behalf of the Board of Management, staff and volunteers, it gives us great pleasure to present this, our 21st Annual Report in Whitehorse Community Health Service's (WCHS) 20th year.

Last year we reported on the alignment of WCHS strategic directions 2004-07 with the Victorian Government's policy: Community Health Services – creating a healthier Victoria. The fruits of this alignment have seen the organization receive significant additional funding, particularly through the Department of Human Services (DHS) Early Intervention in Chronic Disease Initiative and the Diabetes Prevention – A “Go for your Life” Program. These initiatives have enabled WCHS to expand its self-management program, The Good Life Club, and broaden our work with people who have a range of chronic conditions.

Government's investment in the WCHS Community Dental Program has also resulted in significant improvements in access to public dental services. Waiting times for general dental care have reduced from several years to well under 10 months. An Oral Health Promotion initiative is improving referral mechanisms for preschool age children, particularly those at high risk of dental disease. The highly successful undergraduate Dentist teaching program has seen a large number of final year students seeking employment at WCHS post graduation.

Other initiatives have included:

- WCHS' successful participation in an agency consortium under the DHS integrated approach to family violence for funding for men's, women's and children's services, and

- A partnership with The Rotary Club of Box Hill Central, City of Whitehorse and SCOPE for the establishment of the Whitehorse Men's Shed at the Box Hill Community Arts Centre.

The Board and Management Team have worked together to strengthen governance with a focus on effective risk management. A framework has been developed that improves our systems in identifying, analysing, managing and monitoring risk. This has resulted in improved understanding of the risks that WCHS faces and has provided greater assurance that organisational objectives will be reached within an acceptable degree of residual risk.

Ensuring a continued high level of service quality has also been a priority for WCHS this year. All management staff have completed intensive training this year by the GroupWork Institute of Australia in supervision and performance management.

Our experience over the past 12 months has reinforced that partnerships are key to successful implementation of new programs and the quality improvement of existing programs. It is a priority for WCHS to foster existing, and develop new relationships, building stronger partnerships with other agencies and with our community.

WCHS will continue to seek feedback, explore innovative ideas and work with others to improve our primary health care services for our clients.

We would like to thank the Board of Management, staff, and all our committed and hard working volunteers and community members for their great efforts over the past year.

Jane Boag
President

Jim Killeen
Chief Executive Officer

Board of Management

Ms Jane Boag, **President**

Mr David Wells, **Vice President**

Mr Basil Samios, **Treasurer**

Ms Marilyn Forde

Dr Kathleen Brasher

Ms Aileen McFadzean

Dr Jodie Leditschke

Ms Vicki Wise



Primary Health Care

The primary health care team has seen substantial growth this year with new funding in a number of areas.

Chronic Disease Prevention

In November 2005, WCHS received funding via the Inner East Primary Care Partnership (PCP) to conduct a type 2 diabetes prevention study. The Inner East PCP was chosen as 1 of 3 sites across Victoria to conduct the study. WCHS is now working closely with the Whitehorse Division of GPs to:

- Identify people with pre diabetes (who are at risk of developing diabetes) through a risk screening process
- Provide people diagnosed with pre diabetes an intervention called the Healthy Living Course

The evaluation, being conducted by Swinburne University, hopes to prove that intervention significantly reduces the risk of people developing type 2 diabetes.

Chronic Disease Management

For the past 18 months WCHS has been involved in reviewing the way in which services and programs are provided to people with chronic disease. In response to the overwhelming evidence that health care agencies should be oriented towards providing chronic care (planned, managed and proactive care aimed at keeping people as healthy as possible) rather than acute care (reactive, episodic care), the primary health care team has been engaged in systems review and reorientation.

WCHS received new funding in August 2005, under the Victorian Government's Early Intervention in Chronic Disease Initiative, to undertake this work and further expand its services and programs to people with chronic disease. As a result of this funding WCHS has been able to achieve the following:

- Recruitment of an additional 4 EFT (approximately 7 new staff across 5 allied health/counselling disciplines)
- Establishment of a new program, called the Whitehorse Good Life Club, aimed at people with diabetes, chronic heart and lung conditions and musculoskeletal conditions
- Extensive staff education in self management (including the Flinders and Stanford Universities self management models)
- Strengthening of existing partnerships, particularly with the Whitehorse Division of GPs and the Chinese Health Foundation
- A focus on culturally appropriate service provision to the Chinese population of Whitehorse

The Whitehorse Good Life Club became operational in January 2006. It includes a broad range of programs, services and self management supports based on a chronic care model that includes the following elements:

- Clear referral pathways
- Client centred care
- Self management assessment and support

- Psychosocial support
- Consumer participation
- Recall and follow up
- Coordinated care with a multidisciplinary team focus
- GP engagement

Men's Health

WCHS established a new men's health team in late 2005. The team includes a men's behaviour change program (which has been running for 15 years), a newly established men's shed program and a broader focus on men's health issues.

WCHS received family violence funding in early 2006 to work closely with other inner east services to establish an integrated service system for men.

The establishment of the new Whitehorse Men's Shed at the Box Hill Community Arts Centre, due for launch in August 2006, will provide opportunities for men to get together, socialise and undertake activities of interest in a supportive environment. This is a joint program between The Rotary Club of Box Hill Central, Whitehorse Community Health Service, City of Whitehorse and Scope.

Children's Services

WCHS was provided with funding to participate in a child health team research project. The research found that a multidisciplinary team approach often led to better outcomes for children. This team approach needs to extend to external service providers and WCHS is pursuing closer working relationships with other children's service providers including paediatric early intervention and council based services.





Health Development

Health Promotion

The 2004 – 2006 WCHS Health Promotion Plan was concluded at the end of June with formal evaluation of the three priorities. The evaluation results are very positive and reflect solid achievement toward each of the objectives.

The key learnings (about health promotion principles of community engagement, collaboration, empowerment, advocacy and mediating) are reflected in the comments by a group of residents in one of the local neighbourhoods that has been a focus of our work during the last year;

“Three years ago, there was little community spirit. Local residents were less friendly and supportive to one another and individuals therefore experienced isolation. There were certainly no community activities while there was more crime and limited sense of security.

When Whitehorse Community Health Service and the Whitehorse City Council began to support our community three years ago, the process of community engagement and empowerment was started and we had the Community Terms of Reference drawn up. There has been much evolution and now local residents have a say in what happens in our community. We have free resident representation in the monthly community meetings held with our supporting agencies. We have been invited to be involved in the wider community through participation in events such as the 2006 Communities in Control Conference and the Fernwood Venus Program.

During the last three years, our community has seen numerous achievements. We have a walking group that has recently celebrated its third

birthday and has been supported by the Mayor of Whitehorse City Sharon Ellis who attended the birthday celebrations. Through the walking group, much has been accomplished as we walk and talk and support each other. We gain physical health as well as mental and emotional health as we experience less isolation. We also have weekly pot luck lunches on Tuesdays to socialise and work on strengthening our community spirit. We now have our very own community identity through the name Wattle Hill Community – the name that has been created by our community members and we are in the process of creating our community logo. Safety has been improved with the installation of speed humps and a sealed path to our local bus-stop. The sense of security has been heightened as we experience less incidence of crime. A community tree has been planted. Our monthly newsletters called the Wattle Hill Whispers and the installation of our community notice board are two more of our proud initiatives. We have successfully participated in the Fernwood Venus Program and run gardening workshops. We have also successfully held special events to celebrate Housing Week and Christmas. We haven't forgotten or overlooked the young people in our community and a great youth gig has been enjoyed by the young people and the young at heart.”

(This has been taken from a report that was written by residents in response to a request by DHS to present at the Eastern Region Health Promotion Conference, October 2006.)

Needle & Syringe Program

The Community Health Outreach Program Eastern Region (CHOPER) continued to provide a very important public health response aimed at reducing the harm of injecting drug use throughout the last year. The number of clients seen and equipment distributed and returned far exceeded those expected for the year. Highlights for the year include:

- Convening the inaugural Eastern Region Harm Reduction Conference
- Art Therapy workshop presentation at the Brisbane Drug & Alcohol Conference
- Training & team development initiatives: implementation of new supervision model; Certificate 1V training in Alcohol & Other Drugs Work; CPR training, hepatitis C
- Health promotion training for the program Coordinator and Mobile Drug Safety Workers
- Active participation in the Association of Needle & Syringe Programs network, regional drug and alcohol committees and working groups and involvement in key planning and service development forums
- Participation in a state-wide social marketing campaign aimed at reducing the harm of injecting drug use.



Dental

The dental program at Whitehorse Community Health Service (WCHS) consists of a fully staffed 10 chair (surgery) clinic and is one of over 60 public dental clinics across Victoria. Of the 10 chairs, 6 are devoted to the Community Dental Program (providing treatment to eligible preschool children, secondary school children and adults), 2 are rented by the statewide School Dental Service (SDS) which provides care for primary school children and the remaining 2 are teaching chairs for final year University of Melbourne Bachelor of Dental Science students. This mix of chairs is typical of most new large metropolitan public dental clinics.

Highlights of the program this year have included:

- A marked reduction in waiting times for general dental care or a check up – from a previous high of several years to well under 10 months;
- Funding for an Oral Health Promotion initiative, which is exploring referral mechanisms for preschool age children, particularly those at high risk of dental disease, into the service system; and
- A highly successful undergraduate teaching program, as demonstrated by the high number of final year students seeking employment post-graduation.

The Oral Health Promotion grant has allowed the employment of a community development worker for a 12-month period to liaise, network and promote the Early Childhood Oral Health Program to relevant care providers including Maternal Child Health, Family Day Care, local kindergartens, preschools and local public housing estates where other health promotion activities are being undertaken.



This has enabled the dental program to form valuable links with external agencies and other service providers and well as with other WCHS service providers. Early evaluation of data provides clear evidence of which strategies have had the highest success rate in linking preschoolers at need to the dental service. It is hoped the grant will be extended for an additional 12-month period so that relationships that are being developed can be embedded and become part of routine practice.

Challenges for the next 12 months include ongoing retention and recruitment of dental clinicians in the face of statewide shortages and the integration of the SDS into the dental program. In light of policy changes from DHS, a statewide integration of SDS will occur over the next 2 years. This integration will ensure seamless provision of dental services from preschool age children to the elderly by one service provider, allowing a more wholistic and family orientated approach to oral health.

Service Coordination Industry Consultant

This unique 12 month position was established in collaboration with the DHS Primary Health Branch to embed Service Coordination into core CHS business across the state, broadening the service delivery platform and improving system performance. The position was based at Whitehorse CHS as it is recognised as a statewide leader in Service Coordination, and Bronwyn Fleming, an experienced community health nurse and PCP project manager, was appointed as the Industry Consultant in February 2006.

Bronwyn's role is to:

- To identify current practice management processes and strategies to strengthen the CHS capacity for Service Coordination implementation.
- To further identify individual agencies' and the sector's capacity for change, and develop appropriate change management strategies at the agency, sector and DHS levels to further facilitate the embedding Service Coordination into core business.

- To enhance CHSs as the platform for service delivery by highlighting the links between Service Coordination and effective demand management across a range of program areas, and enhance links between CHS staff and interfacing agencies.

Corporate Services

With significant new funding and exciting program initiatives, the corporate services team has worked hard to offer the high level of administration support to all staff.

A big challenge with the growth in staff numbers has been the need to review our resources and procedures to ensure that we have the ability to continue to offer efficient and timely services. This has led to the increase in staff in the accounts/payroll department and the development of a risk management system that will further enable the organization to minimize risks to the organisation.

With the launch of the new WCHS website we have provided access for members of the public, service providers and our members to receive information on all our programs and services. We are currently building an intranet that will provide an internal forum for staff to access current and consistent information supporting all employees and programs undertaking their core activities. We are involved in the statewide movement to an integrated IT system under the HealthSMART initiative.

Other key developments include:

- The merging of dental and community health reception teams to provide clients with an improved level of services
- The reviewing of our OH&S systems to ensure that we have effective systems based on current knowledge
- Collaboration between WCHS and Eastern Health to refine the emergency evacuation and management processes at 43 Carrington Road including the development of Chief Warden position to coordinate emergency response for all tenants.