

Indigenous Eye Health Newsletter December 2014

Launch of Annual Roadmap Update- Brisbane 24th November

Many familiar faces and some new gathered in Brisbane at the RANZCO Congress for the launch of the Annual Update on the Implementation of the Roadmap to Close the Gap for Vision. The Update was launched by Matthew Cooke, Chair of NACCHO and former Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia the Hon. Quentin



Bryce AD CVO. RANZCO President Dr Stephen Best and Professor Hugh Taylor also spoke to the 100 people who gathered for the launch.

The good news is that there is real progress on the recommendations contained in the Roadmap. Five out of the 42 Roadmap recommendations have been fully implemented and all of the remaining have had at least some progress. There is excellent engagement and contribution from all of the partners and governments and we really need to keep up this great momentum.

A copy of the 2014 Update is available on the IEH website at www.iehu.unimelb.edu.au



Top L-R Professor Hugh R Taylor AC, The Hon. Quentin Bryce AD CVO, Lisa Briggs (CEO NACCHO), Matthew Cooke (Chair NACCHO) and Dr Stephen Best (President RANZCO) at the launch of the 2014 Roadmap Update.

Yamba and Milpa Roadshow

The first Yamba and Milpa Trachoma Roadshow was held in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands of South Australia in July. Around 650 children and adults from Amata, Ernabella, Fregon, Indulkana and Mimili attended.



An interactive musical presentation shows children how to be healthy and strong and eliminate trachoma. Babies, toddlers and primary school children were joined by adults of all ages to watch Yamba the Honeyant and Jacinta Price perform. They also met Milpa the Trachoma Goanna for the first time. The song and dance routine included the well-loved Showerblock Song in Pitjantjatjara that had adults and kids joining in. Five hundred Good Hygiene Bags were given to children and Trachoma Information Packs were provided to early childhood education and health staff.



Country Health SA, Imparja Television and the BB & A Miller Foundation together with the Indigenous Eye Health Group funded and produced the Roadshow. Support also came from the SA Dental Services, Relationships Australia SA, Woolworths Alice Springs, CaFHS Early Childhood Development Program from Women's and Children's Health Network SA and the NPY Women's Council Nutrition Project. This experience presented holistic hygiene messages and showed how health promotion partnerships are essential to support the reduction of trachoma and other infectious diseases in children.

Aboriginal Leadership of Eye Health - 'We can see clearer now' – Brisbane 24th November

The RANZCO Congress in Brisbane also provided the venue for a unique presentation showcasing Aboriginal leadership in eye health. 'We can see clearer now – Aboriginal leadership of eye health care reform' presented a First Australians perspective of the eye health care reforms necessary to eliminate the inequity in vision and eye health. A diverse range of speakers from the community controlled, ophthalmology, optometry, government, non-government and public health sectors contributed their perspective and work. The symposium was jam-packed with highlights and speakers included Matthew Cooke, Lisa Briggs, Pele Bennet, Mike Elliott, John Piccles, Shaun Tatipata, Shannon Peckham and Kris Rallah-Baker. Hugh Taylor, Jennifer Gersbeck and Ashish Agar chaired the session. The symposium was video recorded and we hope to be able to soon make the presentations available for all to see. It was a wonderful and memorable event.



Diabetic Retinopathy Online Grading Course

To assist in the identification and grading of diabetic retinopathy within primary care, a new online course has been developed. The course provides detailed information on the clinical grading, diagnosis and referral for diabetic retinopathy, so that timely treatment can be initiated. A certificate of competency is provided on successful completion of the competency-based exam. The course is free of charge and is multilingual, with versions now available in English, Chinese, Portuguese and Spanish. The Urdu and French versions are in progress. Go to: drgrading.iehu.unimelb.edu.au

The key to the prevention of blindness and vision loss from diabetic retinopathy is timely treatment through regular eye examinations and early detection.



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DIABETIC RETINOPATHY GRADING

School Attendance Officer Training

Remote school attendance programs aim to develop a community culture of learning and a routine of going to school and being school-ready. The IEH was invited to participate in education about the importance of clean faces and holistic hygiene with the Anangu School Attendance Officers.



The IEH presented an engaging session with School Attendance Officers and supervisors at the Skill Hire Training Program in Pipalyatjara in October. The group especially enjoyed the use of local images, video and Pitjantjatjara language. The next training session in Indulkana will be held in early 2015.

Good Hygiene Bags, Safety Mirrors and Trachoma Resources

The use of Good Hygiene Bags has been recommended by many regional public health and remote Indigenous community health services to support holistic health promotion.

Currently the IEH is working with Coles and their suppliers to put together around 7000 Good Hygiene Bags. We are also working with Bunnings to supply and install 250 large safety mirrors for use in trachoma hot spot regions of Australia. This tremendous generosity will provide a great boost for trachoma elimination programs in 2015 and is yet another example of wider collaboration of education, family and health services.



In 2014, trachoma resources were sent to 33 organisations including 88 Trachoma Story Kits, 71 A2 Community Flipcharts, 12,800 Tattoos, 396 Football Posters, 106 DVDs and 30 Trachoma Guidelines.

Victorian Update

Victoria has recently recruited two new eye health project officers in the Barwon South West and Grampians regions. The new project officers have been engaged to develop and strengthen regional networks, improve coordination and referral pathways and promote better outcomes for Indigenous eye health. The officers will work closely with regional Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, and the IEH has been invited to participate in advisory groups for Ballarat (Grampians region) and Warrnambool (Barwon South West). The Loddon Mallee and North & West Metropolitan regions are in the process of recruiting similar project officers which will increase the coverage of eye health projects in Victoria.

Queensland Visit

IEH visited Queensland in July with the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH), a leader in integrating community controlled services in South East Queensland. We also met with Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC), the peak body representing the Aboriginal community controlled health sector and CheckUp the Queensland fundholder for Rural Health Outreach Fund (RHOF). Discussions included Aboriginal eye care services in Queensland. We took the opportunity to visit the IUIH Capabala and Northgate Aboriginal health clinics, engaged with local health care workers and visited the mobile eye health van.

New South Wales – Western Sydney

An Aboriginal eye care stakeholder group has been established in Western Sydney with the support of the Aboriginal Medical Service Western Sydney, Western Sydney Local Hospital District and Western Sydney Medicare Local. The group is developing plans and analyzing data and IEH is supporting this work.

Northern Territory Visit

IEH, with RANZCO CEO David Andrews, visited Darwin in September to discuss with Top End stakeholders opportunities to advance Indigenous eye care in the Northern Territory. The meetings were hosted by Remote Area Health Corps (RAHC) and provided some positive recommendations for NT Department of Health and support for a NT-wide eye committee reporting to the NT Aboriginal Health Forum.

Medical Services Advisory Committee

An application requesting Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) listing of retinal photography with a non-mydratic retinal camera (RP-NMRC), was lodged with the Commonwealth Department of Health in December 2012. The application for the identification of retinopathy in people with diabetes, has successfully made it through all the assessment stages and a final outcome is due in late November 2014.

Primary Eye Care - Clinical Software Developments

IEH has been liaising with the three major medical software companies (Best Practice, Medical Director, Communicare) to explore the possibility of including eye health indicators (MBS 715 health check; retinal examination for people with diabetes) and prompts (basic eye checks in clinic and retinal eye photo and/ or examination) into patient clinical platforms. The inclusion of these prompts and indicators are designed to encourage primary care practitioners to conduct regular basic eye examinations for Indigenous patients and to appropriately refer patients.

Conferences

Dr. Peggy Chiang presented on ways to sustain good eye health in rural and remote regions at the annual CRANAplus conference in Melbourne in October. The presentation highlighted approaches to primary eye care which is a critical part of the overall system to improve quality care for Indigenous (and non- Indigenous people). Regular eye examinations can facilitate early detection and timely referrals for treatment and thus reduce inequity.

Other recent conference presentations include NACCHO Health Summit in June, Rural Health West and Primary Health Care Research Conference in July, Public Health Association of Australia and Australian Disease Management Association in September.

Ministerial Visit to Amata and Alice Springs

The important nexus between Education and Health in relation to trachoma elimination was highlighted during an August Ministerial visit. Mr. Harold Mitchell AC took the Minister for Education the Hon. Christopher Pyne MP, Trevor Buzzacott, Hugh Taylor and guests to the APY Lands community of Amata and Alice Springs. The Minister for Indigenous Affairs the Hon. Nigel Scullion was also in Amata to see first hand the progress of trachoma elimination, school attendance programs and other important local initiatives. In Alice Springs, trachoma coordinator Gabrielle Watt and trachoma nurse Anna Huigen provided a progress update. The group then visited long term trachoma elimination supporters – Imparja television, CAAMA radio and Yipirinya school.



The Hon. Christopher Pyne and the Hon. Senator Nigel Scullion meeting with community members in Amata.

Health Promotion Roundtable

The IEH is currently researching and developing best practice health promotion approaches to apply to Indigenous eye health and diabetes care. In a two-step process, a roundtable has been organised on the 8th December 2014 at the Lowitja Institute in Melbourne. Leading Indigenous and non-Indigenous experts in health promotion, marketing and social media will convene to discuss the key factors for success and lessons learned from past and current health promotion programs such as Indigenous Tobacco Control and Beyond Blue. Technical experts in media and social marketing will provide insights into the most effective methods for communication, and how reach and effectiveness can be monitored, evaluated and optimised. A second larger workshop will be held in April 2015 to refine the health promotion methodology identified at the roundtable. Input from community and public and eye health practitioners at this workshop will ensure the provision of appropriate and acceptable health promotion for Indigenous eye health.



Thanks to Dom Barry, Jay Kennedy-Harris and Mark Jamar from the Melbourne Football Club for starring with Milpa in our latest Trachoma TV community service announcements

Goodbyes and hellos

We farewell Josie Atkinson and Dr Marian Abouzeid from IEH who have both made significant contributions to our work. Josie commenced with IEH in 2011 and her work focus was around trachoma health promotion and community engagement. This included many trips to the Northern Territory, working with Melbourne Football Club and using her media experience and skills to develop social marketing products. Marian was part of the Roadmap team and her public health and medical training added important perspectives and skills to support implementation of the Roadmap.

We are very pleased to welcome Carol Wynne and Jessie Motlik who have recently joined IEH to help expand our work in health promotion from trachoma to include both Roadmap and diabetes initiatives.



Congratulations

Congratulations to our own Rachael Ferguson a finalist in both the video and still image categories of the 'Visualising Health' - sharing knowledge and promoting health and wellbeing digital media exhibition.

Her winning still image very cleverly juxtaposes an Aboriginal man, a retinal camera and a clinical image of the retina to illustrate the importance of annual eye checks for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with diabetes. The video entry was a trachoma social marketing advertisement featuring Milpa the Trachoma Goanna encouraging 'clean faces and strong eyes'.



Rachael's winning image "Inside Sight"

Thank you

Indigenous Eye Health would like to take this opportunity to thank the many community members, colleagues and stakeholders who have supported our work in 2014.

We would also like to acknowledge our generous donors and funders including: The Harold Mitchell Foundation, The Ian Potter Foundation, Gandel Philanthropy, Mr Greg Poche AO, the BB & A Miller Foundation, CBM Australia, the Cybec Foundation, The Aspen Foundation the Vision CRC, the Australian Government Department of Health and private donors.

We wish you all the best for the festive season and look forward to working with you in 2015.

