

Note from the General Manager

Welcome to the last edition of the Newsflash for this financial year.

Firstly, thanks to all of you who took the time to fill out an evaluation survey to tell us what you think about this newsletter.

The evaluation told us that you would prefer to receive the Newsflash bi-monthly. So from now on we will only be producing the Newsflash every other month, and will no longer produce the Bulletin.

As we wrap up our 2008/2009 programs, we are frantically finishing up for the year and preparing for the new year ahead. NUAAs has undertaken some great projects across the state as well as maintaining our NSP here in Surry Hills. Details will follow in the team reports below.

Thanks for supporting NUAAs and working in partnership with us.

We will be back with an update of our 2009/2010 programs in the next edition of the NUAAs Newsflash.

Last Ever Bulletin...

NUAAs will now only publish our Newsflash. It will come out every second month, beginning in July.

Policy, Campaigns and Communication Team

The policy and advocacy position has been busy this past month with a range of activities. Much of the work is aimed at making sure the perspectives of NUAAs, its members and people who inject drugs are represented to other health care organisations as well as the broader community.

The 2009 Pharmacy Expo was held at Darling Harbour this month. In amongst all the companies spruiking their products and giving away show bags were a few presentations and forums that dealt with some of the more serious issues that pharmacists face. One of these sessions was about Community Pharmacy Pharmacotherapy Dosing. The session was aimed at giving potential dosing pharmacists some information about pharmacotherapies and about people who are on this treatment. Sione, NUAAs's Policy Officer, spoke about the consumer experience of pharmacotherapy and about the advantages of being able to dose at a local chemist rather than a big clinic. This was a great opportunity to encourage more pharmacists to take up pharmacotherapy dosing and to set right some of the preconceptions and clichéd ideas some people have about pharmacotherapy treatment and about pharmacotherapy consumers. We had really

good feedback from the organisers and from many of the attending pharmacists. Hopefully this will lead to more chemists being willing to dose people. Being able to go to your local chemist and make picking up your dose a part of a shopping trip is a great change for people used to being buzzed in and out of dosing points and putting up with queues 20 people long!

The other major piece of work being undertaken by the policy worker this month is putting together NUAAs's discussion paper on peer distribution of clean injecting equipment. This paper aims to raise some of the key issues around needle and syringe provision and distribution. At present it is not legal for one person to pass on a clean fit to another person in order to inject with it. Equipment may only be distributed by people authorised to do so by the NSW Health. So every time you help someone out with a clean fit you are breaking the law! In the context of the high rates of hepatitis C amongst people who inject drugs, this situation is farcical, dangerous and places users at needless risk.

The discussion paper will be out in July and will contain some recommendations and challenges for the health sector and the government.

Community Mobilisation Team

A very successful NUAA Hunter Open Day was held on May 28 at ACON in Newcastle. There were many representatives from local services in attendance and it was an excellent opportunity for services to find out what NUAA actually does and to develop partnerships.

Our ultra-cool Hunter Peerlink team just finished off their Peerlink sessions with a combined session with the local Needle and Syringe Program. They did a tour of the primary NSP, collected lots of resources and had a "sit down" with a few of the workers

The NSP was very supportive about future activities and events which the peer educators are hoping to organise. Congratulations to all the peer educators from Newcastle who have been doing a great job. NUAA has had great feedback from lots of places and it appears they are being very pro-active with helping people and spreading the gospel of peer education as well as sharing information within their networks. Keep your eyes open for future events if you live in the Newcastle area.

The Asian Project had an event at the Casula Powerhouse where they displayed all their art. Photos and posters describing all aspects of the project were on display. Certificates were handed out to all the peers involved.

Congrats to all involved.

Everyone is really keen to keep going after July and to plan some great activities.

So what else for the second half of 2009? We have a Consumer Participation event in Albury in mid-July where we will be looking for some keen people who want to be more involved in the local Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) to attend a series of workshops. AIVL, which is NUAA's Canberra-based peak body, will be coming with us and will be running workshops for keen peer educators. So give NUAA a call if you are interested.

NUAA will also be visiting Armidale, Moree, Tamworth and other nearby areas to talk to local users and their supporters so give NUAA a call if you live in these areas and would like to meet up with us and share all your expertise about local issues.

Coffs Harbour is holding a Peer Education Forum in the first week of July so give the NSP or NUAA a call if you are interested.

So NUAA hopes to see you somewhere in NSW soon!



Education Team

Watch this space... The Education Team is changing and we are re-shaping some services. Look out for the special Newsletter in July.

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